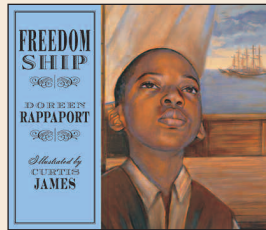


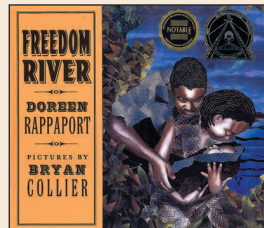
This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and author of *Reaching for Sun* (Bloomsbury). Visit her Web site at tracievaughnzimmer.com to find many other guides to children's literature.



FREEDOM SHIP

By Doreen Rappaport
Illustrated by Curtis James
Tr. ed. 0-7868-0645-1
\$15.99

RECOMMENDED READING



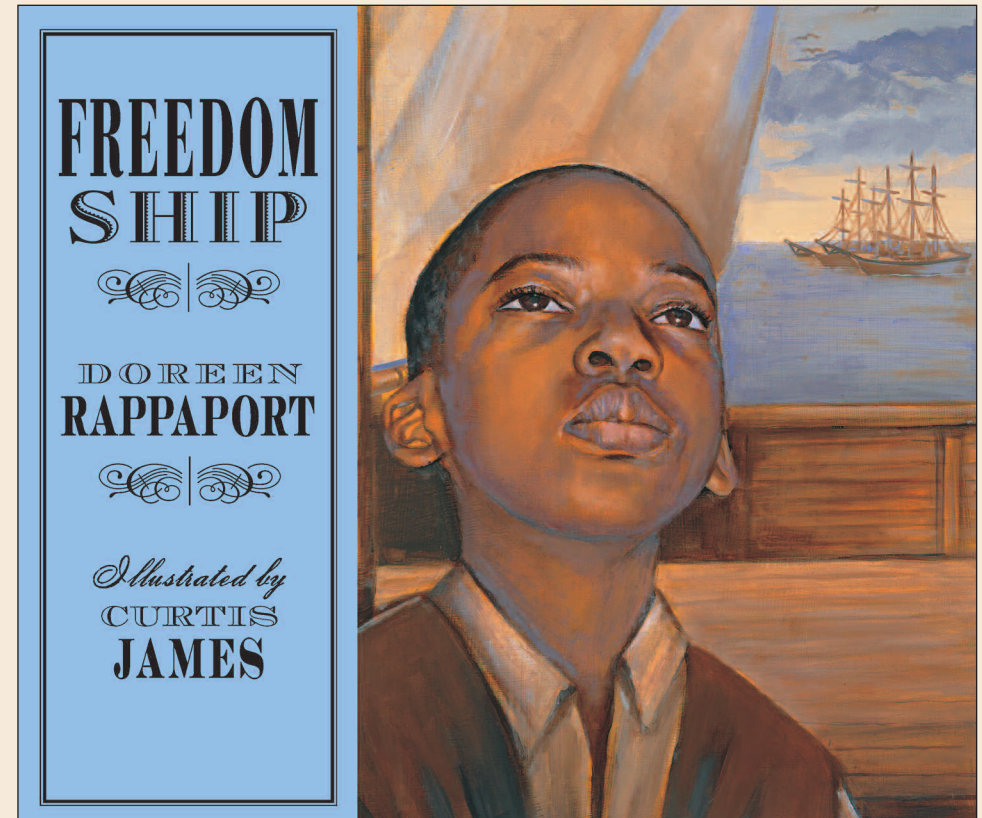
FREEDOM RIVER

By Doreen Rappaport
Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Tr. ed. 0-7868-0350-9
\$14.99



JUMP AT THE SUN

An Imprint of Hyperion Books for Children
114 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011-5690
Visit us at www.jumpatthesun.com



DISCUSSION GUIDE

JUMP AT THE SUN

ABOUT THE BOOK

During the Civil War, young Samuel and his father are slaves on a Confederate steamship out of Charleston, South Carolina. Beyond the harbor filled with Confederate ships, they see Union ships in the Atlantic Ocean, where freedom lies. On May 13, 1862, Samuel's family and the other enslaved Africans on the ship attempt a daring escape, risking their lives to be free.

