

# COME SEE THE EARTH TURN THE STORY OF LÉON FOUCAULT

Written by Lori Mortensen, Illustrated by Raúl Allen

**Tricycle Press/Random House 2010**  
**ISBN-10: 1582462844, ISBN-13: 978-1582462844**

(Currently out of print)

Hardcover, 32 pages, Children's, Ages 5-8

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS



**ABOUT THE BOOK** - A sickly child, a poor student, and a medical school dropout, Léon Foucault seemed an unlikely candidate for greatness. But his ingenious experiment—simple, beautiful, and stunningly original—changed how we see the world. Scientists knew that the earth turned on its axis. But how could they *prove* it? Countless experiments had been tried . . . and had failed. Then, one historic day in Paris, Léon Foucault gave a magnificent demonstration that offered the proof everyone had been looking for. Discover the improbable story of the man behind the famous Foucault's Pendulum.

**THEMES** - Science, History, Biography, Earth's rotation, French Physicists, Foucault's Pendulum, Character Education: effort, creativity, determination, persistence, patience.

### ACTIVITIES

**Art - 1)** *Come See the Earth Turn* is an illustrated biography. Have students look in a mirror and draw their own portrait. **2)** People were amazed when they saw Foucault's experiment. Have students draw a picture of the crowd as they watched the great pendulum swing across the floor of the Paris Observatory.

**Character Education - 1)** Foucault faced many struggles. Have students identify specific instances when Foucault could have given up. **2)** Foucault had weaknesses and strengths. Ask the students to list their strengths and weaknesses.

**Geography - 1)** Léon Foucault was born in Paris, France. Ask students locate this city on the map. **2)** Museums around the world demonstrate Foucault's pendulum. Have students locate these museums on the map.

**Health - 1)** Foucault was born a sickly child. Experts believe he may have suffered from multiple sclerosis. What are its symptoms and treatment? **2)** Many notable people have also faced physical illness and challenges. Who else had multiple sclerosis and other challenging conditions?

**Language Arts - 1)** People were astonished when they saw Foucault's experiment. Have students write a letter to a friend as if they were one of the people in Paris who saw the earth turn. **2)** To show how the earth turned, Foucault faced many obstacles before he succeeded. Have students write how they worked to achieve a goal, resolved any setbacks, and how they finally succeeded.

**Mathematics** - Before his success with the pendulum, Foucault studied the speed of light. How fast is the speed of light? Create math problems using the speed of light.

**Research - 1)** Foucault was a physicist. Have students research the names of other notable physicists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and their discoveries. **2)** Before Foucault gave his great demonstration, countless others had tried to prove the earth turned. Who were they and how did they try to prove it?

**Social Studies** - After Foucault's success, many scientists were angry and jealous of his accomplishment and France's Academy of Science regularly rejected his membership until three years before his death. Have students discuss why his colleagues felt that way, and why other countries honored him while France rejected him.

**About the Author - Lori Mortensen** is an award-winning children's book author of more than 70 books, and over 350 stories and articles. When she's not removing her cat from her keyboard, she works on all sorts of new projects filled with extraordinary people and quirky characters that delight her writing soul.

Recent picture book titles include *Cowpoke Clyde & Dirty Dawg*, (Clarion, 2013), *Cindy Moo* (HarperCollins, 2012), and *In the Trees, Honey Bees!* (Dawn, 2009).

Upcoming titles include *Mousequerade Ball* (Bloomsbury, 2016), *Chicken Lily* (Henry Holt, 2016), and *Cowpoke Clyde Rides the Range* (Clarion 2016). To learn more about Lori's books and other activity guides, visit her website at [www.lorimortensen.com](http://www.lorimortensen.com).