



The City of Ember

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The city of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to flicker. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds a secret that will save the city. She and her friend Doon must decipher the message before the lights go out on Ember forever!

Activity 1 – Necessities of Life

1. Bean sprout experiment
 - a. Using a small paper cup and dirt, seed grow your own plant.
 - b. Talk about what it needs to grow; light, nurturing, water, care.
 - c. What does it mean to nurture? (Constant care – believing it will grow).
 - d. Write about what you have learned from watching the seed sprout.

Activity 2 – Jobs

1. In the book, citizens chose their careers by pulling them out of a bag.
 - a. Draw jobs out of a bag – would you be happy with that? How would you perform it? What would your job choice actually be? Would that be enough schooling? Would you want school to end or keep going?
 - b. Share your job with the class: come dressed up to class in the clothes of your profession.
 - c. Do the jobs that others chose really fit them?

Activity 3 - Predictions

1. Mysterious box
 - a. Make your own treasure box using any material. Then fill the treasure box with miscellaneous treasures: what would they be?
2. Just as their jobs were decided at random, use the same method to make other decisions at random. Place a list of choices in the treasure box and allow family/class members to select one at a time.
3. Make decisions in your family or classroom based on pulling it out of a bag.

Activity 4 – Bugs Plants and Underground Life

1. Draw the type of bugs that have adapted to live underground – what adaptations would they need?
2. Doon was fascinated with bugs in the book. If you lived in an underground city, what do you think the bugs would look like?
3. Make your own bugs by using any household or kitchen item to create it.

Activity 5 - Ember comes to the other city

1. Read the last part of the book when the city of Ember comes to the other city and the other city thinks that they look so raggedy and poor.
 - a. What makes a person look good or in style – look in magazines and pick what styles you like – are they fads? Do those material things give you more value or more status?

- b. What is it that gives you status – who were the most important people in the story? Were they also the people with the most status? See Chapter 20.
- c. Lina had to re-create her friendship with Doon in order for them to work together – can you think of people who you have stopped associating with that later you might value?
- d. What will people do to become popular – to feel accepted, to have value?
- e. What qualities would you want in a friend through difficult times and challenges? – think outside your group of friends.

Activity 6 – Different endings

1. After Doon and Lina leave on the raft, we don't see what is happening to the city. Then they throw the instructions down the hole to the city floor, but we don't know what happens after that. Write different endings to the story OR fill in the story from the time the kids drop down the instructions until the city follows and comes above ground.

Activity 7 – Be a detective!

1. Create a list or instructions or clip an article from the newspaper or a magazine.
 - a. Remove parts of the article using white out or tape. Let your group use detective work by filling in the blanks and deciphering the message.
 - b. Use the original or master to check the work.

Activity 8 – Packing your bundle

1. Lina and Doon had to pack their bundles of belongings to leave the city forever.
 - a. If you had to pack your things in a backpack – what would you take?
 - b. What would be the hardest to part with?
 - c. Create a list of items and ask the class/family to rank them in order of importance for this adventure. Include items such as money, a blow dryer, candle, matches, food, clothing, radio, books, photos, fun things, etc. Then make them choose 5 items that they think are the most important to have.

Activity 9 – Create a Newspaper!

1. Lay out an “underground” newspaper.
 - a. Write an article about the reason to go underground. Was it a weather catastrophe? Was it war?
 - b. Write an ad to persuade people to come to an underground city.
 - c. Write “want ads” to determine what the people in an underground city would need.
 - d. Add other sections of interest to your newspaper. Look at your own home newspaper for ideas.

Activity 10 Create a far away hidden city

1. Draw it then describe it.
2. Create a colorful brochure to persuade people to come to this far away city. Exchange it with another group or class and see how many people would actually come based on your brochure.
3. Conduct a survey of class/family members-why would they go? Why wouldn't they go?
4. How would you pass on important information until the right time? How could you make sure it wasn't lost?