Birds on Wishbone Street

Story Summary

Moe's neighbors on Wishbone Street come from all over the world, and she's excited to meet the new boy who just arrived from Syria. Sami isn't quite ready to talk about his past, but he loves birds just as much as Moe does. And who wouldn't have fun in a parkette full of packing snow? When the children discover a female cardinal stunned by the cold, Sami uses his experience taking care of pigeons in Syria to help rescue the bird—an incident that helps Sami to feel more at home.

Suzanne Del Rizzo
Birds on Wishbone Street

Suzanne Del Rizzo has always loved getting her hands messy. She traded her job in scientific research for a career in children's illustration with her first picture book, *Skink on the Brink*, which won the SCBWI Crystal Kite award and was a finalist for the Rainforest of Reading Award. *My Beautiful Birds* was also an SCBWI Crystal Kite winner, as well as a Malka Penn Award winner, a Marilyn Bailie Picture Book Award finalist, and a *New York Times* Notable Children's Books selection. Suzanne's dimensional illustrations use polymer clay, acrylic glaze, and other mixed media to bring rich texture and imagination to her books.

Pair this book with:
My Beautiful Birds By Suzanne Del Rizzo
Links:
https://suzannedelrizzo.com

Picture book ages 5–8 | ISBN: 978-1-77278-219-6 | Pages: 40

Themes

kindness, friendship, community, nature, multiculturalism

BISAC Codes

JUV039250 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Emigration & Immigration
JUV039060 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship
JUV002040 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Birds
JUV074000 JUVENILE FICTION / Diversity & Multicultural

Reading Level

Lexile: AD580L | Fountas & Pinnell: N

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies: family history, communities around the world, map skills
Visual Art
Media Literacy: camera angles
Science: daily and seasonal changes

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Curriculum Connections:

Activity	Main Subject Areas	Specific Skills
Read-Aloud	Comprehension	Activate prior knowledge Infer, predict, make connections
Collections as Stories	Social Studies	Research, family history
Global Communities	Social Studies	Compare communities around the world, map skills
Clay Art	Visual Art Media Literacy	Texture, create art works Camera angles
Birds and Us Through the Seasons	Science	Daily and seasonal changes

The Read-Aloud

This is a book to be read slowly, savoring the magnificent illustrations as you go.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g. activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand the text

You Will Need

- *Birds on Wishbone Street*
- *My Beautiful Birds,* also by Suzanne Del Rizzo

How To:

Before Reading

Show the cover of *Birds on Wishbone Street*. Read the title and the name of the author/illustrator. Explain to the students that Del Rizzo created both the story and the pictures. Invite students to comment on what they see. Open the book to the picture of Moe's Collection on the front endpaper and again invite students to comment on what they see. Read the dedication page. Invite students to comment on the dedication or picture. Draw attention to the fact that Del Rizzo has made this illustration as if seen from high above the ground. Ask, "Who would see this park from that point of view?" (birds) "What season is it?" "How can you tell?"

Birds on Wishbone Street

During Reading

First spread: After reading, invite reaction and ask students to find the family who is moving in on Wishbone Street.

Second spread: Read the left page, showing astonishment at Moe's story. After reading the right-hand page, ask, "What do you think? Will the new kid have stories?"

Third spread: Read expressively and give students time to take in the illustration.

Fourth spread: After reading, invite students to briefly share an experience they've had getting or being a new neighbor, or giving or receiving a welcome gift.

Fifth spread: Ask, "Have you ever felt too shy to say anything?" Assure students that it's okay and sometimes it's enough just to be near someone, sharing an experience. Did students notice that the new kid is wearing the hat, scarf, and mitts that Moe gave him?

Sixth spread: Read and reflect.

Seventh spread: Read thoughtfully, pausing to give students a chance to take in the signs of the blossoming friendship, and the emotions of the moment.

Eighth to tenth spreads: Emphasize the sound effects and excitement as you read.

Eleventh to twelfth spreads: Read with a sense of urgency.

Thirteenth spread: After reading, invite students to reflect on how Sami feels to have his bird expertise affirmed.

Fourteenth spread: After reading, pause for any comments on Sami's collection.

