



# Educator's Guide

## The Giant King

by Kathleen T. Pelley

Illustrated by Maurie J. Manning

Grades K - 4

Published by Child and Family Press

**The Giant King** is an ideal choice for story hour for children in kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However its underlying themes of belonging, kindness and peacemaking can also be tied into many aspects of the curriculum: social studies, reading, writing, art, research activities, and drama. Teachers can choose one or several areas to focus on depending on their students' grade level and interest.

### Story Summary

People say that Rabbie, the carpenter's son, is a dreamer, but the boy says he works from his heart, carving, "not what is, but what can be." When Rabbie goes to sell his carvings in a far-off town, he finds the people besieged by a fierce and destructive giant. The townspeople despair, but Rabbie suggests that if the giant were treated like a king, then he might behave like one.

### About the Author

Kathleen Pelley grew up in Glasgow, Scotland, but owes her passion for stories to her gentle, Irish father, who loved to feed her tales of fairies, leprechauns, and banshees. A former teacher, Kathleen moved to the United States in 1990. As well as writing stories, Kathleen worked for several years recording books on tape for the blind at the Colorado Talking Books Library. She has published: a children's play, stories in *Hopscotch* and *Cricket* magazines, and the picture books **Inventor McGregor**, **Magnus Maximus**, **A Marvelous Measurer**, and **Raj, the Bookstore Tiger**. She lives in Greenwood Village, Colorado. Explore more at [www.KathleenTPelley.com](http://www.KathleenTPelley.com).

### About the Illustrator

Maurie J. Manning's first illustrations appeared on the endpages of the books in her parents' library almost 40 years ago. Since then, she has learned that drawing in other people's books is not allowed, and that it is better to make your own books. She is the author and illustrator of *The Aunts Go Marching* (Boyd's Mills Press). She lives far from Scotland in southern California with her two children and a lot of pets, but you can visit her online at [www.MaurieJManning.com](http://www.MaurieJManning.com).

## Vocabulary

Rabbie – A popular Scottish boy’s name, short for Robert.

Whittle

Chisel

Commotion

Blood-curdling

Bairns

Lass

Treachery

Slay

Cast down

## Critical Thinking

After an initial reading of the story, ask:

### 1. Names

- Who remembers the Giant’s name?

It is mentioned only once – why do you think the author did that?

- Discuss how the giant stands for all those people who are “nameless” in our world and who often do not belong, e.g. the poor, the sick, the old, the homeless, the stranger, the foreigner.

- What is one of the first things parents do when their child is born? (choose a name)

- What is the first thing you do when you bring home a new pet?

(choose a name) Naming is the first act of loving someone. Discuss how it is harder to ignore someone once we know his or her name.

### 2. Belonging

- Why did the giant feel as if he did not belong?

- Have you ever felt as if you did not belong? Discuss.

- How do you act when you feel as if you don’t belong?

- There are all kinds of reasons that someone may feel as if she does not belong.

Like the giant, a person may feel too big, or perhaps too small, or too poor. What other reasons make people feel different?

- How can you make others feel as if they belong – in the classroom, school, neighborhood, home? Discuss.

### 3. Bullying

- In what ways did the giant act like a bully?

- What do you think made him act like that?

- Discuss why bullies act the way they do.

- How could you treat a bully like a king? Discuss.
- Look up the word prejudice in the dictionary. Discuss its meaning. Do you ever pre-judge someone? Discuss.

#### **4. Showing Understanding and Kindness**

*“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”*

Aesop.

*“There is nothing so strong as gentleness, and nothing so gentle as real strength,”*

Francis de Sales

- How was Rabbie strong?
- How was Rabbie gentle?
- How is it hard to be kind to someone who is mean? Discuss.
- Divide the class into groups and have each group find newspaper articles that show people being kind and how their actions changed the lives of other people. Discuss their findings.
- Read and discuss *Aesop’s Lion and Mouse*
- What movies have you seen that have the theme of kindness and understanding?

#### **Peacemakers**

- Rabbie’s father said, “The lad’s a bit of a dreamer.” What did he mean?
- What dreams do you have?
- Divide the class into three groups. Have each group research one of the following “dreamers”

Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Gandhi.

- Discuss their dreams for the world – what difficulties they faced and how they overcame those difficulties.
- “Be the peace you want to see in the world,” Gandhi – discuss.
- How can you change someone by what YOU do?
- For more stories, songs and activities on this theme, look at this website:  
[www.tlpeace.org.au](http://www.tlpeace.org.au).
- List three ways you can be “peacemakers” at home, in the class, at school, in your neighborhood.

#### **Finding the King in Everyone**

- Rabbie believed that if you treat someone like a king, then he will act like one. Do you agree? Discuss.
- Who was Michelangelo?
- What did he carve with?
- When people asked him how he made such fine figures from marble, he told them, “I only discovered what was hiding there.”
- What did Rabbie say when he was asked how he made such fine carvings?
- Discuss what he meant.

- What did he mean when he said that I see with my heart, and so I carve what might be, what can be?”
- Do you think artists “see” the world differently? What about musicians?
- Is there a king hiding inside each of us?

