

Author Bio

It wasn't until high school that Louis Sachar began to love reading. And it wasn't until college that he began to love kids. By chance, he took a part-time job as a teacher's aide at a local elementary school. He found that he loved being "Louis, the Yard Teacher," and that experience is what led him to write his first book, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*.

Themes

Courage, friendship, respect for others, teamwork, overcoming fears, recognizing one's strengths and overcoming one's weaknesses.

Discussion Questions

Which character/story was your favorite? Why?

Compare Wayside School with a more "traditional" school, like Lanai Road. What is good/bad about Wayside School as a place of learning (educating kids)?

What was good/bad about Mrs. Jewls' methods of class control and discipline?

Can you think of a funny or unusual thing that happened recently at your school?

Has your principal or teacher ever done something unexpected?

Wayside School has many unique features. What do you think is the most unique feature of Lanai Road?

Activity

1. Turn an apple into Mrs. Gorf:

Give each student a small apple. Have children core the apple and, using a potato peeler, cut two small holes for eyes and a larger one for the nose, and a small half-moon shape for the mouth [or do this ahead of time and dip apples in lemon juice/water mixture to prevent discoloration]. Give students raisins, M&Ms or Skittles to insert as eyes and a baby carrot for the nose. Put candy corn teeth in the mouth. Spread cream cheese on top with Chinese noodles for hair. Cut slits in side and insert triangular nacho chips for pointy ears. TAKE A BITE – how does she taste?

2. Wayside School Construction Project:

Build Wayside School using toothpicks and gumdrops or marshmallows.

3. Readers' Theater:

Let the children perform one, two or three scenes using the prepared scripts adapted from three of the stories in the novel. Total performance time is 12 minutes for all 3 scripts.