

**Subject**  
Language Arts  
Social Studies

**Grade 5+**

## Summary

Explore in detail, the characters and artwork of the story, *Freedom child of the Sea*, by Grenadian storyteller and author, Richardo Keens-Douglas. The activities include role-playing, analyzing artwork from the story, and talking about the importance of positive messages.

## Overall

### Expectations

Students will read a variety of fiction and analyse and create media works.

## Specific

### Expectations

Students will identify a writer's perspective or character's motivation.

Students will analyse and assess a media work and express a considered viewpoint about it.

## Author

Kim Saunders

# Freedom Child of the Sea

## BACKGROUND

Recently, FCP met with Richardo Keens - Douglas at his home in Grenada. In our conversation with the well-known storyteller, author and playwright, he talked about how his work has enabled him to travel and meet young people all around the world. It's also allowed him to share his message of how everyone of us is special.



(ISBN 1-55037-372-2)

From his publisher's website

([www.annickpress.com/authors/keensdouglas.asp?author=231](http://www.annickpress.com/authors/keensdouglas.asp?author=231))

Richardo talks about *Freedom Child of the Sea*. It is an honest while hopeful story of the human spirit, set against a backdrop of slavery. Richardo explains: "Slavery happened, and when kids find out about it, they'll want to talk about it. Hopefully, *Freedom Child of the Sea* can be used as a springboard for discussion."

As with all of Richardo's work, this story gives a message of hope for all mankind. "*Take pride, take time, take care, give love, be yourself. God never makes mistakes.*"

**ACTIVITY: Read the story, *Freedom child of the sea*. Below is a selection of follow-up activities for your class or small group.**

1. In the story, the old man tells the young boy that some strangers came to a place in Africa "*where everyone was happy and lived with pride....the strangers came not to give, nor to share. They had come to take. And what they wanted were the humans.*"
  - a) In small groups, role-play what the strangers have come to say to the Village Elders. With partners or small groups, create the scene and perform.
  - b) You are a young village member whose family has been taken away. You were hiding and have been left behind. In your hiding place, talk about what you've seen and how you feel. You have relatives in a village far away. What will you do?

2. The artwork by Julia Gukova is complex and beautiful. There are layers of images on many of the pages. On the inside of the jacket, the description of the artwork reads, “The art in this book was rendered in mixed media”. This means a variety of techniques and materials was used by the artist.
  - a) Browse through the book, looking closely on each page. See if you can identify the types of materials or techniques the artist may have used. For example, did the artist tear different colours of paper and use them in some parts of the illustration or did she cut paper with scissors? How many different types of paper are included in one illustration?
  - b) Look closely to see if you can identify what material the artist used -oil paints, watercolours, coloured pencils, markers? If you are unfamiliar with these materials – try experimenting with some.
  - c) Using plasticene, make an image of the Freedom Child. The description in the story may help.
3. The old man starts the story of the Freedom Child for the young boy with “*Once upon a time, a very long time ago, there was a place in Africa...*” The artist, Julia Gukova illustrates this part of the world with incredible imagination. Examine the illustration to see if you can identify the animals and humans.
  - a) How many different animals and people do you see?
  - b) How many different patterns do you see?
4. After hearing the story from the old man, imagine that the young boy wants to communicate with the Freedom Child. In role as the young boy, write a letter to the Freedom Child. You can put your letter in a bottle and if you live near the sea, drop it in the ocean for others to find.
5. At the conclusion of the story, the old man shares his feelings with the young boy, “*I believe there is hope for all of us.*” Why is this an important message?