## Reading

- List story elements: character, setting, problem solution
- Comprehension Strategy Questions:

### Schema

- That reminds me of.....
- This makes me think of....
- I read another book that .....

### Visualize

- I can picture...
- I can see the....
- I can visualize....

### Questioning

- What is the message of this piece?
- What do I think I will learn from this text?
- What predictions do I have about this reading?

### Infer

- I wonder why...
- I wonder how....
- I wonder if.....

### Determine Importance

- The big idea is....
- So far I've learned....
- This idea is similar to...

### Synthesize

- Compare and contrast this story with others with the same theme
- Think of new ways to use this information
- Can connections I make across this text help me to create new perspectives?

## Writing

- Pretend that you are the giant living in his cave on Ben Cullin. Now write a postcard to your mother and describe how it feels to be an outsider. Describe how you feel about the people in the town. Describe how you feel about your size. On the outside of your postcard, draw a picture of your cave and its surroundings. Design your own stamp and draw it in the top right hand corner.
- Have students exchange postcards. Now pretend that you are the giant's mother and write him a postcard in reply. What will you say to comfort and cheer him?
- Pretend you are the giant after he has been made the king. Now write another postcard to your mother. Describe how it feels to belong. Describe how it feels to be king. Describe how you feel about the people in the town. Describe how you feel about being a giant now. Draw a picture of your castle on the outside of your card and design another stamp.
- Write a newspaper report about what happened when Rabbie led the giant and the people to the King's castle. Make sure to read some actual newspaper reports before you begin. Choose an exciting headline. Include interviews with eyewitnesses. Be sure to answer the following: What happened? When? Where? Who? How?
- Diary entry. Pretend you are the little girl who gave her coat to the giant. Write an entry in your diary for that day. Describe why you did what you did. Describe how you felt when everyone took of their coats to help. Now exchange diary entries with someone else in the class. Draw a picture of what you read.

## Role Playing

- Divide the class into pairs. Each student will choose to be either a television interviewer or a character from the story (not the giant). Now have the interviewer prepare a list of questions for the character, rehearse, and then perform for the class. The purpose of the interview is to explore how this character feels about the new giant king. Have the students consider the following:
  - Will everyone in the town be equally happy with the giant king?
  - Will anyone be afraid of him? Why?
  - Will having a giant as a king offer some advantages over having a normal size king?
  - What qualities does a good king have?

## Art

- Use purple paper to make kindness crowns. Decorate with words/drawings/pictures cutout from magazines to show how you could be kind to someone at school or in your neighborhood who feels sad or lonely or left out. For example, you could draw musical notes to show a song, you could draw flowers or make up a blessing and write it around the crown in decorative lettering – May the sun shine on you today.
- Use purple paper to make a kindness crown for the world. Make it big enough to fit around a globe of the world.. Now decorate it with drawings, words, or cutout pictures from magazines to show how acts of kindness might help the world – e.g. picking up trash, caring for wildlife, listening to others.
- Make a kindness cape. Using scraps of cloth or paper, cut out pieces in the shape of a coat or a shawl. Now in the center of each, draw or write an act of kindness, join them all together to make a cape like the one the people placed over the giant before taking him to the king’s castle. You can display it on a door or a classroom wall.
- Use modeling clay to “carve” your own figure of the Giant King.
- In groups do a research paper on Michelangelo. Come together and discuss your findings.

## Drama

- Working in groups, act out the scene where the giant storms into the market place. Pupils can add their own dialogue and write out a script before they begin.
- Now act out the scene where the giant is treated like a king. (Students should take turns being the giant or one of the townspeople.)
- Conduct television style interviews with those students who played the role of the giant asking him questions that tell us how he felt when he was treated like an animal, and then what he felt to be treated like a king.
- Now conduct interviews with those who played the role of the townspeople, asking questions that tell us how they felt when they were treating the giant like an animal, and then a king.
- Discuss.

## Social Studies

- Locate Scotland on the map.
- What group of countries does it belong to?
  - What famous musical instrument comes from there?
  - What is the Scottish flag?
  - Who is the patron saint of Scotland?
  - What food is it famous for?
  - What famous monster lives there?
  - What is the capital city of Scotland?
  - What is the national dress of Scotland?
  - What is the national anthem?
  - What were these famous Scotsmen famous for?

J.M Barrie, Robbie Burns, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Andrew Carnegie,  
Alexander Graham Bell, William Wallace.

## Scots Dialect

Discuss the difference between accents and dialects. U.K. English is a little different from U.S. English. Many words that you use here in the U.S. have a different meaning there. The following is a list of U.S. words and their British equivalent. Mix them up and instruct your students to pair them correctly.

U.S. U.K.

- candy sweets or sweeties
- cookie biscuits
- plaid tartan
- lake loch
- highway motorway
- barrette clasp
- truck lorry
- sucker lollipop
- gasoline petrol
- Trunk boot
- hood bonnet
- pants trousers
- chips crisps
- French fries chips
- trash rubbish
- biscuit scone
- child bairn (Scots only)
- girl lass (Scots only)
- mountain ben