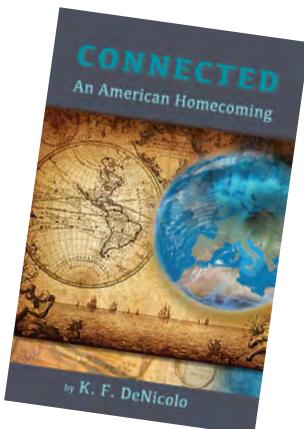


In the Age of Covid-19

# A Virtual Study Guide - Extended Activities Journal

## *for Parent and Children*



*to accompany K.F. DeNicolo's book*

## **Connected** An American Homecoming

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### Author

**K. F. DeNicolo**

[www.kfDeNicolo.com](http://www.kfDeNicolo.com)

and visit K. F. DeNicolo on Facebook

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### Graphic Design & Production

Chris Poston & Tiffani Fleming

[www.figraphics.com](http://www.figraphics.com)

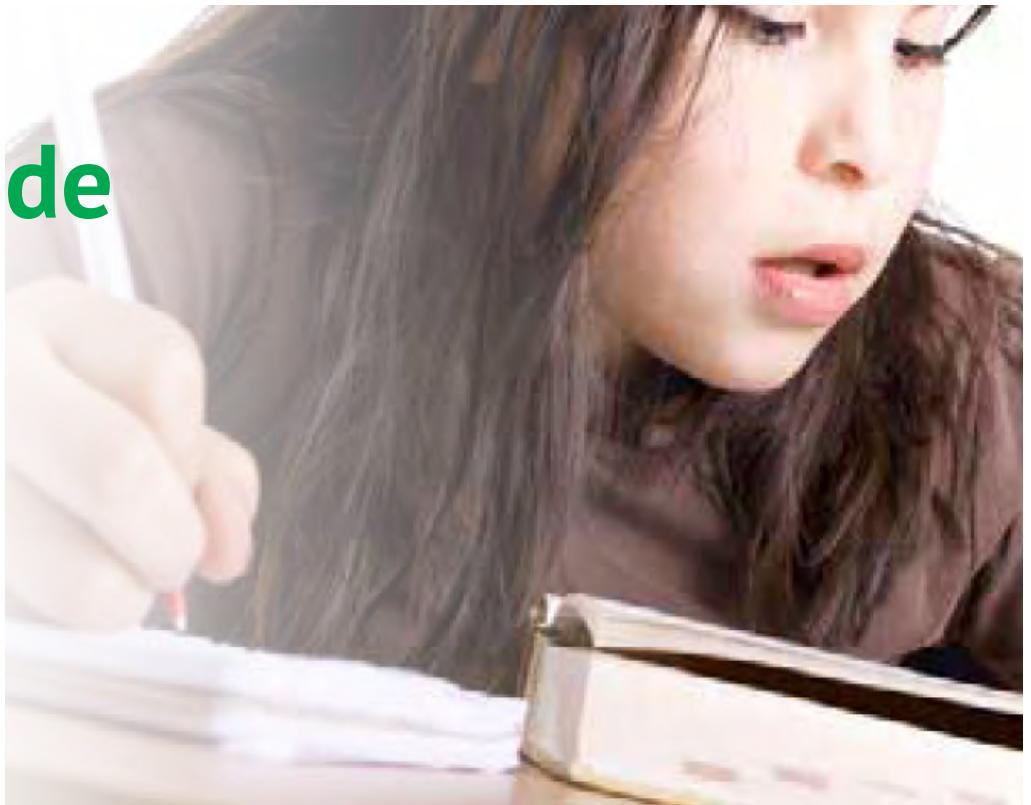
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# **Study Guide**



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# **Extended Activities Journal**

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## Journaling for Connected :An American Homecoming: Extended Activities

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### Chapter 1.Spring's Message: Who or what's your lifeline?Getting to Know You: Point of View

Catherine's hands shook as she placed the small black stone in her pocket along the small packet of seeds. She knew she had to leave home. What she didn't know was how. Pack your life in a suitcase. She backed away from the window and pulled her eyes away from the beautiful sea and the nearby orchards. She turned quickly and stumbled into a table. She caught the pottery bowl slipping off the table's edge. She dug into her pocket , kissed the stone and packet of seeds. She would plant them in her new home or would she?

A. Scavenger Hunt : Pair up with someone and choose five items from the story or your own place. You can check your pockets, dig in your bag, or walk through your house. What do these things say about you and your family. Interview your partner and jot the answers in your journal page.

