DEEP DARK: A BEDTIME TALE
Educator's materials

Deep Dark as a Biblical parable

Fear is the fence we stand at, with the world on the other side. This is the theme of DEEP DARK: A BEDTIME TALE.

> "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"
>
> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Genesis 3:8-10

From the first disobedient bite, Paradise ended for Adam and Eve. They had walked without fear in God's very presence, but with knowledge came awareness of how separate from God they had become.

Children go through a similar transition. We've watched young children walk fearlessly in the dark that just months later terrifies them. Like the first family, they've gained new fears along with knowledge. There's no going back. We can set our fears aside, but they are never really forgotten. I regret reading all of those Stephen King books when I'm in the dark.

Fear is one of the most powerful forces. It shapes our decisions, what we choose to do or to avoid. We try to move the children we love past fear, telling them, "don't be afraid" and "there's nothing to be afraid of". Meanwhile, we polish our own fears every day like worry stones. Fears of being alone or left out, fear of losing the people we love, or our jobs, so many fears we could not list them all. We might set them aside, cope with them for a while, but once born, our fears only die with us.

Our lives are saturated by fears. Fear is not always unhealthy, but it is always a distraction from the joys of life.

We are like the donkey, led always by carrot and stick. Our chosen fears are as distinctive as fingerprints. I'm afraid of heights; my son is not. Everyone is afraid though. Fear is a fundamental shared experience.

The carrots we chase are of equal variation. We continuously avoid our fears while doggedly pursing pleasures. We live in a continuous flow of each, dodging one and grasping at the other. Climb a mountain, exhausting yourself to reach the summit and even on top, our restless eye scans for the best view, always searching for more even when there is no mountain left.

We live here in the deep dark in a full-sensory wash of our fears and pleasures.

The sea-floor world of DEEP DARK: A BEDTIME TALE is the world we see around us. We are surrounded by mysteries from above and we're not sure what they mean, or why they are left here. I have books on geology, the Petrified Forest and space. These are science books, filled with facts and information. They each assert confidence in events 65 million years ago or 45 billion years ago, but within each book the writers admit, "scientists do not entirely understand how bones and plants become mineralized" or "scientists do not agree on". These are the honest books where beliefs are asserted but doubts remain. We cope ably – considering the limits of our understanding.

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Like the story, all the light of the world we inhabit is really inside us.

> "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."
> 1 John 1:4-5

There are a series of videos on the Internet collecting amazing feats of human agility, ingenuity and daring. I enjoy watching these. It is inspiring to see this constant stretch of our boundaries. We are the pinnacle of God's creation.

> "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
> John 13:35

The "bright world above" in the tale, is Heaven. Hatch tries to find someone who can reassure his children about the bright world, but they receive only stories and theories. We seek reassurance ourselves, but they are weak; no one we interact with has been there. Like Hatch, we often come away with more concerns.

> "Thank you for the story wise one," says Hatch. "I wanted my children to not be afraid. Now they are more afraid. I think I must go and see the bright world myself to make our fear go away." - Deep Dark: A Bedtime Tale

Many creatures of the deep sea have eyes that are set to see above. A six-inch fish, like Hatch, that is 4,500 feet deep has the equivalent of a truckload of sea water above him at all times, along with any food up there. Gravity works in water, so deep sea creatures are always looking up in anticipation.

So do we.

Jesus is represented by Hatch in the book.

COMPARISON	JESUS	HATCH
Sacrificed himself	"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13	"I will go, and if I can, I will come back to tell you all what is hiding up there behind our fear. I love you."
Traveled from Earth to Heaven	"When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." Ephesians 4:8	"He swims a long, long, long way up, and up, and up."
Traveled from Heaven back to Earth	"You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him" Mark 16:6	In the last scene of the book, Hatch is telling the others about the bright world.
Golgotha	"They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull")" Matthew 27: 33	Hatch leaves the deep dark, bound for the bright world, from a peak. The stargazer's face looks like a skull.

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Visual cues

The Fingers from DEEP DARK: A BEDTIME TALE represent David's outreached hand to God in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel

The shipwreck in the background has a subtle cross.

Hatch's ascension to the bright world

Because Hatch left and returned, his family's fears were removed. They would enjoy their deep sea home's wonder and beauty without being afraid. Because Jesus came back, He soothes our fears, lovingly brushes the hair from our eyes and tell us there truly is nothing to be afraid of.