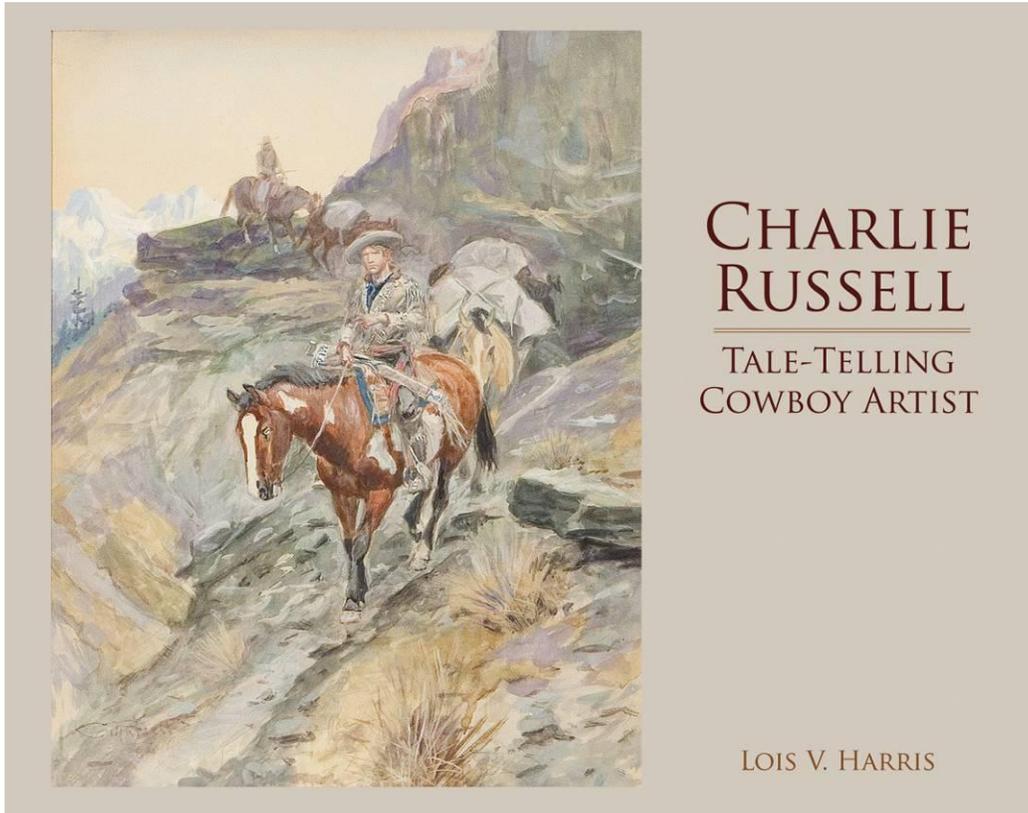


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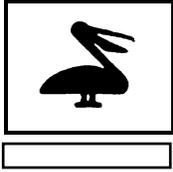
DISCUSSION GUIDE for



32 pp., 11 x 8½, Ages 5-8, 7 b/w photos 23 color illus., ISBN-13: 9781589807587 16.99 HC

Charlie Russell: Tale-Telling Cowboy Artist By Lois V. Harris

**Guide created by Rebecca Van Slyke
Reproducible worksheets**



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Discussion Questions

Answer the questions below on a separate piece of paper.

1. Charlie used his imagination to play games of “Settlers and Injuns” when he was growing up. What “imagination games” do you like to play?
2. Charlie made his family laugh by speaking with different accents. How do you make your family laugh?
3. When Charlie was in school, he loved to draw, read adventure stories and learn about history. What are some of your favorite subjects in school? Why do you like them?
4. Charlie hated math. What might cause someone to hate a certain subject in school? How could someone get past that dislike and learn to appreciate it?
5. Charlie’s cowboy friends nicknamed him “Kid Russell.” Do you have a nickname? Tell how you got this nickname. If you don’t have a nickname, what would be a good nickname for your friends to call you?
6. Charlie enjoyed listening to other people’s stories, as well as telling stories of his own. Are there people you know who are good story-tellers? Ask someone in your family or a friend to tell you a story from his or her life. Then tell a story from your life.
7. What characteristics did Charlie have that made him a good worker? Did he have any characteristics that made him unsuccessful at his work?
8. One of Charlie’s famous quotes is, “Good friends make the roughest trail easy.” Give an example of how a good friend of yours made a “rough trail” easier for you.
9. Charles said, “I’m one of the men that sweats when I write.” What did he mean by that? What is something that makes you “sweat” when you do it? Do you keep doing it in spite of it being hard for you?

