

Midnight Teacher:

Lilly Ann Granderson and her Secret School

Author:
Janet Halfmann

Illustrator:
London Ladd



Awards

Carter G. Woodson Book Award, Honor, 2019
ILA Teachers' Choice Reading List, Selection, 2019
Skipping Stones Honor Awards, Multicultural and International Honor, 2018

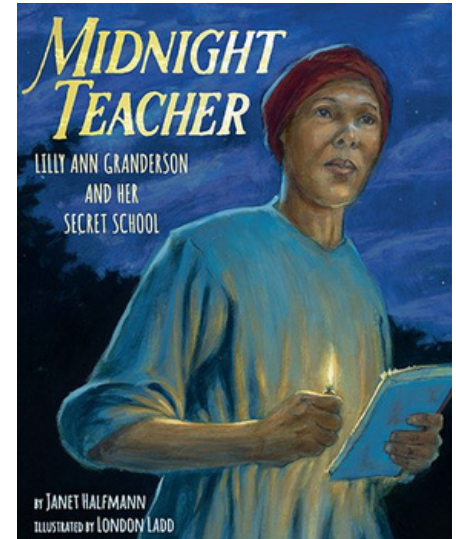
Vocabulary

secretly, sacrifice, dedication

Reviews

[Kirkus Reviews](#)

[Publishers Weekly](#)



Summary

This inspiring historical biography tells the story of Lilly Ann Granderson, who held a secret midnight school to teach enslaved people to read.

FAIR Standard

DV.3-5.7 I can discuss Americans who suffered from the effects of racism and intolerance but contributed to society anyway through their strengths of character and community.

Discussion

1. Lilly Ann's students went to her school in the middle of the night, being careful not to leave tracks or get caught. Why did Lilly Ann take the risk? Why did her students take the risk?
2. Lilly Ann changed her students' lives by giving them the gift of education. Who has given you a gift of education? It can be anyone, not just a school teacher.
3. As Lilly Ann became better at reading and writing, she wanted to share her knowledge with others. How did Lilly Ann feel when her students were able to learn something new? Have you ever taught someone something new?

Discussion

4. Union Army Chaplain Joseph Warren called Lilly Ann “a remarkable woman” who “taught many to read, at the risk of her life.” How else would you describe Lilly Ann?
 5. When Lilly Ann was very young, other children gave her an old blue speller that started a lifelong path of learning. Is there a book that you love or have learned a lot from?
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Activities

1. Lilly Ann had to be creative when teaching her students how to read letters. She used twigs and traced letters on the ground. Later, she and her students used sticks dipped in homemade ink and wrote their names on slates smoothed from pine. Create your name using twigs, rocks, or other items you find outside in nature.

Challenge option: Make your own ink with one of these recipes using raspberries, coffee, or tea. You could even invent your own recipe. Look outdoors for something to write on, like a flat stone or some bark, and write a message with your ink.



2. Lilly Ann Granderson’s blue-back speller gave her the keys to learning to read and write. [Create your own blue-back speller](#) using any materials you’d like, such as paper, cardboard, or felt. Inside of your speller, use the pages to create your own thematic ABC book. Some ideas for themes include animals, food, inspiring words, places, etc.