Fifteenth and sixteenth spreads: After reading, invite comment and gauge interest. Ask what students think Sami and Moe will do with the items they've made.

Sixteenth spread: Read expressively.

After Reading

Discuss the importance of letting the cardinal go once she had recovered.

Show the instructions for suet treats and roosting pockets and ask if students would be interested in making them. If so, you might recruit some adult volunteers to set up a series of special crafts days. Students could rotate in small groups between making suet treats, roosting pockets, and the clay art described in Activity 3.

Return to the dedication page and re-read it. Do students make the connection between the character Moe and the Maureen in the dedication?

Sami did not seem to want to talk much about his past. Let's find out why. Read *My Beautiful Birds*, also by Suzanne Del Rizzo. Afterward, discuss why Sami may not want to talk about all the things that happened to him before he came to Wishbone Street. Note that he shared a few happy memories with Moe: his pigeons, wild birds he met at a refugee camp, and a special time with his uncle.

Return to the fourth through eighth spreads and help students to identify words and actions that helped Moe and Sami become friends. You might record them on an anchor chart:

Words	Actions	How the other person might feel
	Moe gave a gift of mitts, hot chocolate, and a feather	grateful
	Sami wore the gift Moe gave him	appreciated
	They didn't speak, but played side by side in the park	connected
"Hi, I'm…Moe."		liked
"I am Sami."	Sami gave Moe an acorn	liked
	Sami shared the hot chocolate that Moe had given him	appreciated and grateful
"Wow, Sami! These are amazing!"		proud
"Thank you for the feather."		appreciated
	Sami put Moe's feather in the box with his most special treasures	She knows he really likes it

Discuss how the actions played a bigger part than the words.

Activity 1: Collections as Stories

In this project, students will create collections of personal and family artifacts (or photos of such items), accompanied by stories which tell the significance of each item. This project could be done virtually.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- gather and organize information on significant events, people, and/or places in their lives that contribute or have contributed to the development of their roles, relationships, and identity/sense of self, using primary and/or secondary sources that they have located themselves or that have been provided to them (e.g., photographs, family and other stories, interviews, artifacts)
- analyze and construct simple maps as part of their investigations into places that are significant to them or to their family
- communicate the results of their inquiries, using appropriate vocabulary and formats

You Will Need

- *Birds on Wishbone Street*
- Assignments "My Collection, Part I", "My Collection, Part II", and "My Collection, Part III", one copy per student (reproducible masters included below)
- Display board, index cards or writing paper, colored paper, white paper, scissors, glue, markers

Birds on Wishbone Street

Suzanne Del Rizzo

How To:

1. Turn to the front endpaper of *Birds on Wishbone Street*. Comment on how cool Moe's collection is. Draw attention to the words carved into the edges of her display tray, then invite students to comment on items they find interesting.
2. Explain that collections are important in preserving stories of the past, and that is what museums do. They collect artifacts like Moe did, and they write down the stories about them. They display the stories and the artifacts together, so that people can learn about the past. Tell students that they will create their own collections.
3. Send home the assignment "My Collection, Part I" (included below).
4. If possible, visit a museum with your students. Alternatively, show them some photos, videos or virtual tours from a museum. Examples are available here:
   Virtual Tour | Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (si.edu)
   Museum of the World (britishmuseum.withgoogle.com)
   https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/591d131d17bffc24f111e867/1599601326582-L45QAKATHR9E4EI2M1E6/L1570652.jpg
5. Pose this question: If Moe were going to present her collection like a museum, how would she do it? Elicit the idea that Moe might write the stories that go with her collection on cards or sheets of paper, and display the stories along with her collection. Using a gradual release of responsibility model, demonstrate how Moe might do this. Begin by showing students one or two story cards you have created for Moe's items. E.g. "Bird Leg Band: This was on my dad's pet bird. He brought the bird from Ireland when he was 19, hidden inside a hollowed-out radio."; "Blue Jay Tail Feather: This is my favorite find. I found it in the parkette in 2021." Have a student select another item from Moe's collection to write about collaboratively. You could scribe the students' ideas. Items for which there is information in the book to write a story card include the acorn (gift from Sami), a willow twig (from the roosting pockets) and cardinal feathers (a reminder of saving the bird with her new friend).
6. Create two maps: one showing the parkette and Wishbone Street, and one showing Moe's Dad's journey from Ireland to Toronto.
7. Invite students to imagine that Sami is also making a museum display with his collection. Have them write story cards for one or two items (e.g. the blue jay feather from Moe and the photo of Sami with his uncle). Some students may be able to do this independently; others may need a guided writing session. Guide students in creating two maps for Sami: one of Wishbone Street and one showing his journey from Syria to Toronto.
8. Talk to students about doing research using primary and secondary sources. Tell them it's time to write down the stories to go with the artifacts and pictures they have been collecting. They may know the stories behind many of their keepsakes, but may need to interview a family member or look at old photo albums for others. Send home the assignment "My Collection, Part II".
9. Outside of class time, create a display board (or digital slide show) for Moe to use in her presentation, using the stories and maps that you and the students created. Show the students. Make sure it meets the success criteria you will expect from your students. Draw students' attention to any design elements you feel are important, such as lettering and layout. Mounting each story card on colored paper before mounting them on the display board increases impact. Only use a digital slide show if the students would be able to make their own.
10. Have students practice their display board (or slide show) skills using the stories and maps they created for Sami's collection. Again, choose whether independent or guided instruction is best for each student.
11. Send home the assignment "My Collection, Part III".
12. Have students bring from home their collections, or pictures of the items, the stories they have written for each item, and the maps they have made. Have them create their display boards.
13. You might wish to hold a "History Fair" in which each child explains their collection to an audience. Students could practice one at a time in front of the class, which gives the teacher an opportunity to evaluate.

