



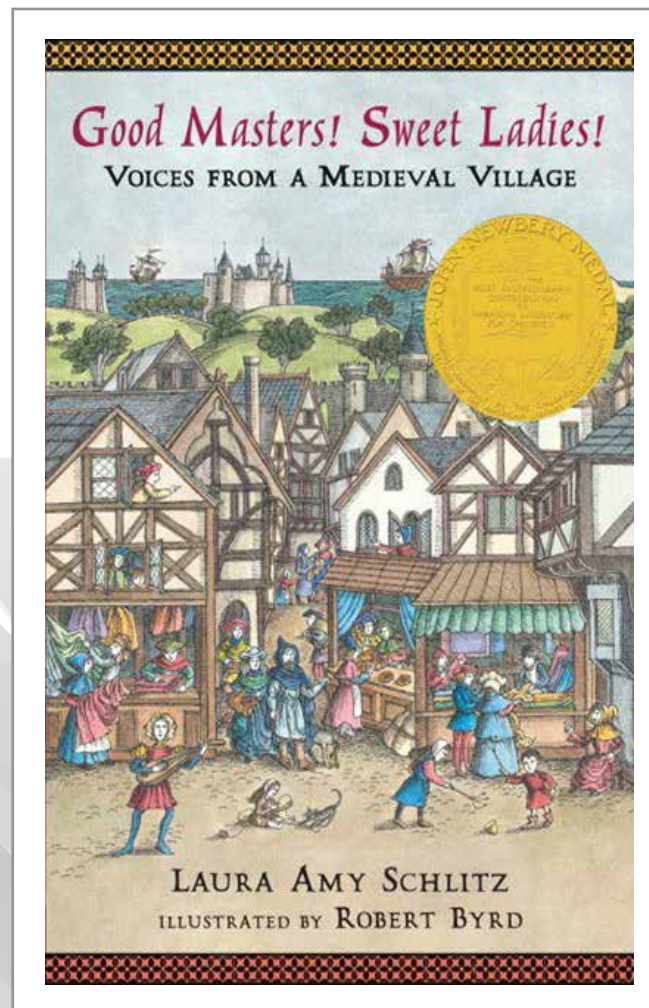
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices From a Medieval Village

Laura Amy Schlitz



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices From a Medieval Village

Laura Amy Schlitz

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Identifying attributes,
compare/contrast, pros/cons,
research, evaluation

Vocabulary

Definitions, context, parts of
speech, synonyms/antonyms

Listening/Speaking

Oral presentation,
listening, performance
of monologue/dialogue,
discussion, acting

Comprehension

Analysis, main idea,
memorization

Writing

Poetry, essay, letter, review,
newspaper article, creative
writing, descriptive writing,
comic strip, eulogy,
monologue

Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,
theme, figurative language,
point of view

Across the Curriculum

History—Middle Ages,
culture, religion;
Music—instruments, songs;
Art—diorama, sketch,
painting, drawing

Genre: drama—monologues/dialogues; historical fiction

Setting: English manor, 1255

Point of View: first person

Themes: coming of age, survival, life and death, religion, freedom, social status

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. society, person vs. self, person vs. nature

Tone: personal, often lyrical, poignant

Date of First Publication: 2007

Summary

A variety of young voices from a medieval manor converge to depict the larger story of life in a different time.

Teacher Note

Because of the historical aspect of this book, religion plays a large role in describing the characters' daily lives. You may choose to notify parents of the book's many references to Catholic tradition and the Catholic Church's historical tension with Judaism. This guide approaches religion from both informative and historical perspectives.

About the Author

Laura Amy Schlitz was born on January 1, 1956, in Baltimore, Maryland. A creative child, she worked onstage at a dinner theater when she was 13 years old. She graduated with a B.A. in Aesthetics from Goucher College in Baltimore in 1977 and became a children's librarian. She also spent a few years touring and writing plays for the Children's Theatre Association of Baltimore. Schlitz's first book, *A Gypsy at Almack's*, was published in 1993 under the pseudonym Chloe Cheshire. The Newbery Medal-winning *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* was originally written 12 years before it was published for fifth-graders to perform. Other books by Schlitz include *The Hero Schliemann: The Dreamer Who Dug Up Troy* and *A Drowned Maiden's Hair: A Melodrama*.

Schlitz continues to work as a librarian. Her hobbies include making marionettes, playing bridge, quilting, playing the folk harp, and making origami animals.

