



# EMMANUEL'S DREAM: THE TRUE STORY OF EMMANUEL OFOSU YEBOAH

AUTHOR: LAURIE ANN THOMPSON

ILLUSTRATOR: SEAN QUALLS

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah](#)

**\*\* REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! \*\***

## OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah's inspiring true story is nothing short of remarkable. Born in Ghana, West Africa, with one deformed leg, he was dismissed by most people—but not by his mother, who taught him to reach for his dreams. As a boy, Emmanuel hopped to school more than two miles each way, learned to play soccer, left home at age thirteen to provide for his family, and, eventually, became a cyclist. He rode an astonishing four hundred miles across Ghana in 2001, spreading his powerful message: disability is not inability. Today, Emmanuel continues to work on behalf of the disabled. Includes an author's note with more information about Emmanuel's charity. ([amazon.com](#))

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laurie Ann Thompson grew up in rural northern Wisconsin, where there are more cows than people. A former software engineer, she now writes for children and young adults to help her readers and herself make better sense of the world we live in so they can contribute to making it a better place for all of us. She strives to write nonfiction that gives wings to active imaginations and fiction that taps into our universal human truths. Laurie has received numerous awards for her children books.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sean Qualls is a freelance illustrator and artist, who burst onto the children's literature scene with his powerful illustrations. Born in 1969 in Cocoa Beach, Florida, and then raised in Bordentown, N.J. (population just under 5,000), Sean spent his days "playing in the woods, walking along train tracks and listening to Kiss records." Sean lives with his wife (who is also a children's book illustrator) and son in Brooklyn, New York.

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- (cover) What do you notice about the person on the cover?

EMMANUEL'S DREAM:  
THE TRUE STORY OF  
EMMANUEL OFOSU  
YEBOAH

### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Perseverance
- Disabilities
- Cycling
- Africa

### Tips for every book!

#### POWER PHRASES:

*I WONDER...*

*I NOTICE...*

*TELL ME MORE...*

#### DIGGING DEEPER:

*"Tell me more, why do you think that?"*

*"How do you know that?"*

*"Why do you think they feel like that?"*

*"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"*

- (cover) Can you tell the setting from the cover of the book?
- Are you surprised to see the boy riding a bike?
- It's time to listen to this true story to find out about Emmanuel's dream.

## DURING THE STORY

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*Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:*

- (p.4) How do you think it felt to be Emmanuel's mom?
- (p.8) What are some of the challenges Emmanuel faced?
- (p.12) I wonder how Emmanuel persevered?
- (p.14) How do you think people reacted when they saw Emmanuel ride the bike?
- (p.20) What do you think Emmanuel will do to help support his family?

## AFTER READING

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*Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read:*

- I wonder why the author Laurie Ann Thompson wrote this story?
- How do people feel about Emmanuel at the beginning of the story?
- How do you think Emmanuel's mother helped him to become independent?
- How did the children treat Emmanuel at first? Did that change later in the story?

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

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- Let's see if we can find Ghana on this globe (or map).

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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- Talk to your neighbor about how Emmanuel's actions began to change the way people think about physical disabilities.

## SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

### 1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

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- What choices does Emmanuel make to accept help when needed?
- What did Emmanuel learn while he was away from his family for two years?
- How did Sean Qualls create the illustrations to show Emmanuel's determination and perseverance?
- Why do you think Emmanuel wanted to bike across Ghana?

#### **Suggested Optional Activity:**

- Watch the 5-minute video [Emmanuel's Ride: an Inspiring True Story](#). Discuss some of the challenges Emmanuel faced throughout his journey. Do you think it is important for people to know about this story?

### 2. WRITING ACTIVITY

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- Think about all the ways Emmanuel's mother helped him to become strong and independent. Write about someone in your life that believes in you and explain how this person helps you.

### 3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

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- Write how Emmanuel shows strength both physically and emotionally in this story.