Activity 2: Global Communities

The positivity with which Del Rizzo presents the idea of multiculturalism makes a great jumping-off point for a study of global communities and could open the door to discussions about combating racism.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify the location of selected countries, cities, and/or towns around the world, and describe how their location and climate are related
- describe similarities and differences between their community and a community in a different region in the world
- identify basic human needs (e.g., food, water, clothing, transportation, shelter), and describe some ways in which people in communities around the world meet these needs

You Will Need

- *Birds on Wishbone Street*
- World map (large wall map or digital map), globe
- A variety of picture books set in different locations around the world (e.g. *Sun Dog* (the arctic) by Deborah Kerbel; *In a Cloud of Dust* (Tanzania), *A Good Trade* (Uganda), and *When the Rain Comes* (Sri Lanka) all by Alma Fullerton; *A Family for Faru* (the African savannah) by Anitha Rao-Robinson; *Adrift at Sea* (Vietnam) by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch and Tuan Ho); *The Library Bus* (Afghanistan) by Bahram Rahman; and *Water's Children* (several locations) by Angèle Delaunois)
- Optional: "Global Communities" worksheet (included below)

How To:

1. Re-read the dedication and author's note. Discuss briefly how the author has taken inspiration from different real people (her father, husband, and sister) and events (*My Beautiful Birds*, in which the fictional character Sami was first introduced, is about refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war that began in 2011). Discuss how the author affirms multiculturalism, both in her note and in the story.
2. Re-read the first two spreads of *Birds on Wishbone Street*. On a world map, find and mark the locations of Toronto and Ireland. Find clues about where Moe's neighbors may have come from and mark the location.
3. Re-read the seventh spread to recall where Sami has come from. Mark Syria on your world map.
4. Help students find the equator on the map. Discuss how proximity to the equator and to large bodies of water affect climate. Learn about the climates in Canada, Ireland, and Syria and compare. Re-read the fourth spread of *Birds on Wishbone Street*. Why are Moe's gifts of a mitt set and hot chocolate appropriate?
5. Help students find the discussed locations on a globe as well.
6. Do research to learn how people meet their basic needs of food, water, clothing, shelter, and transportation in each of the discussed locations. Compare these to your own location. Focus on similarities as well as differences.
7. Read a variety of picture books set in different locations around the world and investigate their climates and how basic needs are met in each location. Some suggestions are given in the "You will need" section. Mark each location on your map.
8. Optional: Use the "Global Communities" worksheet to summarize your findings.
9. Have students do research on one of the marked locations to learn how people meet their basic needs of food, water, clothing, shelter, and transportation and compare these to your own location. Their research could include interviewing someone who came from the location, or having guests from some locations give talks in your classroom.

