

The Back Leg of a Goat

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Christian Focus Publications

Teachers Notes

for primary classes
(Ages 8 -12).



Summary:

The Back Leg of a Goat is the first book in a series of Tania Abbey Adventures written by Penny Reeve. The story follows the experience of a 10 year old Australian girl, Tania, and her friends as they attempt to raise enough money to purchase a goat from a charity gift catalogue.

Being the first book in the series it introduces the characters and the rocky start to Tania and Emily's friendship, a theme which runs through all the Tania Abbey books. A variety of first impressions are challenged as the book progresses including Tania's idea of what it means to be a child of God.

Themes of social justice and global responsibility are also tackled in a realistic and approachable way. The character of Shanti, a ten year old girl living in India, is the face of the poverty spoken of in the book. This personification allows Tania and the reader to understand some of the issues behind the word 'poor'. The plan to raise money for the charity soon develops into an act of faith, an offering of love for God.

With short, fast paced chapters interspersed with black line illustrations, *The Back Leg of a Goat* is readily suited for use in middle primary classrooms. Upper primary classes can also benefit from reading the books, using it to launch them into tackling some of the bigger issues presented.

Use in the Classroom:

- **Literacy based activities.** This book can be read and studied individually, in groups or by the whole class. Some **Activity Cards** are presented below and include a variety of tasks requiring different thinking skills and processes. Students can be set a number of the tasks per card according to their ability, confidence and time permitted. The activities range from basic comprehension and word skills to problem solving and critical thinking. These cards may be used independently if the teacher prefers, or suggestions taken from them for whole class study.
- **Faith Building.** In this book Tania is coming to terms with what it means to be a child of God. The Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46) is the Biblical point of reference regarding salvation. Students can be led through a faith study of other parables which teach about the value and worth of belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven. Children can also be encouraged to consider how, and why, having a living faith in Jesus can impact our daily lives and decisions. Tania's own journey to faith begins in the fourth chapter.
- With strong **themes of social justice** *The Back Leg of a Goat* is ideal to support a unit on responsible global living. Issues of recycling, what it means to be 'poor', the value of education and living as members of a global community are all covered in the text.
- *The Back Leg of a Goat* can also be used to stimulate the discussion and eventual **planning of a fundraising activity** by the class/school to raise money for those less fortunate. Some possibilities could be: organising a stall at the school fair day, collecting small change in a class biscuit tin and watching the amount grow in comparison to a gift catalogues' list of items, organising a recycled fashion parade like Tania and her friends do in the book.

Other Resources Available:

- *TEAR Australia* has a lot of material dedicated to educating children on the needs and stories of the poor, and to empowering them to be change makers in a heavily consumerist society. One resource pack available is their “The Rag-pickers of Delhi” Resource Pack. It is available as a PDF from the TEAR website and explores the rag-picking/rubbish collecting issue that is referred to in the book.

www.tear.org.au

- *Room to Read* is another organisation worth a look as it is specifically focussed on building schools, promoting equal access to education and investing in books and libraries in developing nations. More information on the Room to Read can be found at

www.roomtoread.org

The Activity Cards:

Three cards are presented for use with *The Back Leg of a Goat*. It is suggested that the cards be printed on card and laminated to allow multiple use. If the cards are minimised you should be able to fit two per A4 page. Each of the cards deal with four consecutive chapters from the book so they can be used progressively as the children proceed through the text.

- Card One: the 1st four chapters: “*The Back Leg of a Goat*” to the end of “Making Plans”
- Card Two: the next four chapters: “Friendship? I’ll Keep you Posterred” to the end of “Wasps”
- Card Three: the final five chapters: “Worth Finding” to the end of “Epilogue... of a goat”

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The Back Leg of a Goat

Activity Card One.

This card refers to information contained in the first four chapters of *The Back Leg of a Goat*.

The Back Leg of a Goat, How to Raise Fifty Dollars, Fashion Parade!?! and Making Plans.

Task #1

Look up the meanings of these words:

Supplements, toast (careful! This has two meanings, which one is used at the end of chapter one?), *triumphant, reluctant, scrutinized, despair, impatient, outrageous.*

Choose the one you like best to write in a new sentence.



Task #2

Answer these questions:

Why do you think Daniel almost choked on his biscuit at the end of Chapter 2?

Does Tania want to be friends with Emily? Explain your answer.

Make a list of all the characters in the story so far.

Put a **red** line under the main characters and a **yellow** line under the secondary characters.

Task #3

Design your own costume:

If you had to design a costume for a recycled fashion parade what would you do?

Draw your idea and label the parts with the names of the materials you might use.

Task #4

If you had been invited to the Rumpus Room planning meeting what would you have suggested as a good idea to raise \$50?

Write your answer down with three reasons why it is as good an idea as Tania's, or an even better one.

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Card Two.

This card refers to information contained in the fifth to eighth chapters of *The Back Leg of a Goat*.

Friendship? I'll Keep you Posterred, Don't Mess up the Nature Strip,
Worth Wearing and Wasps.

Task #1

Has the author made a spelling mistake on the title heading for chapter 5? Why or why not?

Task #2

If you could be any character from this book which one would you chose to be? Which one would you hate to be? Explain your choices and reasons why to a friend.

Task #2

Answer these questions:

Who are Thomas and James? What sort of costume does Tania finally decide to make, and why? Does Tania like Mr Campbell, and how do you know this? What do you think is the most exciting part of these four chapters. Why?

Task #3

Design and make a new poster for Tania and Daniel's parade which will now be held outside hall. Include all the details you can. Or design a poster for a different event that could raise money for a goat, or something else, that would help the poor in another country.

Task #4

In "Friendship? I'll Keep you Posterred" Tania is comparing her old friend Sue with Emily. Why does she keep doing this? What does Tania admire about Emily?



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Card Three.

This card refers to information contained in final five chapters of The Back Leg of a Goat.

Worth Finding, It's Going to Rain,
Raining, Pouring, The Back Leg and Epilogue... of a Goat.

Task #1

Draw a timeline of the book's story. Make sure you include the main events and set-backs/complications. Label your favourite parts with a star.

Task #3

Pretend you are one of the main characters and write a letter to your real self.

(Eg if you are Jesse you could write "Dear Jesse..... from Sam")

Write about the fashion parade and how you felt when it started to rain, and at the end.

Task #4

Look up the meaning of the word Epilogue. Do you think this short chapter belongs in the book? Why or why not?



Task #2

Tania's impressions of some characters change by the end of the book. Draw and complete this table in your book to compare Tania's changing opinions.

Name	What Tania thinks at first	What Tania thinks at the end
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emily George• Mr Campbell• God		

Have you ever thought something about someone when you first met them, only to learn later they were completely different? Write a few sentences about that.