

A Leader's Guide to



PAULA'S Patches

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free spirit
PUBLISHING®

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About the Author and Illustrator



Questions About the Story

- * Paula worries that people will laugh at or make fun of her torn pants. Do you think anyone in Paula's class would have done that? Why or why not?
- * If you saw someone who ripped their pants like Paula, how would you help them?
- * Paula is waiting for hand-me-downs from her cousin. What are hand-me-downs? What are some things that have been handed down to you? What have you handed down to someone else?
- * Paula is nice to George about his spilled spaghetti. Why do you think Paula thinks other children will *not* be nice about her torn pants?
- * In the story, Paula and her classmates do many kind, caring things. What are some kind actions characters in the book do for one another?



- * Why do you think Paula feels nervous about showing everyone the patches she made?
- * How do Paula's feelings change over the course of the story?
- * How does Paula feel at the end of the story? Why does she feel that way?
- * If Paula had not hidden her torn pants, how might the story have been different? How might it have been the same?



Questions About Ideas in the Book

- * When and why do people get embarrassed? How do you feel when you are embarrassed? If you notice someone else feeling embarrassed, how can you help support them?
- * How does patching or handing things down help people? How does it help the earth? What else do people hand down besides clothes? (Discuss ideas such as family traditions and stories, recipes, or special roles in a class, group, or family.)
- * Read the note from the author at the back of the book. How does it change your thoughts about Paula's story? What did you learn?
- * Paula has a problem and she finds a creative way to solve it. Have you ever had a problem and figured out a way to make it better? What did you decide to do? How did you get the idea to do that?
- * One theme of the book is how people's clothes matter to them. Why do you think clothes are important in this way? What do the patches Paula makes tell you about her classmates? What do they tell you about Paula?



Exploring Sewing

Use these activities to introduce students to basic hand sewing. If you wish, print and use the how-to form on page 8 with any of the three activities.

Learn from an Expert

Invite a professional tailor, a sewing teacher, or a friend or colleague who likes to sew to visit your class. Before the visit, guide your group to think of things they want to know about sewing. During the visit, students can learn some basics, ask their questions, and take away a few skills or tips for sewing simple stitches for creative activities with fabric.

Sew a Simple Bag

This is an easy way to get kids comfortable with very basic stitching. Have on hand square or rectangular pieces of fabric or felt (9" x 9" to 9" x 12"), darning needles, and yarn or embroidery thread. Show children how to take a piece of fabric, fold it in half, and sew up the sides in an in/out pattern. As needed, help them tie off their finished bags.



How to Do It

Point out the step-by-step directions for two different art projects at the end of the book. Ask the group, "What project can you give step-by-step directions for to help someone make it?" Students can write or draw pictures for their how-to directions.



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Creative Recycling and Upcycling

Here are three creative activities you can use or adapt with kids to extend the spirit of imagination and the appreciation for all the ways clothing and other materials can be repurposed.

Class Quilt

Use Libby's idea of a quilt made from old baby clothes as a starter for making a group quilt. Provide fabric or ask families to contribute old pieces of cloth or clothing; gather other materials such as yarn, darning needles, ribbon, buttons, and fabric glue. Children can make simple patches that you combine into a quilt to display. An easy way to put the quilt together is to glue the individual patches on an old bedsheet, tablecloth, or towel. Hot glue works well on cloth if you or another adult will be gluing the patches.

Recycled Art

Talk with your group about ways to make something fun, artistic, or useful from old things rather than new ones. Possible sources of items to recycle are endless: socks with holes, plastic bottles, cardboard from boxes, bubble wrap, leftover wrapping paper, pictures from birthday cards or magazines, loose playing cards, broken bits of jewelry. Enlist help from family adults to gather clean materials to recycle. Then have students work independently or with partners to create works of art to display.

Upcycled Paper Bags

Before doing this activity, reach out to a local clothing or toy drive to learn how to contribute items. Then have children decorate used paper shopping bags (such as grocery bags) for collecting used clothing or toys. Distribute the bags at a school open house or other family event or send them home to families. Include a note about the drive and how families can contribute or help.





When I am embarrassed, I _____

When someone else is embarrassed, I can _____



How to _____

What you need

- * _____
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____

What you do

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



About the Author and Illustrator



Gabriella Aldeman (she/her) is a Panamanian American author who is constantly trying to mend her children’s torn pants, broken toys, and stained everything—nothing some colorful patches (or superglue) can’t fix! She writes picture books in hopes that more children become readers and that all readers feel seen. She is also a professional translator and holds degrees from Georgetown University and the College of William and Mary. Gabriella lives in Fairfax, Virginia, with her partner and two children. This is her debut picture book. Please visit her at writebetween.com.

Rocio Arreola Mendoza (she/her) is a self-taught illustrator with a background in graphic design. She loves connecting with other creatives, and has worked with local colleagues to develop conferences, workshops, and drawing events in her city, including the activist-art centered Curcumas Creative Studio. You can find Rocio working in her home studio in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, in the high north of México, between the river and the sea. There she will be brewing Chinese tea, playing in the garden with her husband and son, and listening to folk music.