Activity 3: Clay Art

In this activity, students will study Suzanne Del Rizzo's art as inspiration for creating their own clay art.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify and describe visual art forms they see at school (e.g. illustrations in picture books)
- identify some conventions and techniques used in media (e.g. camera close-ups to show details, medium and long shots to put people and objects in perspective, high and low camera angles to create illusions of size or artistic effects)
- create two- and three-dimensional works of art inspired by activities in their community or observations of nature
- use elements of design in art works (e.g. texture)

You Will Need

- *Birds on Wishbone Street*
- Other books by Suzanne Del Rizzo, such as *Skink on the Brink*, *My Beautiful Birds*, and *Sun Dog*.
- Modeling clay appropriate to your students: play dough for the very young, plasticine for grades one and up, polymer clay for grades three and up if you have the budget for it.
- Cardboard to use as a base for clay pictures. Cereal box cardboard will work well and can be painted.
- Sculpting tools such as toy rolling pins, craft sticks, plastic cutlery, and wooden toothpicks.

How To:

1. Leaf through the book slowly with your students, inviting them to look closely at the illustrations and think about how Suzanne Del Rizzo may have created them. The last sentence on the back book jacket gives some insight.
2. Read some of Del Rizzo's other books, listed above in the "You Will Need" section. Study the illustrations.
3. View the author's website at https://suzannedelrizzo.com to study more of her artwork.
4. Focus on particular illustrations to teach clay art techniques. Bringing the real items into the classroom will make the ideas even more concrete for students. For example:
   - Cannoli (third spread) – rolling a snake shape
   - Pine needles (front endpaper) – rolling a very thin snake shape
   - Suet (sixteenth spread) – pressing the clay flat using rolling pin or hands, then cutting out shapes with plastic cutlery
   - Leaves and feathers (front endpaper and other pages) – adding texture to a cut-out shape using a wooden toothpick or found items
   - Radio (second spread) – adding details by laying down shapes of contrasting color on top of another cut-out shape
5. Take students outside with digital cameras or tablets. Invite them to find and photograph scenes that appeal to them, both wide-angle and close-up shots, as well as some overhead shots of items they see on the ground. To demonstrate, you could take a picture of a building (wide angle), an insect (close-up) and a leaf on the grass (overhead). Back in the classroom, students can choose one photo to print out and use as a guide for their clay art.
6. Provide cardboard bases, age-appropriate modeling clay, and plastic and wooden tools. Invite students to make clay pictures inspired by their chosen photograph. When finished, students may wish to embellish their work with found items.
7. Students will probably not create a clay sky and ground as Del Rizzo did, so they could paint their backgrounds using tempera paints, either before or after they have made their clay pictures.
8. Photograph students' work from above, print it out on high-quality paper and display the photos in the hallway and/or on your classroom's web page.

Activity 4: Birds and Us through the Seasons

This activity is perfect at the time of year when fall is beginning to transition into winter, and can be revisited in early spring and early summer.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- describe changes in the appearance or behavior of living things that are adaptations to seasonal changes
- assess ways in which daily and seasonal changes have an impact on society and the environment (e.g. In winter, it is harder for birds that do not migrate to find food)
- assess the impact of daily and seasonal changes on human outdoor activities
- describe how humans prepare for and/or respond to daily and seasonal changes (e.g., by wearing appropriate clothing)

You Will Need

- *Birds on Wishbone Street*
- Chart paper and markers
- Materials for roosting pockets and suet feeders as listed at the back of *Birds on Wishbone Street*
- Picture books that show other seasonal changes, such as *Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring* by Kenard Pak, and *Outside, You Notice* by Erin Alladin

How To:

1. Open *Birds on Wishbone Street* to the first spread. Ask, "What season was it the day Sami moved onto Wishbone Street? How can you tell?"
2. Turn to the fifth spread. Ask, "What is changing?" (Note the warmer clothing on the children as well as the snowflakes)
3. Turn to the eighth spread and discuss the changes. The tenth spread depicts the next morning. What has happened overnight besides more snow falling? ("fresh snowbanks" indicates that the snowplough has gone by)
4. Make a chart like the one below and have students help you fill it in by studying each page in turn and recording phenomena/behaviors depicted in either the words or the illustrations.

