



Puddinhead's Sister, Zirah  
By Marilyn Foote  
Teacher's Guide  
Excellent Resource of Suggested Activities  
For Grades 2 - 4

### **Purpose**

Puddinhead is an enjoyable story that can be used in a classroom enriching a reading program. This guide will assist a teacher to instruct students as they read the book, *Puddinhead's Sister, Zirah*. It will focus on the in-depth educational wealth it has to offer to students in the elementary grades, Pre-Kindergarten – 3.

This guide consists of detailed lesson ideas divided by each chapter along with chapter and pre and post assessments. This unit could be completed in one week or depending on the ability of the students, the teacher will plan the timing out. This is a picture book for the youngest readers and the butterfly poem is an excellent finger play they can learn to do. This faith based story can be done with or without the religious elements.

### **Puddinhead's Sister, Zirah – Summary**

Miriam Foote, aka Puddinhead is reciting in poetic verse the story about her older sister, Zirah who has the unique ability to memorize verses and poetry. Zirah is a gifted learner that is demonstrated by her ability to memorize a beautiful poem about a butterfly.

The story is all in poetic verse. The special part about the poem, *Caterpillar to Butterfly*, which is in the second chapter, is what I call a life cycle poem. The poem records what happens in the life cycle of the butterfly and the poem can be re-recited over and over again because the life cycle never stops.

This story can be read with or without the spiritual elements.

### **Suggested Activities:**

- ✓ Pre-Test.
- ✓ African American History
- ✓ Vocabulary Practice for Each Chapter.
- ✓ Chapter Discussion / Comprehension Questions.
- ✓ English/Grammar Focus
- ✓ Chapters Review Quiz.
- ✓ Posttest.
- ✓ Resource Page
- ✓ Extension Activities Follow-up: Games, Art, and Music Lessons.

### **Puddinhead's Sister, Zirah Chapter Titles:**

- ✓ Chapter 1 – Zirah at Night.
- ✓ Chapter 2 – Zirah in the Morning.
- ✓ Chapter 3 – Zirah in the Afternoon.
- ✓ Chapter 4 – Zirah and Puddinhead.
- ✓ Resource Page – Daddy's Question

### **Pre-Test**

#### Opening Discussion

This could be done as an open discussion with students, while teacher writes down the student responses or a half sheet of paper with these questions on it for the students to fill out. There should be documentation of a before and after measure of the students' understanding of sequential events.

Questions: Try to answer in complete sentences verbally or written or in picture form.

1. Think of the important steps it takes to brush your teeth. Draw/Write/Tell me at least 4 steps to complete this task.

## African American History

“Still Raising “Caine””: The Art, Activism and Archives of Camille Billops and James V. Hatch" showcases materials from one of the most important collections related to 20th-century African American artists, theater and art history. As part of “Still Raising “Caine”, **(TEACHERS, PLEASE NOTE: The real name is “Still Raising Hell”. I changed the word, hell to caine.)** the art Activism and Archives of Camille Billops and James V. Hatch area artists were invited to help create the **Billops-Hatch Butterflies** project, an origami art installation.

In the 1970s, Camille Billops and James V. Hatch began inviting friends and students into their New York City loft to record public conversations with visual artists, writers, poets, actors and musicians.

During this time, they also acquired a trove of books, manuscripts, photographs and art. Now, roughly 40 years later, this vibrant multimedia collection has become one of the largest and most comprehensive private gatherings of African American art and culture in the world.

This week, Emory opens a major exhibition, “Still Raising “Caine””: The Art, Activism and Archives of Camille Billops and James V. Hatch,” drawn from the Camille J. Billops and James V. Hatch archives in the [Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library](#).

The exhibit in the Schatten Gallery of Emory’s [Robert W. Woodruff Library](#), will explore themes related to creativity, social justice and community, art and activism, and the importance of history and memory.

This project will be excellent resource for the children to explore different African Americans in American history.

## Vocabulary Practice for Each Chapter

### **Chapter 1 – Zirah at night:**

tranquil, refreshing, eases, ponder, prepares, precious, patiently, spies, nutritious

### **Chapter 2 – Zirah in the morning:**

except, mutterings, miniature, figurines, inquires

### **Chapter 3 – Zirah in the Afternoon: This is a very larger chapter. It could be split into two sessions.**

dessert, perform, beckoning, audience, hesitates, courage, boldly, blossoming,

cozy, wraps, cocoon, settles, skin-deep, chrysalis, jiggles, nectar, eucalyptus,

secured, pegged, lava, quivers, scent

### **Chapter 4 - Zirah and Puddinhead:**

innocently, stares, amazement, shrugs, assignment, approaches, remarks, ached,

quest, affair, armchair, cherishing, recreated, embraces, declares, gifted.