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B. Menus: Plan a gathering. Invite guests. Prepare a menu of favorite food. Provide entertainment- share picture albums, play a variety of music and

Chapters 2: "Why take a chance- because it's absolutely the right thing to do."

Homesick-that's what our car seemed to say as it stalled. We'd fastened the belts and mom finally started the car. Dad had flown to our new house a few days before. "Are we there yet," my little sister whined. Road trip blues after 3 minutes! A new record I thought. "Should I stay or should I go. I don't know." That was the chorus my parents had been singing for a few months now. Weigh it out- either or, the pro and con's, the works and doesn't and whoever imagined that would happen? Either way and everyway the dice were rolled. We hit the road and I wondered if it wasn't going to hit us back.

Write a letter of advice about going down the road of change. Tell it's effect on you.

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What are the chances checklist! Picture some of the chances people take. Check off the options most likely to succeed.

(Some scenes of everyday life)

Chapter 3. New Neighborhood: America: "What do you do when everything that can go wrong does?"

"Where in the world are we?" That's what my mother said when we moved through the security line and immigration. I held her hand a little tighter and stepped closer. The only problem with mom's question was that it was in a foreign language- Italian. Someone might answer us- in English in America. Whatever, I stepped closer to my mom and watched the crowd carefully. We were different from them. Was that dangerous? I waited along the sideline of the immigration desk for someone to rescue us. Someone moved across the room. Was that cold steely man my father?

A. Travel blues or yahoos: Share some examples where you or someone you know had to move to a new area. Draw pictures that show the many different styles and backgrounds . What took some getting used to? Share a few stepping stones to solutions?

People

Places

Things

B. Role Play: Introduce yourself to a newcomer. Interview them to find out where they're from and what were the reasons for stretching their experiences and interests. Jot down their answers.

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#### Chapter 4. Change: Slow Road? "Did you ever want to escape?"

**She wanted to crack the mirror and wipe out the awful truth.No one looked or acted exactly like her. I don't fit in she whispered to herself." I want to go back home to my old neighborhood" she spit out the words to her father.**

He swallowed hard, stiffened his jaw, and continued to unpack her suitcase. He pulled a map from his back pocket, "This is where we're going tomorrow to learn English." She stared at the map in his iron grip and knew it would be a long slow road home.

**A.Comfort zone. Picture some things that make you comfortable and are relaxing.**

**B.Stretching your limits. Make a board game to deal with life's problems. Add some funny and fierce examples of your own. Mix up people and style. Stir in some twists of fate. Create a surprise and embrace the change.**

**Chapter 5.Hall Pass: “Were you ever scared of being tested?”**

**He pulled out an old alarm clock, set the dials to “high noon,” and handed it to his grandmother. “That kind of nonsense goes on with lots of people.”**

**She replayed her grandson’s conversation and rushed moves to do his homework. Something was wrong. Should she take her own warnings that trouble was near?**

**A. Warning Signs: Collect samples of warning signs and proverbs. Draw a short cartoon showing the lesson learned.**

**B. Researcher: Find 5 important facts about common problems for young teenagers.**

**C. Researcher: Find 5 outstanding contributions by teenagers.**

**Chapter 6. Leaving for school: “Did you ever want to be perfect?”**

**She'd kept the diary between the mattresses and locked. She gently pulled the diary from the bedding. There were funny stories between the pages. She'd smile when she reread them. There were questions written, “Know what you sound like? She wrote the**

words in large letters with red ink. The paper was thin where she had traced a teardrop with damp fingers.

“Someone who cares for you?” A slow response and a question at that? She closed the diary, locked it and hid it away. Her conscience wasn’t as easy to silence or slip away.

- A. Poster Child: Dear Diary: Pictures of Me and Growing to Be: traits you admire in yourself and others. So that it’s written all over you.
- B. Turnaround: Pretend you are a parent. Give your children some rules to live by - make it “music to their ears.”
- C. Write or collect a songbook, play list that resembles this story.
- D. Children’s Book: Illustrate story so that a four year old could understand this story.

#### Chapter 7: “Seize the day.”

Yeah, we’ll move to our favorite song . In a second, they both started dancing in unison. They were hometown kids filled with energy and deeply planted patches of their neighborhoods. They’d danced at the street parties, cheered from the grandstands.

- A. Fashion parade: dressing in style. Draw or prepare a collage or scrapbook of favorite looks.
- B. Favorite moves: Pictures or videos to show the dance scene.
- C. Pictures of guests at the dance party.