10. Charles wrote: *The west is dead, my friend*

But writers hold the seed

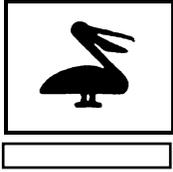
And what they sow

Will live and grow

Again to those that read.



Use your own words to tell what he meant. Do you agree? Are there other ways to “hold the seed” besides writing?



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Activities

Creative Writing:

Charlie's family expected him to come back home after a summer of hard work. Write a letter from Charlie to his parents explaining why he decided to stay and work in the West. Remember to draw some pictures in the letter like Charlie liked to do.

Social Studies:

Read a book about what life was like in the West when Charles Russell first arrived. What might you see, hear, touch, taste or smell if you stepped off the stagecoach with Charles in 1880?

Art History:

Look at some artwork by other artists of the West, like Frederic Remington, Albert Bierstadt and Georgia O'Keefe. What are some characteristics that make each artist's works distinctive?

Art:

Many of Charles Russell's paintings are full of action. Make a drawing or painting of something exciting happening. It could be a scene from your favorite sport, an animal predator-and-prey scene, or people moving in an interesting way, like playing, dancing or working. (Hint: Using a photograph is a good way to stop the action so you can see the position of heads, bodies, legs and arms.)



Art Technique:

Charlie used several different media to work in during his life, like pencil, pen, paint, clay, and wax. Choose one subject. It could be a cow or horse like Charlie might have chosen, or it could be a family pet or a special toy. Model it out of clay, draw it with pencil, colored pencil, crayons, or paint it. Try at least three different types of media. Which way do you like best?

History & Technology:

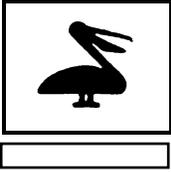
Charles was born in 1864. What was happening in the world at that time? Who was president at the time? What were some new inventions at that time? Who else was born that year? Use books or the internet to find the answers.

Math:

Many people rode a stagecoach to get to Montana Territory. If the average speed of a stagecoach was 8 miles per hour, how many hours would it have taken someone to travel the 1,800 miles to Montana Territory? If they traveled for 9 hours every day, how many days would the trip take?

Reading:

Read a biography about a cowboy (or cowgirl) who lived around the same time as Charles Russell. Some ideas are William Cody, Annie Oakley, Bill Pickett, or Nat Love. How were their lives similar and different than Charles Russell's life?



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Foreign Language:

Charles Russell visited the Blood Indians in Canada. They taught him some native sign language that let him communicate with other tribes across the West. Here are some signs that you can learn.





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Cooking:

Charlie ate a lot of beans and bacon when he was a cowboy. You can make Cowboy Beans and Bacon with some adult help. Remember to start this recipe the day before you want to eat it, because the beans must soak overnight. If you can't cook it over a crackling campfire, maybe you can take some outside and eat under the stars like Charlie did.

Cowboy Beans and Bacon

Ingredients

4 cups of dried beans (kidney, pinto, navy or a mixture of several kinds)
½ lbs. bacon (cut in 1 inch pieces) or ham hock
Water to cover
¼ c. molasses
2 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper



Directions:

The night before, rinse beans and place in a large pot. Cover them with water and let stand overnight. In the morning, drain the water off.

Add ham hock or bacon pieces. Cover with fresh water and simmer over low fire (modern cowpokes can use a crock pot) for 3-4 hours.

Add molasses, salt and pepper.

If you want, you can also add any of the following:

- 1 tomato, peeled and chopped
- ½ onion, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. garlic, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. mustard, catsup, or barbeque sauce.

Simmer an additional hour, then serve.

About the book:

CHARLIE RUSSELL: Tale-Telling Cowboy Artist By Lois V. Harris

Charles Marion Russell was the first artist to live most of his life in the West, sketching and painting not only from live subjects, but from actual experience. Becoming a frontiersman at a young age in 1880, he rode and worked with horses on a daily basis, something that no other Western artist had done before. This biography for children is the first of its kind about Russell, and the subject's own vibrant paintings illustrate his life story. It follows Russell from his school days through adulthood and reveals how he held on to his dreams, living out a child's cowboy fantasy.

Charlie Russell not only wanted to experience the West, he wanted to replicate it. It took years of hard work and determination to land a job as a cattleman and longer still for him to master his artistic talents. Through stories, wax figures, and paintings, he was able to capture that rare spirit of the region and pass it along to others. Russell became a famous artist, author, outdoorsman, environmentalist, storyteller, and beloved Western figure. Today, more than 2,000 of his paintings, sculptures, and drawings are held in the C. M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana. This book pays tribute to a great Western artist, encouraging every young cowboy to live out his dreams.