

Night Job by Karen Hesse, illustrated by G. Brian Karas

Identities & Themes

- White/European American
- Socioeconomic status
- Family structure: Single parent

Teacher Reflection Questions

1. Think back to your childhood. What were you taught about the value of work both inside and outside of the home and what kinds of work were available and valued?
2. What expectations did your family have for you in terms of how you contributed to the family as you were growing up and what kinds of work you should do as an adult?
3. What assumptions and expectations do you have about your students' families and how their work impacts their children's lives inside and outside of school? How do these assumptions and expectations influence your relationships with your students and their families?

Background Information for Teacher

This book shows a loving relationship between a boy and his father, who is a single parent and has to bring his child to his night janitorial job. Though the situation may not be ideal for some families, it is portrayed beautifully by highlighting the positive ways they support each other and the little moments that make their relationship special. Sharing this book can help children in similar circumstances feel proud of their families and open up a discussion about the many positive ways children and adults contribute to society.

Many children have parents and caregivers who work evening and night hours and/or multiple jobs that take them away from being at home with their children. These families may struggle to be actively involved in the school community or experience judgment from other families if children are left at home by themselves or go to work with them. It is important that children and their families don't feel shame or judgment about their family dynamics and working situations.

See also the **Socioeconomic Status Primer** in this guide.

Anti-Bias Education Tenets

- Empathy & Understanding
- Healthy Complex Identities
- Respect Across Differences
- Notice, Name, & Reject Bias
- Responsiveness & Action

Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision Making
- Relationship Skills

Read this to the students before reading the book:

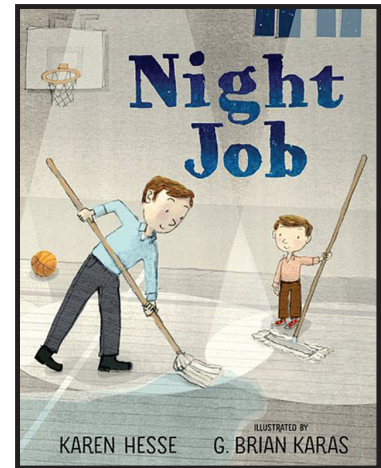
In this book, a boy helps his dad at his night job as a janitor cleaning a school after it closes for the weekend. Listen to find out how the boy helps his dad and how working at night might be different from working during the day.

Discussion Questions (essential questions bolded)

1. What is the dad's night job?
2. Why do you think the dad works at night? (Possible answers: He likes this particular job; he enjoys working at night; it's a second income, etc.)
3. **What do you think some differences might be between working at night and working in the day?**
4. **Why do you think the boy goes with him to his night job on Friday nights?**
5. **Do you think the boy enjoys helping his dad with his job? Why or why not?**
6. What do you do at home to help out your family members?
7. What can you learn by helping out your family members?
8. **How do the dad and his son show love for each other? What do you do to show love for someone else?**

Journal Prompts & Extension Activities

1. Draw a picture or write a story about a time when you helped your parent/caregiver with a job they had to do. This job can be related to employment outside the home like in the book or work inside the home like cooking, cleaning, fixing something, etc.
2. **Mystery Job:** Brainstorm a list of different types of jobs with the class. Then have two students volunteer to do one of two things: 1) Pick a job from the list and act out how you would be doing that job. Their partner will be the guesser. Then students switch, and the guesser acts out one of the jobs on the list. 2) Another option is to have one partner give three clues that describe the job without naming the job while their partner guesses. You could also have the whole class guess, which teaches patience and cooperation. It is also enjoyable to see how creative students can be.
3. **Wants and needs:** Prepare a stack of wants and needs on index cards with words and pictures. Ask students the difference between wants and needs and discuss. Invite students to draw a card, read and show it to the class and discuss if it is a want or a need. Here are some suggestions: Toothpaste, Apples, Carrots, Sunscreen, Water, Sleep, Skittles, Pie, Candy bar, TV, soda/pop, Car (depending on student responses, you may have to talk about transportation being the need), Public transportation, Housing (depending on student responses, you may have to talk about housing being the need, but that there are different types of housing).



Literacy Connections

- Realistic fiction
- Identify details in the text
- Compare and contrast characters
- Identify theme or main message
- Describe characters/
Character development
- Character point of view
- Make text connections (to self, text, the world)
- Describe major plot events
- Figurative language