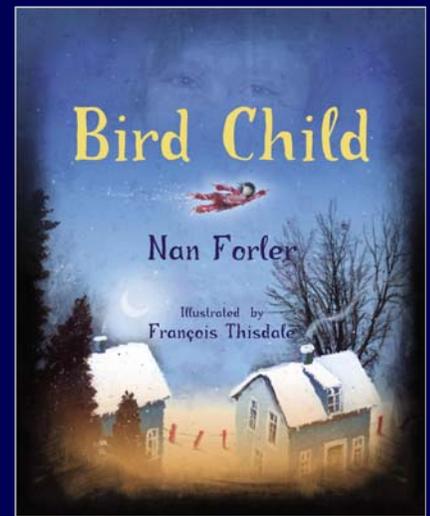


# Tundra Teacher's Guide

## Bird Child

Nan Forler, illustrated by Francois Thisdale



*Bird Child* is an excellent book that allows students to make personal connections to the text and to take part in discussions on bullying. The following activities support curricula in language and literacy, visual arts, drama, and mathematics.

### THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Social Situations, Friendship, Emotions

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**Tundra Books**

[www.tundrabooks.com](http://www.tundrabooks.com)

## Text-to-Text Connections:

### Find the Bystander:

- 1) What does “point of view” mean? Whose point of view is represented in *Bird Child*?
- 2) Discuss the terms “bully,” “bullied,” and “bystander.” Which characters play each of these roles in *Bird Child*?
- 3) Re-write this story from the bully’s point of view or from Lainey’s.
- 4) Read other picture books (recommended at end of guide) that touch on bullying. Who plays the bully, the bullied, and the bystander in these stories? Whose point of view is represented? Compare the differences in how the bully, the bullied, and the bystander react in each of these books and discuss how these reactions affected the outcome of each story.

## Text-to-Self Connections:

### Change the Ending:

- 1) On a chart, write the headings “Bully,” “Bullied,” and “Bystander.” Encourage students to record on sticky notes parts of the *Bird Child* that remind them of a personal experience at school, in their neighborhood, or at home. Invite students to put their sticky notes under the appropriate heading.
- 2) Ask students to write about a time they may have taken part in a bullying incident. Were they the bully, the bullied, or the bystander? How did the incident end? Ask them to write a different ending to their story. What could they have done differently?
- 3) Have the class act out different bullying scenarios. Discuss ways in which the conflict could end differently through the actions of bystanders and others involved.

### Change Ourselves:

Ask students to rate, on a scale of 1-10, their feelings of safety and inclusion at school. Use the data to generate graphs of the results. Set up a “peace box” where students can write about incidents of bullying. For one month, make a graph of incidents involving class members. Introduce classroom meetings, where students can discuss their concerns in a non-threatening atmosphere. As a class, brainstorm solutions to conflicts and monitor progress at weekly meetings. After a few months of classroom meetings, set up the graphs again for one month and compare the results.

## Text-to-World Connections:

### Change the World:

- 1) Discuss the term “injustice” with your class. Have students read some of the suggested books on global empathy and justice. Ask students to identify whether there is a bully or a bystander in the global situations that they’ve read.
- 2) Read *One Peace* for examples of children who have stood up to injustice. As a class, decide on a plan of action to move from being a bystander to being part of the solution. Here are a few suggestions: Adopt a class from a Third World country. Write letters to its students. Have a garage sale to raise money for the class.
- 3) In small groups, brainstorm ways that you can stand up to injustice. Visit other classes in your school, or others, to speak about your project and to get others involved. Check out the suggested list of websites with hands-on global justice programs for children.

### Writing Connections

- 1) Explore how literary devices (shown below) help the reader to visualize and connect to the story in *Bird Child*.  
Literary devices:  
Simile: “her voice dry as a mouthful of wool”  
Metaphor: “a navy blue blanket of sky”  
Personification: “the windows of her broken-down house stared blankly at Eliza”  
Onomatopoeia: “smushed”  
Alliteration: “feathered and frayed”
- 2) Provide your students with a list of nouns and ask them to write down the first adjective that comes to mind. Then ask them to use one of the literary devices above to make the description more vivid for the reader.



## Visual Art:

### Mixed-Media Masterpiece:

- 1) Introduce the artistic styles “abstract” and “realism” through the illustrations in *Bird Child*.
- 2) Examine the use of realistic photographs and abstract watercolors with your students. Discuss the symbolism behind the techniques used to create the red spatters of paint and faint wings found in the illustrations.
- 3) Create mixed-media art by cutting out faces from magazines or photographs, and combining them with watercolor paints and “found items,” such as buttons and feathers.