Season	Weather/Light	People	Other Living Things
Fall	-cool	-wear sweatshirts -ride bikes -climb trees -wear shoes outside -need coats, mitts, hats on colder days -go inside if it's too cold -drink hot chocolate	-leaves turn yellow, orange, and red -leaves fall on the ground -some birds, like cardinals, blue jays, chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers, stay all winter
Winter	-cold -snow falls	-make snowballs, snow sculptures, snow angels -wear boots and snowsuits outside -build snow forts -snowplows clear the roads -give birds food and shelter	-birds that don't migrate have trouble finding food
Spring			
Summer			

5. Do an inquiry to learn how daylight hours change with the seasons and add your findings to the Weather/Light column. Also add students' further observations and research about how people and other living things behave/adapt in each season. You might address just fall and winter at first, then later in the school year, use first-hand observations to record what happens in spring and summer.
6. Observe the presence or absence of birds outside your classroom window.
7. Make roosting pockets and suet treats following the instructions at the back of the book. Make or acquire seed feeders as well. You could combine these crafts with the clay art in Activity 3, using a rotation of small groups or "electives" format.
8. Place feeders and roosting pockets in trees, visible from the window if possible, and observe any changes in the bird traffic.
9. Use other picture books to prepare to observe the changes that will usher in spring and summer (e.g. Read *Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring* by Kenard Pak at the end of winter, and *Outside You Notice* by Erin Alladin at the end of spring)

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My Collection: Part I

In class, we have been looking at collections as a way of preserving the story of a person and their family.

Each student is asked to collect between 5 and 20 meaningful items. Ideally, collections will be a mix of:

- items or photos saved by the children themselves, as memories of their own experiences;
- mementos of their early childhood, saved by caregivers; and
- items or photos of family importance, including from before the child's birth.

Photographs can be used for items that are too large, fragile, or valuable to bring to school.

Part II of the assignment will be sent home once the necessary in-class instruction has been given. Students are encouraged to start collecting their items in the meantime. Keep them at home for now.

Every student's collection will be unique, but here are some possible items you might think about:

- nature items collected on a walk
- photo of a special experience
- very special toy
- tooth or lock of hair
- ticket stub
- baby handprint or footprint
- memento from baptism
- memento of a pet
- piece of jewelry
- baby's first shoes
- hospital bracelet
- artifact from place of origin
- military item
- cultural items
- photos of ancestors
- newspaper clipping
- antique object with a family connection
- coins or stamps
- letters or postcards

Have fun collecting!

My Collection: Part II

Please complete one of these story cards for each item in your collection.

What is it?	
How and when did it first come into your collection or your family?	
Who first owned it?	
Why is it important?	
Additional Details	

What is it?	
How and when did it first come into your collection or your family?	
Who first owned it?	
Why is it important?	
Additional Details	

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What is it?	
How and when did it first come into your collection or your family?	
Who first owned it?	
Why is it important?	
Additional Details	

My Collection – Part III

We have been learning map-making skills in class. Together with a caregiver, each student is asked to create 2 maps related to their collection:

1. A map of the local area where the student collected one or more items for their collection, such as nature items.

   Examples:

   - a map of your backyard where you found a twig
   - a map of your community, where you found a pebble on a walk
   - a map of a local park where a photo of you was taken

2. A map showing a larger area, such as the country or the world, showing the route by which one or more items has been carried.

   Examples:

   - a map of indigenous territory or treaty area that relates to items in your collection
   - a map showing the route a relative took for military service, to go with a photo of that person in uniform
   - a map showing the route a family took when immigrating, to go with an object from their country of origin
   - a map showing the route to a vacation destination where objects or photos were gathered

Make sure your maps include:

- ☐ title
- ☐ labels
- ☐ north arrow or compass rose
- ☐ water lightly colored blue, land lightly colored a different color
- ☐ legend (optional)

Name: _____

Global Communities

On the chart, write the names of different locations. Record the latitude (distance from the equator) and one way the latitude affects the lifestyle of people who live there.

Location	Distance from Equator in Degrees (Latitude)	How Latitude Affects Lifestyle