



# Lost and Found Cat

The True Story  
of Kunkush's  
Incredible Journey

Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes

Illustrated by Sue Cornelison



**Genre:** Juvenile Nonfiction/  
Animals

**Ages:** 4 to 8

**Grades:** P to 3

**Themes:** Diversity, Migration,  
Refugee, Immigration

**This guide provides talking  
points on:**

- Refugees and Migration
- Being “new” and being  
“different”
- Coming together to help  
one another

In this beautifully illustrated story, we meet a real-life refugee family who left Mosul, Iraq, in 2015. Sura and her five children—and their beloved cat—spent weeks traveling by foot, bus, and boat through Turkey, Greece, Germany, and eventually into Norway. Along the way, they are aided by an international community of volunteers, who provide transportation and support to the millions of refugees fleeing war and famine. When Kunkush was lost amidst the chaos of the journey, the family had no choice but to travel on without him. Days later, a team of volunteers (including the authors of the book!) found Kunkush in Greece. They used the Internet—and helpers from all over the world—to reunite Kunkush with his family.

### **Before Watching:**

- In *Lost and Found Cat*, Sura and her family have to decide what to bring when they flee their home. Invite students to imagine they are going on a long journey. What would they bring? Why?

### **Pause and Discuss:**

- *Lost and Found Cat* features a rich and descriptive vocabulary, including some words that may be unfamiliar to young children. As you watch, pause the video to invite children to define or act out the new words they encounter, paying attention to how the words differ from synonyms. How is *smuggle* different than *bring*? What does it mean to *flee* rather than *leave*? What might it look like to give permission *grudgingly*?

### **After Watching:**

Lead students in a discussion of key ideas in the text, including:

- There are many reasons why people migrate. Sometimes people migrate because they are leaving, or fleeing, something unpleasant or dangerous; other times, they migrate because they are hoping to find something new or exciting. What are some things that might push people out of their homes or home country? What are things that might draw people to explore somewhere new?
- Sura and her family had a long and difficult journey. They traveled across hundreds of miles, and spent weeks on the road. However, they never got discouraged. Why not?



- When Kunkush got lost in Greece, the local cats knew he was a stranger. They hissed, and spat at him, and chased him away. How do you think that made Kunkush feel? How would it make human refugees and immigrants feel if they were treated unkindly for being different?
- There were many people who helped Sura, her children, and Kunkush along their journey. Who were some of these people? What did they do to help? How did people work together across linguistic and geographic distance in order to reunite Sura and Kunkush?
- Sura's family traveled together. How did this affect their journey? How might the story be different if Sura traveled alone? How would traveling as a family unit help the journey? Is it possible that traveling as a family might hinder a journey?

## Thinking Beyond the Text:

One of the things that makes *Lost and Found Cat* special is that the authors worked with Kunkush's family to decide how to tell their story. Why is it important that people get to decide how to tell their own stories? How might this story have been different if it was told from someone else's perspective?

Guide students in examining the similarities and differences across multiple accounts of the journey, such as the stories on Amy's "Reunite Dias" [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/kunkushdias/) (<https://www.facebook.com/kunkushdias/>), or articles and videos like [these](https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2016/feb/19/refugee-family-who-fled-iraq-are-reunited-with-cat-video), (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2016/feb/19/refugee-family-who-fled-iraq-are-reunited-with-cat-video>) published in *The Guardian*. What is different?

## Exploring Stories of Migration:

- The authors of *Lost and Found Cat* include photographs and a map of Kunkush's journey. Use the details in the story to track the migration of the family. What types of transportation did they use for each leg of the journey? How long did the journey take?
- Next, create a map honoring the geographic diversity of your classroom and community. Where have students lived? Where are their ancestors from? Use an app [amCharts](https://www.amcharts.com/visited_countries/#) ([https://www.amcharts.com/visited\\_countries/#](https://www.amcharts.com/visited_countries/#)) to see how much of the world is represented in your classroom, school, or community.

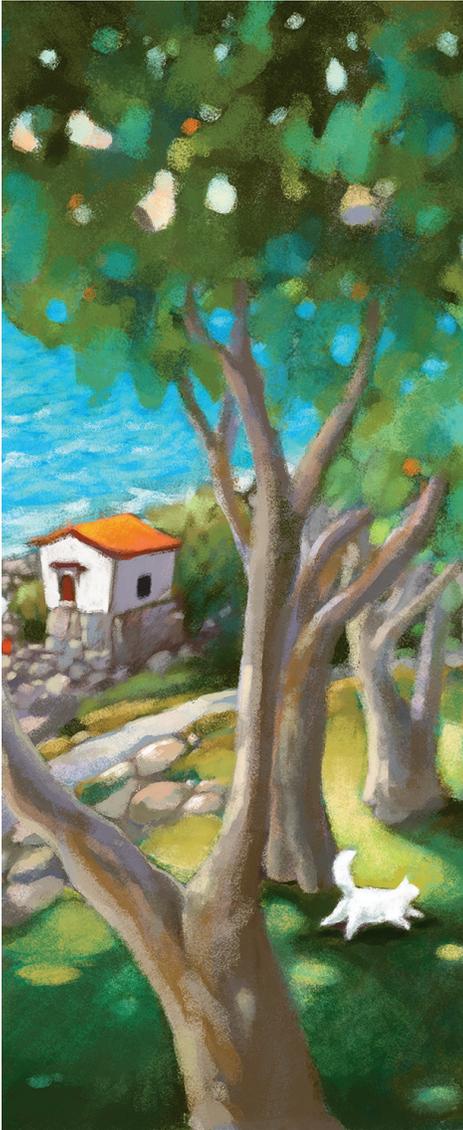




The above activities can support students in meeting the following Common Core Anchor Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.





