

# Lesson from a Book: *Sam Johnson and the Blue Ribbon Quilt* written and illustrated by Lisa Campbell Ernst, William Morrow and Co., 1983

## Synopsis of story:

One morning Sam Johnson discovers that the awning over his pig pen is torn. His wife is out of town, so that evening he sits down to mend the tear himself. It turns out that he really enjoys sewing and before long he has sewn a wonderful and creative patch. At least he thinks so. His wife is less impressed and lets him know that she feels sewing and quilting is no work for a man. Soon Sam gathers the men of the town into a male quilting club! Together they create a Flying Geese quilt. The Rosedale Men's Quilting Club enters their quilt into competition with the Rosedale Women's Quilting club at the County Fair! As the members of the two clubs are on their way to the fair, a gust of wind blows both quilts into a large mud puddle. As the men and women look down at the mess

that has been made of all of their hard work, the men notice how beautiful the women's Sail Boats quilt is and the women notice that the men have created a very beautiful quilt as well. Just then Sam has an idea. Why not take the clean patches from the two quilts and make one quilt to enter in the contest. They enter their "Flying Sailboats" quilt and it wins the blue ribbon for the "just plain Rosedale Quilting Club."

## Lesson plan age level:

Primary (5–11) but can be appreciated by all ages, including adults

## Lesson focus:

Equality, integrity.

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Opening:

Begin with an opening that includes introductions all around and a short period of silent centering.

### Quotation:

The following quotation may be used for older children and for teacher preparation:

Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each of us is unique, precious, a child of God.

— *Advices and Queries, Britain Yearly Meeting (p. 11)*

### The story:

You might ask for volunteer readers with older children, but be very sure that only those who want to read are asked to do so.

### Wonderings and discussion questions:

1. I wonder what you like the most about this story.
2. I wonder why Sam's wife was not more appreciative of the patch Sam created for the awning.
3. Why do you think the women of the town thought that it was funny that a man would want to learn to quilt?
4. Sam felt that his desire to learn to quilt was so important that he posted Equality for Men signs all over town. Why do you think he felt so determined?
5. Do you think that the women of the Rosedale Women's Quilting Club were a little nervous when they found out that the men were forming their own club? If so, why?
6. It seems like it was difficult for the women and men to tell each other that their quilts were beautiful. I wonder why this was so.

7. Do you think that the Rosedale Quilting Club continued with both men and women? I wonder if this caught on in other towns!
8. Can you think of an activity that you might be surprised to see a boy / a girl interested in? Why?
9. Are there gifts you feel you have that may not feel appropriate to you because you are a boy / girl? I wonder if there are ways we can help each other feel comfortable with all of our gifts.

### Activity:

Glue a quilt.

Have 12 inch squares of fairly heavy cloth for each child. (Felt works very well for both the background and the quilt pieces. Have a few extra squares for fast workers.) For younger children, have precut shapes for them to work with. Older children will enjoy cutting shapes themselves. Have quilt pattern books available for the children to look at, but be sure to explain that they may create any pattern they like. When the squares are done, discuss with the class and decide if they want to take their squares home with them, or have the squares sewn into a hanging for the Meetinghouse.

### Song:

"This Little Light of Mine," in *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*, Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 1996, #266

### Closing:

Have a closing time of silence.

Lesson plan by Ellen Kepchar of New Garden (NC) Meeting for the Religious Education Committee of Friends General Conference.