### Winged Birds:

- 1) Paint a bird using handprints for the wings. Glue on feathers and other “found items.”
- 2) Ask students to write about a time they were “given wings” by someone else’s actions or about a time they felt as though they were flying.

### Just a Blur:

- 1) Examine the way in which various artists portray movement in their paintings.
- 2) Create your own drawing of blurred movement. To begin, make a tracer of a bird or a wing. Trace the shape, pressing hard. Move the shape over 1 cm and trace the outside edge, tracing a bit lighter. Continue moving the shape across the page, 1 cm at a time, tracing increasingly lightly until the shape is barely seen. Color in the initial shape and then the others, using decreasing pressure with each shape. Cover with a watercolor wash.

## Physical Education:

### Winged Tag:

- 1) Have the class brainstorm responses that a bystander can use to stop a bully, such as “Stop,” “That’s not fair,” or “How would you feel?”
- 2) In the gym, choose someone to play the role of the bully. This person is “it.” Choose someone else to be the bystander. This person will be given “wings,” (e.g. holding a piece of a feather boa). When the bully tags someone, the person who has been tagged stands in a frozen position, chin down. The bystander may release that person, by giving them the feather, and calling out one of the responses to stop a bully.

The bystander takes the person’s hand, and they run together to release the next person tagged. The person on the end calls out the phrase and passes on the feather, and the released person joins the “winged” group. Each person in this group cannot be tagged because someone has befriended them. Eventually, the whole group is joined and the bully is left powerless.

## Dance:

### Movement Phrases:

- 1) Choose a theme, such as “bird” or “wings,” or the name of a character in the book. Ask the students to come up with three progressive “frozen” poses to reflect the theme. Hit a drum 8 times, becoming progressively louder, until the 8th beat is a loud boom. The students will move for 8 beats in the character of the theme and freeze in the first pose on the 8th beat. Hold the pose. Beat again 8 times. Repeat this until all three poses have been presented. Have half the class sit down and watch as the other half presents their dance phrases simultaneously.

## Empathy and Bullying Resources:

### Picture Books: Text to Text Connections:

*My Secret Bully* by Trudy Ludwig  
*One* by Kathryn Otoshi  
*You're Mean, Lily Jean* by Frieda Wishinsky  
*Don't Laugh at Me* by Steve Seskin and Allen Shamblin  
*Hey Little Ant* by Phillip M. Hoose and Hannah Hoose  
[*Franklin's Secret Club* by Paulette Bourgeois]  
[*Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Bullies* by Howard Binkow]

### Global Empathy and Justice for Kids: Text to World Connections:

*One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists* by Janet Wilson  
*Peaceful Heroes* by Jonah Winter  
*A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World* by UNICEF  
*Ryan & Jimmy and the Well in Africa that Brought them Together* by Herb Shoveller  
*Listen to the Wind* by Greg Mortenson  
*One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference* by Katie Smith Milway  
[*Take Action: A Guide to Global Citizenship* by Marc Kielburger]  
Freethechildren.com – an organization started by Craig and Marc Kielburger, empowering children in North America to take action to improve the lives of fellow children overseas. Many activities for educators.  
Penniesforpeace.com – activities for educators and children to bring hope and education to children in developing countries  
codecan.org – supports “Project Love,” a hands-on project where students pack a bag of school supplies for a child in another country

## Parent and Teacher Anti-Bullying Resources:

*The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander: From Pre-school to High School – How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence* by Barbara Coloroso  
*Facing the Schoolyard Bully: How to raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World* by Kim Zorzour  
Bullying.org – promotes positive action and creative, non-violent solutions to bullying  
Stopbullyingnow.com – resources and activities about bullying awareness, prevention, and intervention  
Cfchildren.org – a non-profit organization that works globally to prevent bullying and violence



Born in Elmira, Ontario, **NAN FORLER** has degrees in both music and education, and she has taught junior kindergarten through to grade eight for over twenty years. Nan has studied music in Vienna, Italy, traveled through England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and driven coast-to-coast through North America. As a mother and teacher, she encourages her students and her own children to speak out against injustice, both in the schoolyard and in the global community and this is reflected in her first book, *Bird Child*. She lives in Waterloo, Ontario.

For nearly twenty years, **FRANÇOIS THISDALE** has worked as an award-winning freelance illustrator, creating images for children's books, news magazines, corporate reports and book covers for North American and European clients. His multi-textured images are the product of a unique blend of traditional drawing and painting techniques with digital imagery. He is also a musician who has composed soundtracks for short films and art exhibits. François Thisdale lives in Quebec.

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