## Extending the Conversation:

### Using Picture Books to Talk about Identity and Immigration

#### Exploring Stories of Migration:

There are many children's books that grapple with chosen and forced migration. These books can be useful for young readers and older children alike, as they examine the ideas raised in the text and make connections to their own experiences. To find other children's books related to diversity and social justice, visit your local library or use the resources below.

**6 Elements of Social Justice Education:** This website (<http://6elementssje.blogspot.mx/>) features an annotated list of children's literature, organized around six key themes (self-love and knowledge, respect for others, exploring issues of social injustice, social movement and social change, raising awareness, and taking action).

**Multicultural Children's Book Day:** This website (<https://multiculturalchildrensbookday.com/>) features resources, instructional materials, and recommendations to help teachers and parents use children's books to promote respect and understanding among culturally, geographically, and experientially diverse communities.

#### Taking Action:

There are a diverse array of local, national, and international organizations focused on immigration policy, advocacy, or providing legal, financial, and social support to immigrants and refugees. The [California Federation of Teachers](http://cft.org/safe-haven) (<http://cft.org/safe-haven>) has curated a comprehensive set of legal and educational resources for students, teachers, and families affected by changing education policies. Other groups, like [United We Dream](https://unitedwedream.org/) (<https://unitedwedream.org/>), are led by young people themselves and suggest ways [teachers can meet the needs of immigrant and refugee children](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/im_uac-educators-guide_2016.pdf) ([http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/im\\_uac-educators-guide\\_2016.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/im_uac-educators-guide_2016.pdf)).

**Extension Activity:** What are the groups and organizations that are most active in your community? How do they respond to the needs of diverse immigrant and refugee communities in your area? How can you, your classroom, and your school help welcome the immigrants and refugees in your community?

## Related Resources from Teaching Tolerance:

**[10 Myths about Immigration:](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/immigration-myths)** (<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/immigration-myths>) Many of us think we know about immigration, but actually only know some of the facts about the experiences of diverse migrants. This statistics-rich resource examines some of the most common myths about immigration, including the reasons why people migrate, ways documented and undocumented people enter the United States, and trends in employment among immigrants in the U.S.

**[My Family Journey \(Grades Pre-K-5\):](https://www.tolerance.org/lesson/my-family-journey)** (<https://www.tolerance.org/lesson/my-family-journey>) Many children do ancestry projects in elementary school. This standards-aligned lesson includes additional resources to help children examine their ancestry in its broader sociopolitical context by exploring historical trends in migration, pressure toward assimilation, and cultural influences in their own community.

**Extension activity:** Older children might examine how their family's immigration experience was impacted by broader policy questions within and beyond the United States. Resources like [this one](http://www.choices.edu/curriculum-unit/immigration-u-s-policy-debate/) (<http://www.choices.edu/curriculum-unit/immigration-u-s-policy-debate/>) use primary source documents to help children analyze the role of the United States as a sanctuary for refugees and immigrants, as well as the rationale for and impact of historical and contemporary anti-immigrant policies.

**[Who is an Immigrant? \(Grades 1-5\):](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/who-is-an-immigrant)** (<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/who-is-an-immigrant>) In this standards-aligned lesson, children explore multiple aspects of their own identity and culture. Next, they examine ways they are similar to and different from those around them. Finally, children read stories about children who are immigrants, and look for similarities and differences across diverse cultures and journeys. Extension activities include writing and art projects related to identity and shared experience.

**[The Motivation for Movement \(Grades 6-12\):](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/the-motivation-for-movement)** (<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/the-motivation-for-movement>) In this set of seven standards-aligned lessons, children read interviews with undocumented women who immigrated to the United States from Mexico, Guatemala, and other Latin American countries. They then analyze what pushed these women to leave their countries, as well as the factors that pulled them toward the U.S. Available resources include a [teachers' guide](http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Injustice_study_guide_web_0.pdf) ([http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Injustice\\_study\\_guide\\_web\\_0.pdf](http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Injustice_study_guide_web_0.pdf)) with activities for mathematics, English Language Arts, and social studies classes.



## About the Authors:

Amy Shrodes and Doug Kuntz felt compelled to travel to Greece to help with the refugee crisis, each in their own unique way—Amy as a volunteer helping the arriving refugees and raising awareness back at home through a podcast, and Doug as a photojournalist, who spent time in Greece, Turkey, France, Germany, and finally Norway, bringing the plight of the refugees to people around the globe. When they met Kunkush, they knew he was very special to someone and they wanted to do everything they could to reunite him with his family.

## About the Illustrator:

Sue Cornelison graduated with a BFA from Drake University and continued her studies at the International School of Studio Arts in Florence, Italy. Sue has worked as a full-time illustrator for over a decade. She wrote and illustrated *The Twelve Days of Christmas* in Iowa, as well as illustrated *Sofia's Dream*, *Down by the Bay*, *You're Wearing That to School?!*, and the *American Girl Bitty Baby* series. Sue works in her backyard treetop studio in a renovated 1909 carriage house in rural Iowa.

### Product Information

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\$14.99

Available for purchase from these outlets:



Available digitally from the below media service:



“Bound to be a hit with cats and kids alike...”  
- People.com

This resource guide was created by Dr. Alison Dover, of California State University, Fullerton. Dr. Dover is widely published in the fields of literacy education, teacher education, and social justice education.