#### Chapter 8. Cafeteria: “My troubles are over only to find an unwelcome surprise.”

**She was the center of gravity, the focal point at the eye of the storm. Talking things over with his grandmother always gave him insights..."I had to rush over here to catch one of your cliffhangers where the hero overcomes despite all odds. Tell me a story?"**

**"What, you think I have a flavor of the day that's going to give you the courage to be yourself?"**

- A. Get it down in writing. Brag about it! Real life, name in lights, star attraction-promoting myself chart.**
- B. Sing a song or write one that talks about the courage to overcome and struggle to reach a goal.**

**Chapter 9: "Have you ever had a favorite place? What if someone came one day and destroyed it?"**

**"So are you still battling the monster," the grandson asked.**

**"Oh yes, we've become friendly enemies, like dueling opponents at the chessboard," GG answered.**

- A. Winner & Still Champ! Take a bow and describe a time where you or someone you know won peacefully.**
- B. What is polite disagreement? Demonstrate example in a short skit and dramatize.**

**Chapters 10-12: "Such is life."**

**He pulled the compass, the pen, the maps and stared at his grandmother. "It's all there somehow!"**

**“What mystery?” she looked puzzled as she handled each of the pieces. She laid each piece down carefully, precisely and smiled.**

- A. Research the world’s greatest mysteries. Unravel them-a hypothesis..**
- B. Problem-Solving: Share your “light bulb” revelations, “breakthrough” moments when you finally got the picture.**
- C. Build on favorite scenes & key lines. How would you advertisethem?**
- D. Lessons along the way: Picture it!**

**HINT! Somethings to think about:What did you know before you began? What do you need to know more about? What did you learn.**

#### AUTHOR’S NOTES

Why did I write the story?

I meant it as a dose of humanity in a growing technological, impersonal, and violent world. It is the heartwarming stories of grandma takes on a mission- use all her powers to instill life-affirming qualities to the next generation. Get her grandson back home-rescue him from the risk of violence at every turn. Although a peacemaker, she is to wage a battle, very close to her heart – to claim lifelong lessons for her grandson. Can she possibly deliver the mission when her faithful companion is lost, the odds are against her, and her body has started to betray her?

What’s the meaning of the summaries, activities, the questions, the notes?

It’s meant to be an interactive partnership among readers and writers for common ground and common solutions.

Is this book supposed to be about the “good old days?”

It’s more about finding good connections and values in the days ahead.

#### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The story begins with a young couple a sixteen year old woman and 17 year old man. They share a dream, become a team, start a family, cross the Atlantic, and conquer the world. In what

ways do immigrants share the same problems when dealing with a new land? What was so different about this young couple? What are the similarities and the contrasts in many walks of life today?

2. Do you think most people have problems fitting into new places with new people? How do similar problems keep coming around throughout life; for example, moving to a new neighborhood, a new school, or job?
3. Do Catherine and Tav seem to agree on plans throughout their life? Do you agree that you may have a plan until the “rest of the world weighs in?”
4. Ever have the feeling that you’re outside the inner circle? How is that true of all the characters in this story? Outsiders, insiders and points of view?
5. How is the story of Jo, Vinnie’s mother, so much like Vinnie’s own story?
6. Are Catherine and Tav American heroes? Would they be heroes in many countries?
7. Are there world-class bullies as well as neighborhood thugs mentioned in this story?

### **Responsibility: Confrontation and Leadership-Nick’s House**

**Prologue:** Didn’t want to look like a loser. Acted fast and furiously but not wisely. See what happens when Nick goes home after trouble at school.

Get in the house. Trouble at school today in the usual places, in the hallway or maybe the cafeteria. Anywhere where kids were on their own. Didn’t even have to be in school could have been on the phone or writing notes in the bathrooms or on the walls, on their cell phones or devices. Yea could have been anywhere, but this was one of the worst places. At school, someone was going to pay the consequences. Nick knew who that someone was going to be- him. Nick had been arguing with himself all the way home from school. “Just walk away-that’s all I had to do...how could I- then none of the kids would like me. Worse, what if they turned on me. Jack wasn’t going to let me just leave. Should have told him. I just know this isn’t going to go away. Not the way the teachers looked or the parents in the cafeteria. This was going to be big,big trouble. If anyone didn’t need more problems it was me and my family.

**Reader’s Guide Summary:** In this story, Nick is dealing with the aftermath of bad choices and bad behavior. There are pressures about getting along, being respectful and finances, problems at school and thinking things through.

**Reader's Guide: Exercises and activities:**

Can you think of a time when you or someone you know acted before they thought things through? What happened and what did you learn.

