

# Catherine, Called Birdy

by Karen Cushman

## A Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant



A 1995 Newbery Honor Book

# ***A Teaching Guide***

by Margaret Whisnant

with  
***Objective Tests***  
and  
***Answer Keys***

for

## ***Catherine, Called Birdy***

By Karen Cushman

**A 1995 Newbery Honor Book**

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# CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

By Karen Cushman

**September**

Pages 1-12

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Catherine had to endure the presence of biting fleas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Most of the time, Catherine's father was kind and loving toward her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In order to be excused from the task of spinning, Catherine agreed to write a diary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Catherine's mother wanted her to write as a way to please her brother Edward, who was planning to be a monk.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Edward hoped writing about her life would help Catherine appreciate her parents and all the advantages she had.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. This story took place in England in 1290.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Catherine adored her nurse Morwenna.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Catherine's parents were rich people whose ancestors were English kings and queens.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Instead of being forced to stay inside and tend to her sewing, Catherine longed to be outside the hall with the villagers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Catherine was almost fourteen years old.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Catherine's father wanted her to marry a rich man to ensure that she would live in luxury the rest of her life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Catherine thought of herself as sweet-tempered and beautiful.

# CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

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**October (Part I)**

Pages 13-28

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. One of Catherine's tasks as a lady was (A) visiting the sick, (B) making medicines, (C) feeding the pigs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Jews who stayed in the hall were leaving England because (A) they had relatives in France, (B) they had lost all their money, (C) the king had ordered it.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. While the Jews were in the hall, the cook and kitchen boys (A) fled to the barn, (B) cooked special food, (C) made them feel welcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Catherine hid in the shadows of the hall in order to (A) see what the Jews did, (B) stay away from her father, (C) avoid having to work in the kitchen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The old Jewish woman told a story about a stupid man who (A) couldn't find his way home, (B) lost his children, (C) didn't know where he was.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Catherine was able to leave the hall with the Jews by (A) hiding in one of their wagons, (B) dressing like a boy, (C) walking between two of them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The old woman told Catherine she should be (A) like her brother, (B) herself, (C) more careful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. At the fair, Catherine saw a puppet show about (A) Moses, (B) Abraham, (C) Noah.

# CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

By Karen Cushman  
November  
Pages 43-58



Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Did Catherine like her bother Robert?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Did Catherine join the village children as they went from cottage to cottage on November 2 and begged for soul cakes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Was it really true that the man Catherine lived with was not actually her father?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Did Father Huw come to Catherine's mother seeking medicine for his boils and blotches?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Was Catherine pleased with the relationship that developed between George and Aelis?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Did Father Huw believe the coming storm was the work of the Devil?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Did some of the villagers take shelter in the hall after the storm flooded their homes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Did Catherine approve of the way her father and other guests drank ale to celebrate every occasion?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Did George and Aelis want to marry?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Was it Catherine's plan to find a spell that would transform the love between George and Aelis into hate?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Was it a pleasant experience for Catherine when the privy was cleaned out?

# CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY

By Karen Cushman

## *Whole Book Test*

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. This story took place in the year (A) 1290, (B) 1390, (C) 1490.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Catherine lived in (A) France, (B) Germany, (C) England.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. How old was Catherine? (A) fifteen, (B) twelve and a half, (C) almost fourteen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Catherine wrote the diary to please (A) her father, (B) her brother Edward, (C) her mother.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What pest did Catherine have to deal with? (A) roaches, (B) fleas, (C) rats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. In her chamber, Catherine kept pet (A) birds, (B) rabbits, (C) cats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Morwenna was Catherine's (A) aunt, (B) nurse, (C) sister.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How did Catherine feel about sewing and embroidery? (A) She liked needlework. (B) She hated it. (C) It was a welcome break from the boredom of her life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What drove Catherine's father to find a husband for her? (A) his greed, (B) a desire to see her taken care of, (C) the family's need for more money.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Catherine's friend from the village was (A) old Nan, (B) Edward the miller, (C) Perkin the goat boy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Catherine's father was (A) a knight, (B) a duke, (C) an earl.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. One of Catherine's duties was to learn (A) herbal cures, (B) French and Latin, (C) the family recipes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Catherine's brother Edward left home to (A) fight in the crusades, (B) be a monk, (C) be a cloth merchant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Uncle George had been away on (A) a merchant ship, (B) an exploration of new territory, (C) a crusade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. When Uncle George and Aelis fell in love, Catherine was (A) pleased, (B) jealous, (C) worried about what her father would do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Catherine thought she had destroyed the romance between Aelis and Uncle George because she (A) reported them to Aelis' father, (B) wouldn't leave them alone, (C) put a curse on them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The Jews who stayed in the hall left England because (A) the king ordered it, (B) they were criminals, (C) their relatives had sent for them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Catherine often wished that she was (A) older, (B) a villager, (C) much taller.

