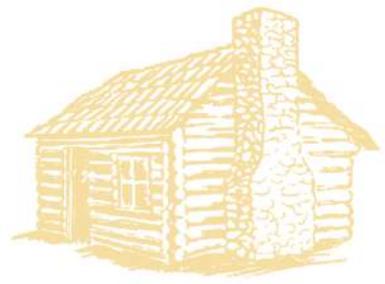


Little House



in the Big Woods

Study Guide

by Rebecca Gilleland

For the novel by Laura Ingalls Wilder



Progeny Press

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Note to Instructor | 4 |
| Synopsis | 5 |
| About the Author | 6 |
| Background Information | 8 |
| Before-you-read Activities | 9 |
| “Little House in the Big Woods” & “Winter Days and Winter Nights” | 10 |
| Projects and Activities | 16 |
| “The Long Rifle” & “Christmas” | 18 |
| Projects and Activities | 23 |
| “Sundays” & “Two Big Bears” | 24 |
| Projects and Activities | 28 |
| “The Sugar Snow” & “Dance at Grandpa’s” | 29 |
| Projects and Activities | 33 |
| “Going to Town” & “Summertime” | 35 |
| Projects and Activities | 40 |
| “Harvest,” “The Wonderful Machine” & “The Deer in the Wood” | 41 |
| Projects and Activities | 45 |
| Crossword Puzzle | 47 |
| After-you-read Activities | 49 |
| Additional Resources | 51 |
| Answer Key | 55 |

Synopsis

In this recollection of Laura Ingalls Wilder's childhood, Laura tells her story of growing up in the Big Woods of Wisconsin in the 1860s. There are no houses for miles around, just the Ingalls family in their little log cabin: Charles and Caroline (Pa and Ma), Mary, Laura, and baby Carrie.

Little House in the Big Woods follows the day-to-day events in the life of Laura Ingalls over the course of a year. The story begins as the family makes preparations for the cold winter, storing away food and preserving meat. Through the long nights Pa tells stories and entertains the girls with his fiddle. In the spring the family makes maple syrup. Summertime means long, hard work in the fields, and fall means harvest time. As the seasons change, the chores and the play of Laura and her sister, Mary, also change. *Little House in the Big Woods* is a delightful look at family life on what was then the frontier.

Little House in the Big Woods Study Guide

Dig Deeper:

10. Read James 3:14:

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts do not boast about it or deny the truth.

What is bitter envy? What made Laura feel envy toward Mary?

11. Have you ever been jealous? What made you feel jealous? Who can you talk to about it?

12. Read Romans 12:17:

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

What do you think Laura should have done when Mary bragged about her curls?

13. Pa tells Laura that she must obey him no matter what Mary does to her. Imagine that you were in Laura's place. Would this be difficult for you to do? Why or why not?

Projects and Activities

1. *Cheese-making.* If possible, visit a cheese factory to observe cheese being made. Teachers: Check your local library for educational videotapes on cheese-making. Buy fresh cheese curds and buttermilk. Let students sample each.
2. *Honey Harvest.* Teachers: check with your local library for educational videotapes on beekeeping and honey production. If someone in your area keeps bees, arrange a visit. Observe honey being removed from the honeycomb. Buy fresh honey and serve on crackers or bread.
3. *Reports:* Write a 1–2 page report on one of the following subjects:
 - a. The moon (Ma told them it was dead and cold)
 - b. Cheese-making and varieties of cheese
 - c. Honeybees and honey production
 - d. Beekeeping

Little House in the Big Woods Study Guide

happy, resigned, at rest, snug, or comfortable. We should give thanks in *all* circumstances, because regardless of what we do or do not have God has promised to never leave us. Our true contentment depends on that promise—that God will never leave us.

“Sundays” & “Two Big Bears”

Vocabulary:

1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. d; 5. c.

Questions:

1. The sled hit a pig and the pig squealed all the way down the hill. Grandpa’s father was awake and standing in the doorway as Grandpa and his brothers—and the pig—slid past. “Tanned their jackets” is probably a variation of the phrase “tanned their hides” (jackets being made from hides) and means the same thing: the boys were given a good smack with a switch.
2. Pa went to town to trade his furs.
3. Pa has to leave behind his gun because there were so many furs to carry. Ma worried about Pa coming home in the dark without his gun because of wild animals.
4. Answers will vary but should resemble the following: Laura follows Ma. They see the dark shape of the cow in the barnyard. Ma tries to open the gate, but it bumps the cow. Ma reaches over and slaps its shoulder and tells the cow to move. The lantern light suddenly shines not on the cow, but a bear! Ma tells Laura to walk back to the house. Laura obeys. Before Laura gets part of the way back Ma picks her up, lantern and all, and runs into the house and slams the door.
5. Ma tells Laura she is a good girl because Laura did exactly as Ma told her to do, she did it quickly and she did not ask why.
6. All around the house the wind went crying as though it were lost in the dark and the cold.
7. Candy and calico cloth.
8. The bear is actually a big, black, burned stump.
9. Answers will vary. If Pa had had his gun with him, he most likely would have shot at the “bear,” discovering quickly that it was only a stump.

Dig Deeper:

10. The Sabbath is the last day or seventh day of the week observed as a day of rest according to Scripture. Traditionally this is either a Saturday or Sunday. Laura’s family rested on Sundays to honor the Sabbath.

“The Sugar Snow” & “Dance at Grandpa’s”

Vocabulary:

1. anxiously: with worry and uncertainty; 2. bored: drilled a hole; 3. common every day: for everyday use; 4. pranced: leaped up on the hind legs and moved forward; 5. scalloped: rounded projections on the edge of an object; 6. trough: a long open container to carry liquid, such as a rain gutter; 7. yoke: a wooden bar designed to rest on a person’s shoulders for carrying balanced loads suspended from each end.

Questions:

1. Laura tastes the snow to see if it was sugar because Pa calls it a “sugar snow.”
2. What Pa calls a “sugar snow” is a snow late in spring that means more maple sugar can be made. A cold spell holds back the leafing of trees and makes the sap run longer. Cold spring nights and warmer spring days are best for making maple syrup.
3. Pa points out the tracks of wild creatures in the snow along the road.
4. Grandma’s house has at least four rooms. One great big room, one for Uncle George, one for the aunts, and the kitchen. A room for Grandma and Grandpa is not mentioned, but it appears that they sleep in the big room.
5. Laura does not know whether she should be afraid of Uncle George or not because she heard Pa tell Ma that Uncle George is wild. Laura decides she likes Uncle George when he dances with her at the dance.

Dig Deeper:

6. They argue about which baby is prettier.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.