



Inquire to Learn!

There are many ways in which *The Sun-Child/Tonga: The Friendly Islands* can be used as a base for Inquiry Learning. This is just one suggestion.

Session 1

Using the Big Book, share-read *The Sun-Child*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of the sun, royalty/important people, family relationships, presents, curiosity, and weddings.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion

The Sun: *Why does the sun often appear in folk tales?* Discuss the importance of the sun to life, and how the sun is sometimes portrayed as a god or a demi-god in folk tales. Discuss also that folk tales often focus on aspects of life and values that are important to a country/culture.

Royalty/Important People: *What sets royalty and other important people apart from everyone else? How are they treated?* Brainstorm important people who are shown respect e.g. principal, minister/priest, prime minister and members of parliament, judges, tohunga and kaumātua, members of a royal family.

Family Relationships: *Who are the most important people in your life?* Discuss that family members are often the most important people in our lives, and that members of a family have responsibilities to one another. Discuss that family relationships and family responsibilities are different for different families and for different cultures.

Presents: *Are presents always good? Why/why not? Are there rules around the giving and receiving of presents? Is it difficult to wait to open a present?* Discuss the nature of presents, making sure to talk about important times when presents are given, such as at weddings. Be aware that children may have a variety of views and experiences around the giving and receiving of presents.

Weddings: *What happens at a wedding?* Invite the children to share wedding experiences they have had. Talk about ceremonies such as weddings being different for different cultures. *How might a royal wedding be different to the wedding of ordinary people? How might it be the same?*

Text and Illustration Based Inquiry Questions

Cover: Look at the cover and read the title. *What do you notice about the sun on the cover and throughout **The Sun-Child**?* Discuss how the illustrator has drawn the sun to look like a Tongan man. *Who do you think is the sun-child in this story?* (the baby)

P. 2: Revisit the sentences: *One day the sun looked down from his home in the sky and saw Fataimoeloa's beauty. He fell in love with her.* Introduce the word *personification* and define it as the giving of human qualities to an object or animal. Explain that personification is a tool to make stories and poems more interesting.

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Teacher’s Notes continued

P. 5: Revisit the sentence: *Fataimoeloa was sad to let her son go, but the wishes of the Tu’i Tonga had to be obeyed.* and discuss the power held by royalty and other rulers. Ensure that the children also understand that being chosen by the Tu’i Tonga was a great honour.

P. 6: Revisit the sentence: *“Your father has found you a husband,” said the messenger.* and discuss the concept of arranged marriage within a historical, cultural, and social context. Ensure the topic is dealt with sensitively and that the children understand that arranged marriage is still practised within some cultures today.

P. 7: Revisit the sentence: *She felt dazzled when she looked at her future husband, as if she had been staring at the sun.* and discuss the author’s use of poetic language to emphasize the connection between Sisimataela’a and his father, the sun.

P. 10: *Why did Sisimataela’a swim east to get near to his father, the sun?* (Because the sun rises in the east.)

P. 12: *Why did the sun give Sisimataela’a a present of two packages?* (In celebration of his marriage and to help him in his married life). *Why did the sun give his child both monū, fortune, and mala, misfortune?* (Because all things in life must be balanced.)

P. 14: *Would you be curious about what was inside the two packages? If given the choice, which package would you peek inside? Why?*

P. 15: *Why did the ocean suddenly become so stormy?* (Because Sisimataela’a disobeyed his father and peeked into the package mala.)

PP. 16–17: *Why were the people expecting that Fataimoeloa and Sisimataela’a had brought gifts for the wedding?* (Because in Tonga it is customary for the groom and his family to give gifts to the bride’s family to show respect, particularly in the case of a royal wedding.)

PP. 18–19: *Look at the illustration. What do you notice about the people and boats arriving?* (Many of them are carrying food and other goods for the wedding celebrations.)

PP. 20–21: Revisit the text: *Sisimataela’a took a deep breath and unwrapped the package monū.* Ask, *How do you think Sisimataela’a is feeling at this point?* (nervous)

P. 22: Discuss how surprising it would have been for poor Sisimataela’a to produce more gifts and food than the King himself. Discuss the full meaning of the sentence: *They knew then that Sisimataela’a was no ordinary man.* (The Tu’i Tonga and the people realized that Sisimataela’a must be special to have brought the mystery gifts of monū and mala.)

PP. 22–23: Revisit the text on P. 15 to remind the children of what had happened when Sisimataela’a had peeked inside the package mala. Ask, *How would Sisimataela’a be feeling about opening the package mala this time?* (very worried) Refer to the text on P. 23 and talk about the possible reasons that the package mala has brought mixed blessings this time.

P. 24: *How does the folk tale’s ending reinforce the idea that family and family approval is important in Tongan culture?*

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Using the text: *Fataimoeloa dressed her son in special clothes.* from P. 22 as a springboard, challenge the students to research the special clothes traditionally worn at weddings for a variety of cultures. Invite them to make a poster or some other creative display of wedding clothing from around the world.