Characters

Hugo: the nephew of Sir Stephen, the lord of the manor; kills and eats a boar

Taggot: the blacksmith's daughter; does not consider herself beautiful; helps Hugo with his horse and develops a crush on him

Will: a plowboy whose father died; works hard to honor his father and care for his family

Alice: a shepherdess; sings her favorite sheep, Jilly, back to health

Thomas: the doctor's son; training to become a doctor himself

Constance: a disabled girl; is traveling to St. Winifred's well hoping to be healed

Mogg: the daughter of a "villein," or slave; When her abusive father passes away, she helps her family hide their best livestock, a cow, so the lord will not claim it as his own.

Otho: the miller's son; reveals how the miller cheats people; is thus disliked by other children

Jack: Mogg's simpleton brother; secretly befriends Otho even though other children will not

Simon: the son of the wounded knight, Sir Stephen; dreams of becoming a knight himself but, because his family is bereft, he must become a monk to preserve his family's status

Edgar: the falconer's son; releases a sparrowhawk from the lord's mews to save it from Simon's neglect

Isobel: Sir Stephen's daughter; believes her status is ordained by God; Her gown is stained when someone in town throws dung at her.

Barbary: an overburdened girl who throws dung at Isobel and feels guilty

Jacob ben Salomon: a Jewish boy who is friendly to a Christian girl, Petronella, at the stream

Petronella: a Catholic girl who is friendly to a Jewish boy, Jacob, at the stream

Lowdy: the daughter of the man who tends the master's hounds; enjoys animals but hates fleas; mother died when she was young

Pask: an orphan who runs away from his lord in search of a better life in town

Piers: the glassblower's apprentice; could inherit the job if he eventually marries one of the glassblower's daughters

Mariot: the glassblower's eldest daughter; willing to marry Piers

Maud: the glassblower's younger daughter; despises the thought of marrying Piers

Nelly: survived drowning as a newborn; considers herself lucky; helps her family catch eels and frogs; claims to dislike Drogo

Drogo: the tanner's apprentice; enjoys tanning but not the complaints about how tanning pollutes the river

Giles: a beggar; survives by working with his father to deceive the townspeople

Jack: The Half-Wit

Jack describes his life, including being bullied by other children, with the exception of his sister. He secretly befriends Otho, even though Mogg tells him that Otho is a thief.

| Vocabulary | |
|------------|--|
| jeering | |
| hedge | |

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe Jack's character? Do you think he would make a good friend? (*Jack may be a little slow due to his father's beatings [which are referenced in Mogg's story], but he also seems capable and kind. Answers will vary.*)
2. What is Jack's image of Heaven? Why do you think he perceives Heaven in this way? (*For Jack, Heaven is what awaits him after he dies. He envisions Jesus, Jesus' mother, angels, and harmless beasts in Heaven. What he seems to most emphasize is the absence of a presence like his father—one that is abusive or cruel. His conception of Heaven may be based on the Catholic tradition in his culture, but it also seems to be related to his life experiences. Consequently, he longs for a peaceful place where he can associate only with kind family and true friends.*)
3. When Jack finds Otho, what do you think has caused Otho's injuries? (*Answers will vary. From Otho's earlier passage, we know of his father's propensity to beat him. The reader might also assume that other peasants' children beat Otho because he and his father cheat their families out of grain.*)
4. Based on Jack's description of his relationship with Otho, would you consider them friends? Explain. (*Answers will vary. In the classic sense of what it means to be a friend, Jack and Otho are not really friends. However, Jack's definition of a friend is anyone who does not hurt him. Jack therefore considers Otho his friend because Otho treats him kindly by not joining in with the other boys who call Jack names. Other than this, though, Otho does not speak to or smile at Jack.*)
5. What about Jack's story is universal to people in all times and places? (*Answers will vary. The act of bullying, mocking those who are different, name-calling, and even unexpected kind acts such as Jack's could be considered universal elements of the story. Encourage students to use specific evidence from the book and their own experiences or ideas as they answer.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Writing: Write a story of Jack's encounter with Otho from Otho's point of view. Your story can be written as poetry or prose but must use Otho's voice.
2. Health: Conduct research, and create a brochure a student could use to get help in the event someone is bullying him or her. Some suggested topics are: What is Bullying?; How to Keep From Being Bullied; Ways to Deal With a Bully; Where to Go For Help.

Pros and Cons

Directions: Use the chart below to brainstorm the pros and cons of living during the Middle Ages.