Based on a true incident, Doreen Rappaport's riveting story lets young readers experience the courage and determination of enslaved Africans. Curtis James's stunning illustrations further illuminate this gripping, suspenseful adventure.

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide includes discussion questions intended to provoke insight into the themes of the book, which include freedom, family, risk, and hope.

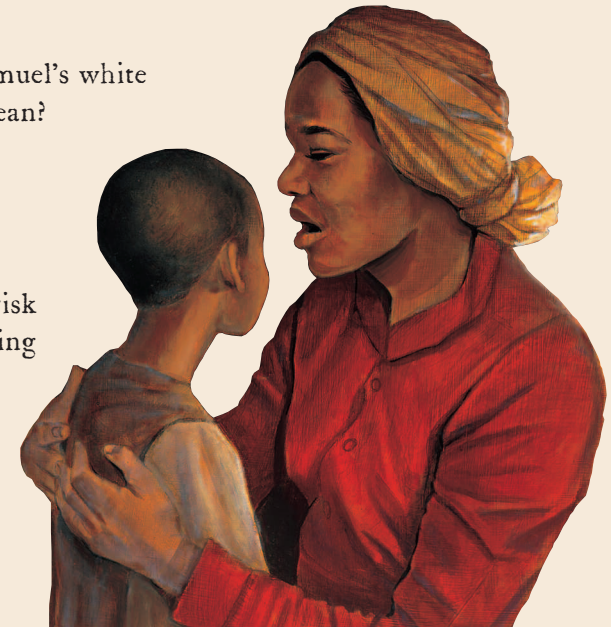
PRE-READING

What is the meaning of the title?

Is the book set in our current time or long ago? What clues do the author and illustrator give to tell us what the time period is?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1 What does it mean to be a slave? When did America support slavery?
- 2 Who is telling the story? Where did he learn it?
- 3 What is the Union? Who are the Confederates? What war are they fighting?
- 4 Why would Samuel be free if he could only get to a Union ship?
- 5 Why does Samuel's mother tell him to do everything quietly? What could happen if he disobeyed?
- 6 How do they get past the other ships and the islands that are guarded? What is the plan if they get caught? Why are they willing to do that?
- 7 Why does Robert Smalls put on the captain's clothing? Does it work?
- 8 What do they do with Samuel's white bedsheet? What does it mean?
- 9 What do they give to the Union Army? Why?
- 10 Would you be willing to risk everything for such a daring escape? Why or why not?



PROJECTS

LANGUAGE ARTS

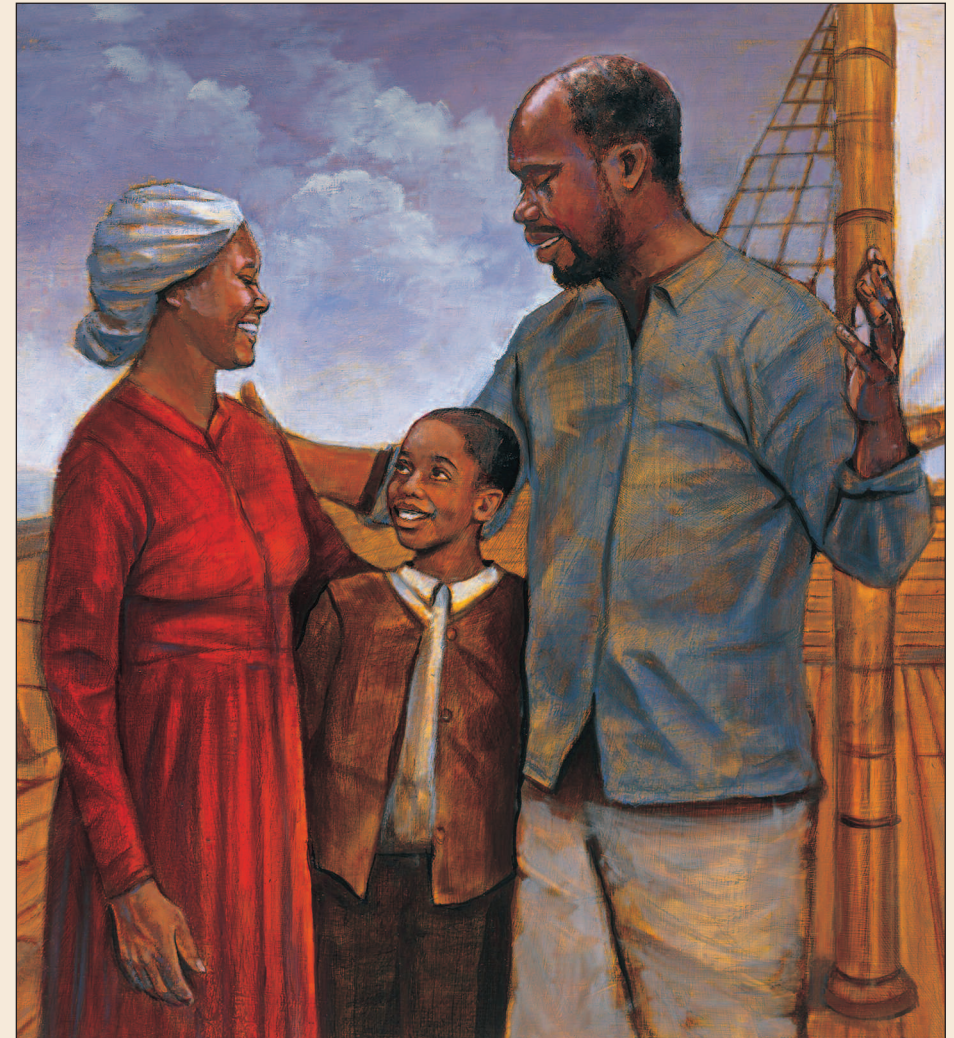
Write a scene between the escaping women and children hidden in the dark cabin below deck. What might they be whispering to each other? What hopes do they have for their new lives?