Challenge the students to learn all about the sun and present their findings as a poster.

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Teacher's Notes continued

Share other folk tales that feature the sun e.g. *A Visit to Sun and Moon* (StoryWorld 1, Inuit); *How Māui Slowed the Sun* (Māori); *Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky* (Africa); *Sun, Moon, and Wind Go Out to Dinner* (India).

Invite the children to write their own folk tales featuring the sun.

Share the Greek folk tale *Pandora's Box* and compare it to *The Sun-Child*. Ask, *How are they the same? How are they different?*

Using the illustrations of boats in *The Sun-Child* as a springboard, challenge the students to research traditional Tongan boats and their different uses. Some students may like to present their findings as either an oral or written report. Other students might be inspired to build models of the boats they learn about.

As a class, find and list all of the Tongan words in *The Sun-Child* (excluding names): *Tu'i Tonga* – King, *monū* – fortune, *mala* – misfortune, *kātoanga* – celebration, *koloa* – gifts, *falehau* – a large house fit for a chief. Research to learn new Tongan words and add them to your list.

Session 2

Using the Big Book, share-read *Tonga: The Friendly Islands*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of Tonga and Tongan culture, Polynesia, ceremonies, Māui, royalty, Tongan crafts, whales, rugby, and Tongan rugby players.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion and Inquiry

Tongan Greeting: *People in Tonga speak Tongan. Does anyone know how to greet someone in Tongan? People say mālō e lelei.*

Cover: Look at the cover of *Tonga: The Friendly Islands* and ask, *Why do you think Tonga might be called "The Friendly Islands"*. After some discussion, refer to the caption on P. 1. Discuss Captain James Cook and his role in the exploration of New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific.

Location of Tonga/Geography: Look at the map on P. 1 of *Tonga: The Friendly Islands* and note the location of Tonga in the Pacific Ocean and in relation to New Zealand. Discuss that the flight time between Tonga and Auckland is 2 hours, 50 minutes, which makes Tonga a close neighbour. If any of the children come from Tonga or have visited there, invite them to share their

experiences. Note the word *Polynesia* on P. 1 and, using a world map as a reference, define it as the triangular area that extends from New Zealand up to the Hawaiian Islands and east to Easter Island. Invite the children to find and name other countries within Polynesia such as Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands, and Tokelau etc (note that Fiji is part of Melanesia rather than Polynesia).

Tongan Culture: Revisit the following text on P. 1 of *Tonga: The Friendly Islands*: *Tonga is a very traditional country. Many people still live in village communities and follow traditional ways of life.* Discuss the word *traditional* and make sure that the children understand its meaning (a long-established way of doing things that has been passed down from parents to children over many generations). Revisit the text on PP. 2–3 and discuss the different aspects of Tongan life and culture, drawing on students' prior knowledge and experience. *How is life in Tonga the same as life in New Zealand? How is it different?*

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Teacher's Notes continued

Royalty/Kingdoms: Reread P. 4. Discuss that countries can be ruled in different ways and explore the concepts of monarchies and democracies. Ensure that the children understand that New Zealand is a democracy, ruled by elected leaders. Explain that New Zealand, Australia, and Tonga are part of the Commonwealth, which is led by the British royal family, but that each country in the Commonwealth, including Great Britain and Tonga, has its own leaders/rulers. In Tonga the ruler is the Tongan king and in New Zealand and Australia the leaders are the prime ministers. Reread the caption on P. 5 and ask, *Why do you think Queen Sālote thought it was important to teach Tongan culture as part of the school curriculum?*

Whale-Watching: Invite the children to share any experiences of whale-watching they may have had. Ask, *Why do people enjoy whale-watching?* Introduce the concept of ecotourism, and explain that ecotourism aims to provide tourists with experiences that protect the environment, provide economic benefits to the local community, and educate and inform the traveller. Ask, *Would you like to swim with whales? Why/why not?*

Rugby: Brainstorm rugby players, both past and present, who are Tongan or of Tongan descent.

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Using the photo on the Contents page of *Tonga: The Friendly Islands* as a starting point, research the giant stone doorway in Tongatapu known as Ha'amonga 'a Māui (Burden of Māui). Invite the students to write their own folk tale explaining how this doorway came to be.

Using the question *Why do people only live on around 36 of Tonga's islands?* as a starting point, research to find out more about the geography of Tonga. Challenge the students to draw a map of Tonga, labelling the main islands.

Research the flag, coat of arms, and motto of Tonga. Challenge the students to design their own coat of arms for their family or for the class.

Watch online videos of Tongan dance and song performances. It may be possible to arrange for the class to see a live performance in the community.

Learn about Tongan crafts, such as woodcarving, mat weaving, and bark cloth making.

Research Tongan foods. It may be possible to sample some common foods such as *ufi* (yam), *manioke* (tapioka), *talo* (taro), and *niu* (coconut).

Challenge the students to learn more about humpback whales and write their own Fun Facts based on what they have learned.

Invite the students to choose a well-known rugby player of Tongan descent and write a profile/biography on him/her.