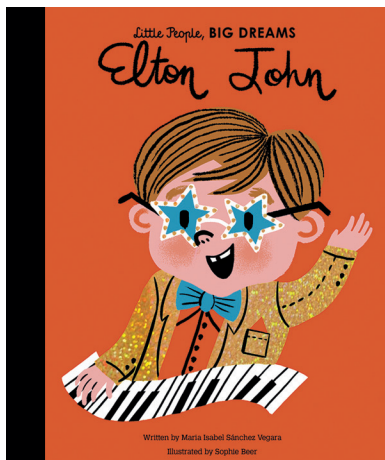


Little People, BIG DREAMS™

TEACHERS' GUIDE



Elton John
Little People, BIG DREAMS™
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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

As a boy, Elton John had the gift of music – he could even play it by ear! For Elton though, music was more than pretty musical notes; it was also a source of comfort and relief. Although he realized that he wasn't yet skilled at writing lyrics, Elton was able to team up with a partner who was, and they put their talents together to create wildly popular songs. Through a combination of skill, hard work, and staying true to himself, Elton was able to create music that continues to bring joy, happiness, and a special kind of comfort to people around the world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. Why is Elton John famous?
2. How did music help Elton as a child?
3. Who did Elton work with to help create his songs?
4. How did Elton feel after performances when he first became a star?
5. What positive changes did Elton make to improve his life?

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Early in the book, Elton is described as “playing a waltz by ear.” Ask the students if they know what “playing by ear” means. Can any of them do it? How do they think that talent affected Elton’s musical career? In what ways did Elton use music to help himself feel better when his parents argued?
2. In school Elton learned that music is about “bringing people together.” Have they ever seen this happen among their friends, family, even strangers? Ask the class to list some of the ways they think music can bring people together.

3. The book explains that, after performing, “Elton felt terribly alone.” Ask the students why they think he was so lonely. Why do they think being a rock celebrity wasn’t enough to make Elton fully happy? How did meeting young Ryan help change Elton’s feelings?
4. In his career, Elton managed to bring “joy and happiness to the world with his songs.” Ask the class why they think it was important for Elton to bring the comfort of music to others. Do they think music can be a kind of medicine? Why or why not? Ask them to suggest some of the character traits Elton needed to succeed at his award-winning career in music.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. To get everyone in a good mood, select a few Elton John songs to play for the class. Ask if any of them have heard them before. Encourage the students to dance if they like – Elton’s music is perfect for dancing! Afterward, ask the students to share their thoughts about his songs. How did the music make them feel?
2. Elton and Bernie worked together to create their songs: Elton wrote the music, and Bernie wrote the lyrics. Separate the class into pairs, and ask one member of each pair to write song lyrics, and the other member make up a tune for them. Ask for volunteers to sing their songs to the class!
3. Have the class imagine themselves as rock stars. Would they rename themselves? Change their look? What instruments would they play? What would their songs be about? Ask the students to create a drawing of their rock star selves and post in the class for all to enjoy.
4. Elton was friends with a boy named Ryan White, who died from AIDS at a very young age and changed Elton’s life forever. In memory of Ryan and to help fight the disease, Elton created the Elton John AIDS foundation. Ask the students to pretend they are many years in the future and they are famous (maybe they’re a musician, maybe a famous astronaut!) – how will they honor the people who inspired them as they became successful? How will they give back to their communities?