SOCIAL STUDIES / GEOGRAPHY

Color a United States map from the 1860's. Color the Union states blue and the Confederate states red. Place an X where this story takes place.

ART

The color of freedom: Create two pieces of art, a drawing or painting that uses colors and shapes to represent slavery, and a second piece that uses colors and shapes to represent freedom. Explain your choices in a brief artist's statement.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

1 How did you learn about this remarkable story?

I am always reading and looking for great stories about “not-yet-celebrated” Americans. All my friends know this about me. One of them came across an article about Robert Smalls, who piloted the steamer over to the Union side. She sent me the article and I started digging.



2 What types of historical documents do you research when you're writing a story like this one?

I try to find first-person accounts of an event. I wasn't successful in finding any for this book. So I dug into newspapers, then I found out that a historian had written a book about Smalls and his life. This incident was in it, of course. The chapter on it had footnotes, which led me to other sources.

3 What advice do you have for young writers?

You have to read. Read, read, read! You have to see how other writers handle material. How they shape a memoir, historical fiction, a biography, fantasy. You read them not to copy them but to see their techniques, their choices, what they leave in and what they leave out, how they shape a point of view.

You have to write every day. Even for twenty minutes. You can get a lot down in twenty minutes if you do it every day. And you must have the courage to reread what you have written and to revise it. Revise, revise, revise! That's the key.

ILLUSTRATOR INTERVIEW

1 How did you approach this project?

Before I begin any assignment I pray and ask God for inspiration. For this particular project I outlined my plans with the art director and editor, giving them the specific outline on how I would approach each illustration and how it would fit on each page. After the committee and I agree with the idea for each illustration, I begin.



2 What kind of research did you undertake for creating the illustrations for *Freedom Ship*?

For *Freedom Ship* I researched the United States Navy Web site for ships during that period, as well as several other Web site's for uniforms, events, and monuments mentioned in the story. I also watched a PBS special titled *Slavery and the Making of America*.

3 What medium did you use for the illustrations in *Freedom Ship*?

I'm primarily known as a pastel artist, but for this project I decided to use oil paint on gesso* panels. I started with a detailed pencil drawing. Once the sketch was approved, I started with the oil paint, starting from light to dark.

4 Do you have any advice for aspiring young illustrators?

My words of advice to an aspiring illustrator would be to look at the masters. I myself looked at Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, and Norman Rockwell, as well as others. I would tell them not to take criticism to heart but to open their minds. To experience the text and learn from each body of work.

*Gesso: A prepared surface of plaster or plaster-like material for painting.