"Act in haste, repent at leisure" is an old proverb. What do you think it means?

What does it mean "to buy time" before acting? Can you think of some things to say to avoid being pushed into a decision?

How do you think each character felt about the external and internal conflicts?

***Responsibility: Jack's Story "Confrontation and Leadership"*****Prologue:**

Have you ever had a favorite place? You always found happiness there. What if someone came around one day and destroyed it?

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Jack was cross about what happened with Jo in the cafeteria and fuming as soon as he opened the door at his house. There she was again that slimy scumbag little sister of his crawling around, making a racket, pulling at his pictures on the refrigerator. He called his mom in anger and frustration, "Mom, look what she's doing! She's tearing my picture apart and I need it for school. "Jack pushed his sister, Jill, away, and she fell. "Stop it you little brat, I hate you. You're always making a mess of things. Get out of here." Jack slapped Jill away from the refrigerator and across the room. She fell and her lip was bleeding, just as mom entered the room.

**Readers' Guide: Summary:** Have you ever seen something that made you so mad you wanted to fight? Did you ever get so upset you couldn't even think straight and start shaking? Did you ever use words that hurt others and yourself, but you couldn't stop? That's what happened when Jack came home from school.

### **Reader's Guide: Exercises & Activities**

Explain what you or someone else could do to "cool off" and give a calm response to a problem.

Instant replay: edit the scenes and create a "happier ending to this episode".

What could Jack's parents say or do to assure him that neither his sister nor anyone else could replace their love for him?

What musical background could you create for fury? For peaceful resolution?

Pretend you are in charge, what's your plan to resolve these problems. Picture it!

Illustrate these words: Composure, self-control, stress.

### ***Connected 8:0: Duty, Maturity, Legacy***

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**Prologue:** How does the sand rush so quickly through the hourglass? Such is life!

Jo watched her mother rake the leaves, sweep the patio and wash clothes. Work done before dawn along the shoreline along a small plot of land in Wisconsin! This was a special place where her family escaped the city. A small cottage but filled with enough of everything to camp for a few days or weeks. They all loved this place it was their retreat, fresh country air to breathe life into their souls. The lake hushed the dawn. Morning arrived quietly from slumber. The warm rays of the sun blanketed the earth with color and warmth. There were beautiful fruit trees in the garden, and rich vegetables. Harvest time, maturity. "Where did that leave me?" she wondered.

**Readers' Guide: Summary:**

Old family and friends find a way to live in your heart and memory. You'll remember conversations and how they encouraged you. If you're a little like these people, you'll connect with stories of the past, and you'll see resemblances. This is a story about growing up, finding your place in the world, taking what you've learned and moving forward in your life. There are people and places that shape us and make us world class citizens. One day we are at peace with ourselves and our world. That connection is a legacy to the following generations. I had hoped to share some of my inspirations with you.

**Readers' Guide: Exercises & Activities**

Explain how someone inspired you. Make a chart of what you admire.

What song does this story remind you of?

What have you learned about citizenship? Who gets your vote? Who needs to correct and make amends for their behavior? If you had a mock trial, who would you defend or prosecute?

Describe how Jo grew comfortable with herself

***Extentions: Balance: Readers' Guide: Perspectives & Final Exercises***

***Prologue: 10 Important Things to Know:*** Work on these exercises in a collaborative matter with parents, friends, students, and teacher. Make it fun, educational, and responsible. Use the key ideas in each chapter as tools to help get “Connected” to our world.

1. Teach the messages of this story so that the youngest and oldest people in your neighborhood could understand and enjoy them. Share their messages with us.
2. Role-play using this story or create your own scripts on related stories.
3. Anger management: Rewrite some of the lines in the story to make them less angry. Include some exercises to calm the characters.
4. Prepare an advice column. Include musical references. Sounds like great practice in talking it out.

5. Make a game out of the ideas in the story. Target age: 4-adult.
6. Problem-solving: Imagine yourself in this situation. Someone wrote a lot of messages in different places and then sent them. Many of the messages were irresponsible and mean. Predict the consequences of these actions. What are some ways this communication problem could be resolved?
7. Change these fighting words to peaceful ones. I hate you. I don't want to play with you. You're a loser. Idiot! Shut-up!
8. Complete each statement: Responsible language.

I really admired \_\_\_\_\_ when he said \_\_\_\_\_. I need to \_\_\_\_\_.

Example: I really admired his self control when he said he had to cool off. I need to stop and think.

9. Think about your favorite scene. Complete each statement as it relates to the story or similar situations. "If I had to walk in his shoes, I'd have \_\_\_\_\_."