# About Your Teaching Guide

The primary goal in creating the teaching packs for children's novels is to provide a **classroom-ready**, non-threatening method for checking student comprehension and stretching thinking skills. **When used as a basic guide for teaching a novel, the materials offer many and varied opportunities for learning.**

Use your teaching pack as a guide and lead your students into discovering new ideas about . . . .

## THE PLOT

Each test page is actually an outline of the plot. In your teaching pack, the chain of related events that tell the story has been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of questions. Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot; and consequently **comprehend** the story. This "plot rhythm" is the basic structure of the tests.

To further your students' understanding of plot, try the following activities:

**Summarizing the Story:** Using only the chapter questions as a guide, have your students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven. For twenty questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

**Reporting the News:** Have students write a newspaper article, based on the events from a set of questions, and add the *who, what, when, where, why* format. Some needed information may be located in previous chapters.

**Twisting the Plot:** Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, or a different answer—and explain how changing a single (or several) events would change the story.

To further illustrate the rhythm of a good story, try changing the answers to one complete set of questions. Your students will see how difficult, if not impossible, it is to tell a sensible story from a tangled set of events.

## THE CHARACTERS

Questions that illustrate character motivation and personality are purposely included. Too often, when they are asked to tell what kind of person a story character is, the only answer many of our students can muster is "nice."

In your efforts to remove "nice" from your students' literary vocabulary, try this idea:

**Character Charts:** Display individual charts for the main characters. As the chapters are read, record **facts, behaviors, or events** that relate to the each character. Then connect the items with several appropriate words such as **empathetic, brave, calloused, bold, untrustworthy**, etc. The teacher can take the lead by contributing the first few words and then assigning the task of identifying more terms to students. Record the word collections on the charts with the story facts.

This information is a valuable student resource when displayed in the room for all to see and use during a writing assignment. In creating and using character charts, students will soon begin writing more fluently and insightfully about story personalities.

Use the charts to encourage your students to try some "predicting" or "detective" writing about what the character(s) might do next or what might have happened after the story ended. Let the charts help your students recognize **CHARACTER CHANGE (dynamics)**.

Another fun activity with the charts is to match a book personality with a zodiac sign. Students must justify their reason for thinking a character is a particular sign by citing his/her behaviors, words, reactions to situations, etc. that prove the match.

## READING BETWEEN THE LINES

(Implied Meaning)

Because the primary goal for the objective questions is **basic comprehension**, items requiring a student to **interpret** an event or a character's behavior are not included. Always included, however, are questions that *establish the existence of a story component carrying an implied meaning.*

## **MAKING PREDICTIONS**

(Recognizing Story Clues)

Authors subtly place clues in the story line giving the reader hints as to what is about to happen. Like the implied meaning, these clues are brought to the reader's attention in the form of a question. Once a student learns to spot the gems, his/her ability to comprehend and enjoy a story tends to leap forward.

Use "thinking-out-loud" class discussions to list all the possible meanings of the clue questions. Have your student write their individual predictions (no sharing or telling), store the papers until the novel is finished, and then retrieve them for reading. Sometimes, a wrong prediction makes a story as good as the original.

## **OTHER FUCTIONS**

The objective test pages are excellent discussion guides for both whole groups and small groups. They work well as homework reading guides and as conferencing tools. They are also useful management tools for teachers who wish to use multiple titles in one classroom.

## **IMPROVING/DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS**

Rather than always requiring your students to answer test questions on a printed page, surprise them (and save paper!!) by occasionally doing the test orally.

Try this technique:

### **Student Rules for an Oral Test:**

The teacher will read each question *two times*. No comments or questions that interrupt this initial phase of the test are allowed.

When all questions have been read, individual students may ask for repeats of any question he/she wishes to hear again.

No interruptions/comments during the re-reading part of the test.

### **Teacher Rules for an Oral Test:**

The teacher will read each question *two times*. Except to remind students that a re-reading phase will following after the last question, he/she will not respond to comment/question during this period.

The teacher will repeat **any** and **all** questions (even if it results in reading the same question multiple times).

(The second teacher rule is a *vital* part of the exercise. Asking for multiple repeats of a question does not mean students aren't paying attention. It does indicate their desire to *understand* and *answer* the question correctly.)

As students become more comfortable and experienced with oral test-taking, the number of requests for repeated questions will diminish. An added bonus to this technique is that skills learned in these testing periods tend to translate into other situations where teacher-talking and student-listening are required components of learning.

## **Final Note**

The Novel Teaching Packs are designed for use as supplementary material that supports a total reading program. It is my goal to provide busy teachers with a classroom-ready, practical resource loaded with motivational and learning opportunities for their students. It is my hope that your purchase will prove to be a hard-working instructional component for years to come. Thanks for choosing one of my products for your classroom.



Margaret Whisnant, Author