

A Light for Lucinda

ACTIVITY KIT

Table of Contents

A Note to Educators.....	2
Discussion Questions.....	3
Classroom Activities.....	4
Bilingual Words of Resilience.....	5
The Resilience Candle Printable ...	6



978-1-62354-759-2 English HC
978-1-62354-819-3 Spanish HC
by Olga Herrera
e-book edition available

About the Book

When military violence erupts in the streets outside Lucinda’s home, the family joins together, pushing furniture against doors, filling cracks with wet napkins, and lighting candles when met with darkness. Amid the blasts and cries, Lucinda’s heart taps against her chest. Mamá’s spoon taps against her sizzling pan. How can she cook when so much is happening outside?

A Light for Lucinda honors the human instinct to provide order and stability during times of upheaval with poignant, uplifting storytelling.



About the Author-Illustrator

Olga Herrera is a Cuban and Ecuadorian author-illustrator who earned her BFA from Ringling College of Art and Design. She cofounded Illo Chat, a podcast for illustrators, and is an active, long-time member of SCBWI. She was born in Miami, Florida, and grew up in Ecuador. She now lives in Maryland with her husband, two children, and many pets. Her debut picture book, *The Unwelcome Surprise*, was published in 2023.

A Light for Lucinda

Activity Kit

A Note to Educators

Dear Educator,

As you well know, children are deeply observant. They notice the “flashes” in the distance—whether those are literal conflicts in the news or the metaphorical “storm” of life, such as community stress or loss.

In my book, *A Light for Lucinda: A Story from The Cuban Revolution*, we see the world through the eyes of a child who is watching, processing, and ultimately taking action to move forward during the conflict just outside her door. While the world outside is chaotic, the family finds strength in their own actions: a father offering refuge to a neighbor, a grandfather reinforcing the door, and a mother whose cooking fills the home with hope.

At the center of the story is the grandmother’s wisdom: “No need to curse the dark, we will just create our own light.” This story explores the power of agency—the idea that while we cannot always control outside circumstances, we can always choose how we care for one another on the inside.

Key Themes for Classroom Discussion:

- **The Circle of Control:** Focusing on our own actions in overwhelming times.
- **Practical Resilience:** How small tasks (cooking, helping, comforting) provide safety.
- **Individual Strength:** Recognizing that everyone’s “light” is unique.

I invite you to use this book as a bridge to talk about these big feelings with your students. I hope the following discussion questions and activities help them identify their own inner light and find comfort in the things they can control.

Thank you for the light you bring to your classroom every day.

With gratitude,

Olga Herrera, Author-Illustrator



A Light for Lucinda

Activity Kit

Discussion Questions

1. Observing Resilience (Comprehension)

- **The Helpers:** Each person in Lucinda’s family does something different to help.

What does Papá do?

What does Abuela do?

What does Abuelo Juan do?

Why is Mamá’s cooking just as important as reinforcing the doors?

- **Lucinda’s Action:**

What actions do you see Lucinda take? How do her actions help her family?

2. Sensory Contrast (Analytical Thinking)

- **The Smells:** At one point, the house smells like gunpowder, but then it smells like Mama’s cooking. How do you think the smell of food changes how Lucinda feels inside?

- **The Sounds & Sights:** There are flashes of light and noises outside, but inside, the family is working together. How does Lucinda’s family create a ‘safe space’ even when things are scary?

3. Social-Emotional Learning (Agency & Anxiety)

- **The Stomachache and Tapping Heartbeat:** Lucinda’s stomach hurts when she is worried. Have you ever felt a worry tummy? What are some things—like a hug from an aunt or a favorite meal—that help you feel better?

- **Doing What We Can:** Mama says she can’t control what is going on outside, but she can control her kitchen. What are small things we can do when we feel overwhelmed by big problems?

A Light for Lucinda

Activity Kit

Classroom Activities

“My Circle of Safety” Mapping

The Activity: Have students draw a house. Inside the house, ask them to write the names of people who help them feel brave. Outside the house, ask them to write things they can't control.

The Lesson: This helps children realize that while we can't stop the outside noise, we can strengthen our inside world.

The Resilience Candle Activity (Art & Writing)

The Craft:

- **The Front (Individual Identity):** Using the candle template, ask students to decorate the front as unique as they are. They can use different colors, patterns, or textures to show their personal style.
- **The Back (Personal Agency):** On the back of their candle, students respond to the following prompt:

“When things feel dark or scary, I can make my own light by . . .” (e.g. “I can read a story to my little brother,” or “I can help my grown-ups clean up after dinner”)

The Goal: By the end of the activity, the classroom will be filled with a community of light—a collection of unique candles that show everyone has the power to take action.

Sensory Resilience Sorting Game

This activity can help children understand how the family pushes back against the war outside.

The Activity: Create a T-chart for the classroom board.

- **Column A (The Dark/Outside):** Flashes (gunfire), gunpowder smell, scary noises, ground rumbling.
- **Column B (Our Light/Inside):** Candlelight, food aromas, reinforcing the door, wet napkins, hugs.

The Lesson: Discuss how Column B doesn't make Column A go away, but it makes the

A Light for Lucinda

Activity Kit

Bilingual Words of Resilience

A Light For Lucinda takes place in Cuba. Even though the story is told in English, these Spanish words help tell the story of the family's heritage and bravery.

Note: *Una luz para Lucinda: Una historia de la Revolución cubana* is available as a Spanish-language edition of this story.

Spanish	English	In the Story
Luz	Light	What Abuela makes when the lights go out.
Refugio	Refuge	The safe place Lucinda's family shares with others.
Valentia	Bravery	What Lucinda shows when she helps her family.
Familia	Family	The people who work together to stay safe.
Esperanza	Hope	The feeling they all share as they prepare for a new day.

A Light for Lucinda

Activity Kit

The Resilience Candle

1. Cut along the dotted line

2. Color your Candle

3. On the back, write what you can do to create your own light.

