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Introduction

Good books are wonderful! They stimulate our imaginations, inform our minds, inspire our higher selves, and fill our time with magic. With good books, we are never lonely or bored. And a good book only gets better with time, because each reading brings us new meaning. Each new story is a treasure to cherish forever.

In Literature Units, we take great care to select books that will become treasured friends for life.

Teachers using this unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-reading Activities
- Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- Book Summary
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Activities
- Chapters grouped for study, with sections including:
 - *quizzes*
 - *hands-on projects*
 - *cooperative learning activities*
 - *cross-curriculum connections*
 - *extensions into the readers' lives*
- Post-reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Idea
- Culminating Activities
- Three Different Options for Unit Tests
- Bibliography of Related Reading
- Answer Key

We are confident that this unit will be a valuable addition to your literature planning and that as you use our ideas, your students will learn to treasure the stories to which you introduce them.

The Giver

By Lois Lowry

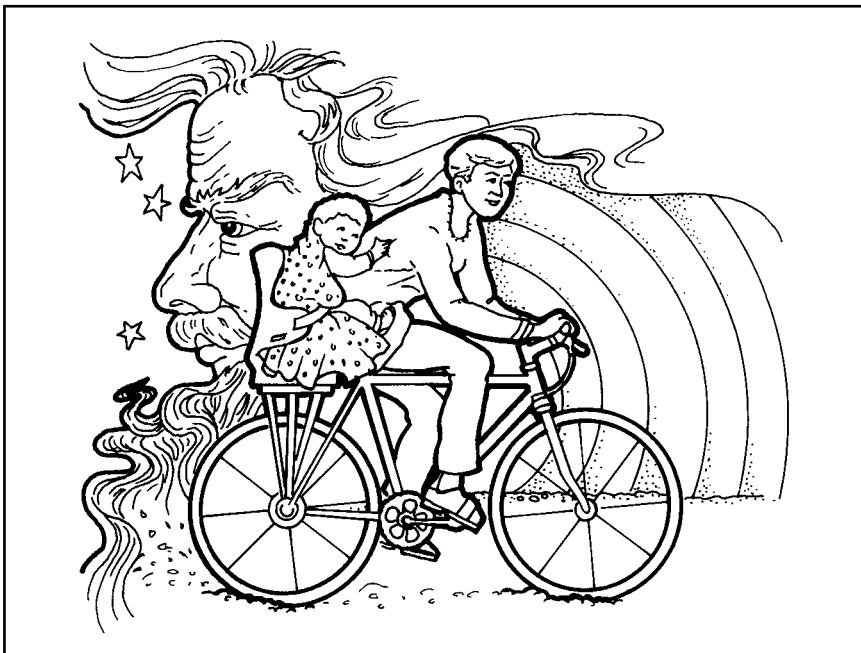
(Available in USA, Houghton Mifflin, 1993; Canada, Thomas Allen & Son;
UK, Gollancz Services; AUS, Jacaranda Wiley)

This fascinating science-fiction novel is about a boy named Jonas who lives in a nameless community sometime in the future with no war, poverty, hate, fear, pollution, or disease—a utopian life. It is a world by itself with no choices at all. Each aspect of life has a prescribed rule: one-year-olds—“Ones”—are named and given to their chosen family; “Nines” get their bicycles; “Birthmothers” give birth to three children first and then become labourers; “family units” get two children—one male and one female.

Young Jonas is anxiously awaiting his Ceremony of Twelve, the time when all the twelve-year-olds in the community receive their assignments for their lifelong professions. Instead of being Caretaker of the Old, or a teacher or recreation director, Jonas is selected to be the next Receiver of Memories, the most respected of the Elders. The Receiver is a person who receives all the pains, grief, and pleasures in memories of the past. He takes the burden of war, starvation, neglect, misery, and despair. He also learns about joys that the community never experiences: They do not see colour, hear music, or know love. He must receive all of the memories lodged in the mind of the old Receiver, whom he calls The Giver.

As Jonas is trained by The Giver, he discovers that he wants more than black and white, more than rules and security. He wants life. He desires colour and choice. He wishes that everyone could feel love and pain.

The author gives you the feeling of being trapped and confused by breaking up the pieces and clues and scattering them throughout the book. You hit dead ends and curves as you are reading. Then, as pieces come together, new experiences are revealed, and instead of feeling trapped and confused, the reader may feel startled, sad, and angry. The cliff-hanger ending can be construed as allegory or reality.



This book is a lot like life. Our most cherished beliefs, the values of the individual, the family, and the society—these are the abiding emblems and themes interwoven throughout the novel. We take our way of living for granted. One day it may be gone; there would be no choices, no memories, no feelings or freedom. *The Giver* is a book that quietly and delicately reveals how important life is and suggests that, possibly, the way we wish life to be might not be

the best way after all.