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# MY LITTLE ISLAND

Author: Frané Lessac  
Publisher: HarperCollins

## THEME:

Learning to appreciate and experience another culture is a real adventure.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

A young boy takes his best friend to visit the little Caribbean Island, Montserrat, where he was born.

As LeVar tours this same beautiful island and visits the open market, viewers are able to experience the many colors, sights and sounds of this tropical paradise, including the unique flowers, vegetables, fruits and music. He even goes on a “mountain chicken” hunt.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Invite students to share a vacation experience. Where did they go? What did they do there? What was the most interesting, exciting, or favorite part of the trip? (This discussion can be adapted for “wish” vacations—trips that students would like to take.)

The narrator in the story invited his friend Lucca to go to the island where he was born. Discuss what made this trip so special for both boys.

Discuss with students where they enjoy going with a special friend when they have the opportunity to invite, or be invited to accompany, a friend on an outing.

Have students compare and contrast the market experience in the story with their own shopping excursions.

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Locate the Caribbean Sea on a map. Find the island of Montserrat. Look at the names of other Caribbean islands. What names do the students recognize? Based on what they see on the map, ask them to define “island.”

Invite students to imagine that an out-of-town friend their own age is coming for a visit for three days and that they are in charge of showing that person around. Have students plan the sightseeing and activities for their friend. Give students a 12 x 18 sheet of drawing paper that can be divided into three sections. Label the sections: Day 1, Day 2, and Day 3. In each section, have them draw and label the local attractions they will visit and events they will take part in. Provide time for students to share their guests’ itineraries.

Make a large outline of the island in the story on a piece of bulletin board paper that is long enough so that several students can work at it at the same time. (Ask students to recall what it looks like from the air—a giant green turtle.) As a class, make decisions about where to place the areas of the island that the narrator and his friend Lucca visit and lightly demarcate these places. Working in small cooperative groups, have students reproduce these areas of the island. They will need to decide where to put the mountains, the volcano, the village, the “rainbow” houses, the school, the carnival, etc. Both the book and program will give them many ideas for what to put in each site, but they also may wish to consult additional sources for information about rain forests, seashores, marketplaces, and other areas. One group of students may take the responsibility for painting or coloring the ocean and the background of the island and for making a map key. Because many students may potentially want to work on the map at the same time, have them create what they want to include in their area away from the map and add it later.

Locate a market that sells unusual fruits, such as those that grow in tropical climates, and purchase a sampling. Have a tasting party with these fruits. Have students examine the skins as well as the insides. Which have edible skins? Discuss the textures. Are they sweet or tart? Compare and contrast these fruits to types of fruit with which students are more familiar.

Have students find information about some of the plants and animals mentioned in the story and record interesting facts on paper along with an illustration. Post their findings around the edges of the island map from the above activity.

View other **Reading Rainbow** programs that show the vibrancy of different types of communities. Encourage students to notice not only the qualities that make these communities unique, but also the characteristics that they share. Possible programs include: *Borreguita and the Coyote* (Mexican-American community), *Liang and the Magic Paintbrush* (New York’s Chinatown), *Legend of the Indian Paintbrush* (Taos Pueblo, New Mexico), *The Milk Makers* (farm), *The Wonderful Towers of Watts* (Watts area of Los Angeles), *The Lotus Seed* (Vietnam, Yemen, Russia, South Africa), *Alejandro’s Gift* (southwestern U.S. desert), and others.

Listen to some calypso and reggae music. What instruments do the students hear? Do the rhythms remind them of other types of music? Clap hands or snap fingers to the beat. Push the desks back and invite students to move according to the way the music makes them feel.

LeVar traveled to Montserrat by airplane. Brainstorm other ways in which people might travel to an island. After students have considered the logical possibilities, invite them to use their imaginations and think of creative ways to travel to an island.

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Since the filming of this **Reading Rainbow** program, the volcano on the island of Montserrat has erupted. Have students research volcanoes. Where are other active volcanoes located in or near the United States? Enlist the aid of the library media specialist in locating information about the Montserrat volcano.

**RELATED THEMES:**

communities  
island cultures  
commerce

**RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:**

Program #23 — Hill Of Fire

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR:**

Frané Lessac began her career in art as a filmmaker out of frustration that her art teachers didn't like her work. She returned to painting after she moved to the Caribbean, the setting for *My Little Island*. Frané is also the illustrator of *The Wonderful Towers of Watts*, a **Reading Rainbow** feature book. Born in the United States, she currently lives in Australia with her husband and two children.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

YAGUA DAYS

by Cruz Martel, illus. by Jerry Pinkney (Dial)

NICHOLAS BENTLEY STONINGPOT III

by Ann McGovern, illus. by Tomie dePaola (Holiday House)

THE VIKING CHILDREN'S WORLD ATLAS

by Jacqueline Tivers & Michael Day (Viking)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

FLAMBOYAN

by Arnold Adoff, illus. by Karen Barbour (Harcourt Brace)

THE CALYPSO ALPHABET

by John Agard, illus. by Jennifer Bent (Henry Holt)

A CARIBBEAN DOZEN: POEMS FROM CARIBBEAN POETS

edited by John Agard & Grace Nichols, illus. by Cathy Felstead (Candlewick)

CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL: SONGS OF THE WEST INDIES

by Irving Burgie, illus. by Frané Lessac (Tambourine)

A CARIBBEAN COUNTING BOOK

compiled by Faustin Charles, illus. by Roberta Arenson (Houghton Mifflin)

ISLA

by Arthur Dorros, illus. by Elisa Kleven (Dutton)

I HAVE NEWS: RHYMES FROM THE CARIBBEAN

by Walter Jekyll, illus. by Jacqueline Mair (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)

CARIBBEAN CANVAS

by Frané Lessac (Lippincott)

EMERALD BLUE

by Ann Marie Linden, illus. by Katherine Doyle (Atheneum)

ONE SMILING GRANDMA

by Ann Marie Linden, illus. by Lynne Russell (Dial)