10. Translate the following message so everyone in the playground understands it.  
"This is a message for our children to guide and strengthen them so they grow in peace."

#### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The story begins with a young couple a sixteen year old woman and 17 year old man. They share a dream, become a team, start a family, cross the Atlantic, and conquer the world. In what ways do immigrants share the same problems when dealing with a new land? What was so different about this young couple? Research three ideas concerning immigration, refugees, common problems. Fact finding- step one.
2. Do you think most people have problems fitting into new places with new people? How do similar problems keep coming around throughout life; for example, moving to a new neighborhood, a new school, or job?
3. Do Catherine and Tav seem to agree on plans throughout their life? Do you agree that you may have a plan until the "rest of the world weighs in?"

4. Ever have the feeling that you're outside the inner circle? How is that true of all the characters in this story?
5. How is the story of Jo, Vinnie's mother, so much like Vinnie's own story?
6. Are Catherine and Tav warriors closely connected to American and global citizenship?
7. Are there world-class bullies as well as neighborhood thugs mentioned in this story?

**Other notes:**

**Fact Finding Identifying key works researching illustrations and graphics**

**Summarizing pages 25 words or less- use key quotes? Give your own examples, compare and contrast. Agree what would you do?**

**Checklists, organization charts, outlines, predictions.**

**What are some 21<sup>st</sup> century skills you'd pack in your suitcase. What's the same, different?**

**Put the characters on trial, judge defend, prosecute.**

**Create another chapter, a different ending?**

Activity book: Keepsake Journal

What skills can you take with you pack in your 21st century suitcase.

How can you keep sharp lifelong skills?

List the dreams they packed in their suitcase.

Do you agree they had to migrate to find more opportunities. List 5 facts to prove your point.

List 5 examples of how they each fought for their dreams.

Compare youths' struggles today with those of your parents, grandparents.

Interview them or someone their age to learn how they stood up for your beliefs.

Key lines explained by dramatization, illustrations, musical productions.

Words of advice to characters. What might you say in a letter, email , or text to help?

Predict the kind of person Theresa, Jo, Jack, Harrison,Kyong, Vincent will become. Choose stepping stones to add to your prediction like lessons in courtesy, etiquette , clubs, civic and community volunteers.

Intro. Use some of these exercises to inspire your own stories. Sit down at the kitchen table or invite them into your living room. Interact with the characters. You give your ideas as to music, twists and turn of story lines and share with family and friends. This book is your keepsake and a great start to living your dreams learning lessons about life, and writing your own stories about life.

The journal is a memory book, yearbook, reflection sheet notebook, activity book` your masterpiece.

**Disclaimer:** This study guide and extended activities are meant for educational purposes. It is not mean as medical advice. If you suspect, serious problems, you should consult a medical professional. Please use responsibly. All rights reserved.

**Write music or prepare a musical backdrop of your favorite songs. Debate the pros and cons of your choices.**

**Great lines: response and great Come backs: If this book could talk... sketches, coloring book key images, chapters 1-12**

**Who do you reach for when you need a lifeline? Pg.7 chap1**

**Jo, put your hand on your head, on your heart-see they're all there...because they're part of you. Pg. 35, Cath. Chapter 2**

**“Tav had a plan. Jo had a plan. I had a plan. The world had one or two plans of its own.”**

**Pg.46, Catherine Chap 3**

**Chap 4 pg 51” What did we find... surprise.Tav**

**Chap 4 “Sooner or later everyone’s an immigrant in some way.” Pg. 56 Vincent**

**Chap 5 Something was wrong... she pulled out her prayer book.**

**Pg 64 Catherine**

**Chap 6 “Are you allergic?...having a reaction to growing up? Pg.71 Cath**

**Chap 7 “Jo thought if this was citizenship in action...some people were flunking...” pg.77**

**Chapter 8 “ What. You think I have a flavor of the day that’s going to give you the courage to be yourself.”pg 82 Catherine**

**Chapter 9 “ I raised lions in the arena, I raised the gladiators. I challenge everything to keep the dream alive.” Pg. 92, Catherine**

**Chap 10 : People face lions in the arena and in their hearts. Training gladiators takes time.’ Catherine pg.108**

**Chap. 10 “ I remembered something very important GG so I had to come back for it.” Pg.111 Vincent.**

**Chapter 11 Vincent, we learned that there were limits; we worked within them.” Catherine pg. 122**

**Chapter 12” she had strengthened her beliefs and deepened her faith.,, she was making the journey toward her future.” Pg.127**