### **Chapter Discussion / Comprehension Questions:**

#### **Chapter 1 – Zirah at Night:**

1. How many siblings does Puddinhead have?
2. Describe the weather on this day.
3. What was the chore the children had to do?
4. What is the change in bedtime in this story? Why?
5. What is Zirah pre-occupied doing?
6. What does Puddinhead like to do?

#### **Chapter 2 – Zirah in the Morning:**

1. Which sister has the breakfast chore?
2. What excuse does Leah think is causing Zirah to be late for breakfast?
3. What question did Puddinhead ask Zirah about the butterflies?

#### **Chapter 3 - Zirah in the Afternoon:**

1. Who comes over to visit?
2. What family activity happens when they are all together?
3. Which is the baby, the butterfly or the caterpillar?
4. Can you show the different finger gestures for this poem?
5. Describe in sequence what happens in the butterflies' life cycle.

## **Chapter 4 – Zirah and Puddinhead:**

1. How did Zirah feel about learning the poem?
2. How do you feel to try to memorize this poem?
3. Why would daddy say Zirah aced this test?
4. (Spiritual) What do you think the godly message to man knowing about the butterflies' life cycle?
5. How did the family feel about the evening?
6. What's God's gift to Zirah?
7. How do we talk to God?
8. How can Zirah and Puddinhead show their gratefulness to God?

## **English/Grammar Focus:**

### **Chapters 1 – 4:**

1. Adding "s", or changing to "i -es". Find samples of these words in the story.
2. Adjectives: Words that give more details to a noun. "Tranquil" night. Find samples of these words in the story.
3. Compound words: "Bookcase." Find samples of these words in the story.
4. Adding "ing" to verbs. "Mutterings." Find samples of these words in the story.
5. Agreement between verb and noun where you add "s" on the verb or not. "Mommy calls." Or "Grannie and Poppie come over." Find samples of these words in the story.
6. Why would you use a "!" in a sentence? Find samples of these words in the story.

### **Chapters Review Quiz:**

1. This is done during and after the story, Puddinhead's Sister, Zirah is read. Map out a sequence of activities Puddinhead and Zirah were doing in each chapter.

### **Posttest:**

Draw a series of sequential order illustrations in at least 4 – 6 pictures the life cycle of the butterflies. Write several sentences about each picture.

**Resource Page:** [www.sermonsforkids.com](http://www.sermonsforkids.com) is a website that was God sent to me as I was writing this book. Please I found it to be a blessing to me and I hope you will cherish using it too.

### **Extension Activities Follow-up: Games, Art, and Music Lessons**

1. Use a giant sheet of drawing paper or a chalkboard and design an adventure. The drawings should be done in sequential order. The story should be written out in a book fashion.
2. Using music as a starter for a story. Many children's song is excellent sources of characters for a story. IE. Song – The Ants Are Marching (This song is sung with the melody from, When Johnny Comes Marching Home.) Then, write a story using the characters from a song.
3. In the stories of Puddinhead and her brother and sisters used to play act stories; everyone had a character. Design a play for your class. Discuss the scenes and types of props you will need. Produce the play and do it for another class.
4. Create a Story Game – The first person starts a story while everyone listens. It has to be a short beginning of a story. The second, third, fourth person and so on continue this story adding their part until it makes its way around the class.
5. Each child picks one part of the story to design a diorama using a small box, or a lid of a box, or construction paper. You have to fold a half inch frame around the construction paper and pinch the four corners so the frame stands out. Write a small paragraph about the diorama scene to mount this under the diorama when it is on display.
6. The class could order a science kit to grow a butterfly farm. It is so much fun watching the butterfly go through all its stages.
7. Using finger paint the class can do blot painting. You fold the sheet of paper in half and open it up. Take small amounts of finger paint(s) and place the blot in the middle on the center crease. Then fold the paper up and rub the folded paper to spread the paint around inside. Be careful not to push the paint so it would squirt out the edges. When you open it up, the image will look like a butterfly.