

Lamont Books Standing Order

March 2013

Teacher Notes and Activities

Vietnam Diary

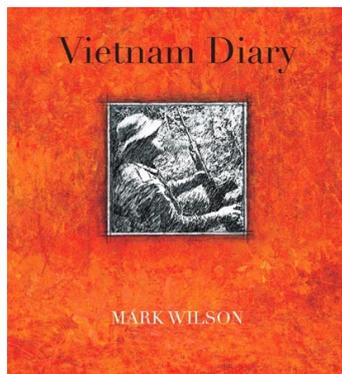
By Mark Wilson

ISBN 9780734412744

\$24.99

A powerful and moving story about the bonds of brotherhood and the tragedy of war, from the creator of MY MOTHER'S EYES and ANGEL OF KOKODA.

Leigh and Jason are inseparable. But when Jason is conscripted and sent to fight in Vietnam, they are divided not just by distance, but their beliefs about the war.



Teacher notes taken from those supplied by the publishers. A full version is available at their site: www.hachettechildrens.com.au.

Themes:

- Vietnam War
- Anti-War Protest
- Bravery
- Friendship

Discussion Points & Activities:

- Research the role played by Australian troops in the Vietnam War.
- Many more Vietnamese people suffered too, and some left their country and came to Australia or travelled to other countries. Research the stories of these so-called 'boat people'.
- Mark Wilson, in his series about children at war, has suggested that generations in Australia have been affected by war. Discuss this topic. You may wish to examine your own family history, in relation to this question. Families are often unaware of their own ancestors' experience of war until they research it. For example, you may have grandparents or great aunts or uncles who fought in wars and even died in them and you don't know about it.
- The Vietnam War aroused deep-seated anger in Australia, where many felt that it was not a war Australia should have been involved in. Read about the protest movement at the time. Design a poster reflecting these ideals.
- Discuss the notions of peaceful protest and conscientious objection. How would you have reacted if you'd been conscripted as Jason was? How might your family react?
- How would you describe bravery? Is Jason brave or naive? Is Leigh brave, or as some people suggested then, a coward? What brave people do you know? Why do you think they are brave? Would you be happy to go to war? Why?
- Research the role played by the Australian government in Vietnam, and how the war came to an end.
- Students might paint their own image of the war in an impressionistic way. After the works are completed, students can then display them as an exhibition created in response to this text.
- Discuss the values conveyed in this text in how Jason and Leigh respond to war. One feels a sense of patriotic duty. The other is anti-war and anti-violence. Discuss the concept of 'bonds of brotherhood' mentioned on the cover and the ideal of mateship and how war forges such relationships.