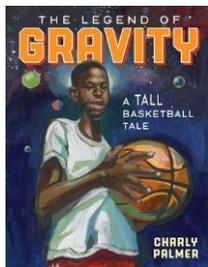


Book Guide

Milwaukee Public Library Summer Reading Program



Book Title:	The Legend of Gravity: A Tall Basketball Tale
Author:	Charly Palmer
Illustrator:	Charly Palmer

Recommended Audience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
	K5	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th

Length of Time to Read:

20-30 minutes

Summary:

From beloved author-illustrator Charly Palmer comes this picture book love letter to the unsung heroes of basketball. Set in his hometown of Milwaukee, the story follows a group of talented young streetball players from Hillside on their journey to the championship game. Like all good tall tales, The Legend of Gravity will have you almost believing the unbelievable while celebrating the art of storytelling.

Before Reading (Create Interest):

Show the front cover of the book to your students. Ask them if they know what a “tall tale” is (a story with parts that are exaggerated or made up, told as if it were true or factual). Ask students if they have ever read or heard a tall tale before. Give some examples of hard-to-believe stories (“That fish was so big, it almost sunk the boat!”). Ask: Have you ever heard a friend or family member tell a tall tale? Have you ever told a story that exaggerated what really happened? Ask your students to pay close attention to the illustrations while reading and see if they recognize any locations from the story.

During Reading (Discussion/Questions):

Pause at any illustrations that show real places in Milwaukee and give your students plenty of time to look at the artwork. Invite students to raise their hand if they recognize a landmark or place name in the book. Stop when you get to a hard-to-believe part of the story and ask your students to share whether they think it’s true or made-up.

After Reading:

Discuss with your group: What is a talent? How do you know if you have a talent? When should you use your talents? How did each player in the story use their talents to complement each other and reach their goal? What lessons do you think can be learned from the book about supporting each other?

Read the Author’s Note and bio at the back of the book. Ask: What do you think an “unsung hero” is? Who is your unsung hero and why?



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STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) **Connection:**

Measure Your Stats

What is your wing span? How high can you jump? How far can you jump? Who is the tallest in the class? Who is the quickest runner? Who can dribble the fastest? Use a tape measure and stopwatch to help your students measure some of their player “stats” (statistics). You can mark each student’s jumping distance using tape on the floor or sidewalk chalk if you’re outside.

Play “Cans”

Split your group into teams. Set up an empty soda can (or water bottle) on the sidewalk or gym floor. Students will use their hand-eye coordination and bounce a basketball to try to hit the can. Have each team keep track of their points and slowly increase the distance between the kids and can as you play.

Make a Dream Team

Show your students the pages from the book that feature all of the players (and their nicknames) from the Eagles and the East Side Flyers. Tell them they’ll be working together to create their own dream team (it can be a basketball team or another kind of team). Split your students into groups of four. Give each group a copy of the included Dream Team handout. To begin, each student will come up with their playground name (cool nickname) and write it down. Next, students will take turns filling in the blanks to explain how they got their nickname. This can be a true story or a tall tale. Each group will decide on a name for their team and write it in the space provided. Finally, students will work together to design a team logo and add color to their page using any art supplies you have. At the end, have each group share its team name, logo, nicknames, and backstories. Pause after each backstory and ask the rest of the class to guess if it was true, made-up, or somewhere in between.

Explore Gravity

Have your students try some simple science experiments to learn more about gravity and force:

<https://vimeo.com/428247976>

Ideas for younger or older children

With younger students, circle up and invite each child to share a nickname they have and how they got their nickname. You could also play a game of “telephone” and have fun seeing how sentences and stories can change when we retell them.

With older students, pull up a current map of Milwaukee and see if they can locate any of the following locations from the book: Hillside, Parklawn, Westlawn, Garfield Park, and Mayflower Court. Search online for a map of Milwaukee from when Charly Palmer was a kid (hint: he was born in 1960). Compare the two maps and make a list of similarities and differences. Discuss with your students: How has Milwaukee changed over time? What has stayed the same? What do you think caused these changes?

Additional Notes: Visit teachingbooks.net to find interviews with Charly Palmer and learn more about his life, art, and books.

