
Activity: A Family Testimonial
Age Range: Grades 3–6
Arts Skill: Visual Art and Storytelling
Culture: African-American

Skills to Develop: To use reading, discussion, and visual art to demonstrate the relationship between an African-American story and each student’s own family story.

What you need:

- A copy of *Jalani and the Lock* by Lorenzo Pace (New York: PowerKids Press, 2001)
- Personal objects from each student
- Paper
- Drawing materials

Vocabulary to explore:

- African-American: *A descendant of Americans who came from Africa. America is made up of so many different kinds of people that come from other countries and cultures.*
- Slavery: *When people are forced to work for no pay.*
- Freedom: *Being able to make your own choices about where to live, where to work, and who you want to be.*
- Testimonial: *Something that tells about a person or a family. It can be a trophy, a report card, a photograph. For Lorenzo Pace’s family, their testimonial is the lock.*

About the Book: The book *Jalani and the Lock* tells the story of Lorenzo Pace’s family. One of Dr. Pace’s ancestors was brought to America as a slave. *Jalani and the Lock* tells how this enslavement happened and how the family passed down the story from one generation to the next.

About the Author/Artist: Lorenzo Pace is an artist, a musician, and an author. He was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up in Chicago, Illinois. He went to college to study art and arts administration. He now lives in Brooklyn, New York, where he has an art studio. One of his artworks is a large sculpture that is in New York City. The sculpture is called “Triumph of the Human Spirit.” It is very big and very heavy, weighing about 300 tons! It is made of granite.

Directions:

1. Find an object at home that means something special to you and your family.
2. Draw a picture of the object. You could also glue colored paper, magazine clippings, and other collage materials onto the drawing.
3. Then write a story about the object. Why do you like it? Why did you choose it? Why is it special to your family?

Goal/Outcome: Students will understand the idea of a family symbol, and they will understand the value of passing down a family story.

Curriculum Link: Curriculum Framework for the Arts: Visual Art Curriculum Standard 4: “Analyze the visual arts in relation to history and culture.”