

DISCUSSION GUIDE

JOSEPHINE AND HER DISHWASHING MACHINE: Josephine Cochrane's Bright Invention Makes a Splash

Written by Kate Hannigan
Illustrated by Sarah Green

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Celebrate the inventor of the dishwasher in this inspiring STEM/STEAM picture book biography about Josephine Garis Cochrane, the brains behind one of the world's most-used kitchen appliances.

Many Americans have a dishwasher in their kitchen. But who invented it? Meet Josephine Garis Cochrane: entrepreneur, innovator, girl boss. Washing dishes is a pain—it leaves Josephine's cups cracked, her dishes dinged, and her chowder bowls chipped. She'd rather be picking flowers, frosting cakes, or playing piano than dealing with cracked crockery. What to do about a chore that's icky, destructive, and time-consuming? Josephine tackles this task the modern way: she makes a machine to do it for her! She tinkers and tests, and perseveres through fizzles and flops—until she has a government patent for her invention, and there are whirring, whizzing, bubbling dishwashers making a splash across America.

This charming tale includes an author's note, a list of notable women inventors, a timeline of fascinating inventions, and a list of sources.

ASTRA BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS


CALKINS CREEK

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PRAISE FOR JOSEPHINE AND HER DISHWASHING MACHINE

"Though Cochrane's may not be a household name, Hannigan seeks to change that, presenting the events chronologically and factually, interspersing the narration with quotes and information about other inventors of the period, women included. Green's bright digital illustrations capture Josephine's determination and emotions and enhance the text with diagrams, sketches, and charming homey details, including dishes and tools floating by. A wonderfully realized introduction to a fascinating, long-overlooked woman." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Hannigan portrays Cochrane as a strong-minded woman who succeeded despite legal and social constraints on women's actions, while Green's colorful digital illustrations provide appropriate character portrayals, period settings, and clothing for the story. The informative back matter offers introductions to 16 other women inventors as well as more information on Cochrane and her company. A picture book celebrating a little-known inventor." —*Booklist*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was Josephine Garis Cochrane a "modern woman"?
2. Why did Josephine decide to invent the dishwashing machine?
3. Why did Josephine's blood "pump with an inventive spirit"? Who inspired her?
4. How did Josephine work on her invention? Who helped Josephine with her plan? Was Josephine the first person to invent a dishwasher?
5. What major setback did Josephine experience? And how did she prevail?
6. Why did Josephine have to act fast to safeguard her idea? What did she do to make sure it would be protected?
7. Josephine needed investors in order to grow her business. But how did potential investors react to a woman running a business? Where did Josephine decide to go to exhibit her dishwasher, and what was the outcome?

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8. By 1898, Josephine's business outgrew her backyard shed and she opened up a bigger factory outside of Chicago. But even with this success, where was her machine not catching on? What did she decide to do in order to make more sales?
9. What phrase did Josephine say over and over in the book? How did this mantra guide her thinking and motivation?
10. After finishing the book, go back to the first page and re-read the *The Daily Picayune* quote from April 2, 1892 that appears at the opening of the book:

"The women of the future will have the memory of Josephine Garis Cochrane in grateful remembrance. It was she who invented the machine which as set woman free from the most slavish and disgusting task of housekeeping – dishwashing."

Do you agree with this quote today?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS + EXTRA CREDIT

- Josephine's story is one of persistence. Author Kate Hannigan describes her as "revising, reworking, rethinking" in the story. How does Josephine's story inspire you?
- Author Kate Hannigan sprinkles quotes by Josephine Garis Cochrane throughout the book. Find these quotes and discuss each one further. Which one resonates with you the most?
- Read the author's note at the end of the book. What other information did you learn about Josephine Garis Cochrane from this note?
- Look at the list of notable women inventors author Kate Hannigan lists at the conclusion of the book. Pick one inventor and do some research online or by reading more books to find out more about this person. Prepare a presentation on your findings and share it with the class. Do these inventors share any notable characteristics? How are they different?

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- Look at the timeline of fascinating inventions in the back of the book. What else was happening in the world during this timeframe? Recreate this timeline on a bulletin board in your classroom or school hallway. Fill in with other notable world and local events. How does this additional knowledge help you understand the inventions that happened during this timeframe?
- Sarah Green's bright and colorful illustrations in the book help to bring Josephine's story to life. How do they help you appreciate Josephine and her passion to invent the dishwasher better?
- Other than the dishwasher, what appliances in your kitchen can you simply not live without? Find out more about these appliances. What's the story behind these inventions and their inventors?
- Think about the inventions of the future. Is there a task you do on a regular basis that that you feel could use an invention to make it easier? Brainstorm with your classmates! What are some recent inventions you've heard about in the news? Who is inventing cool things today?

READING LIST

BLIPS ON A SCREEN by Kate Hannigan, illustrated by Zachariah Ohara

THE LEAF DETECTIVE by Heather Lang, illustrated by Jana Christy

WOOD, WIRE, WINGS by Kirsten Larson, illustrated by Tracy Subisak

MADAM C.J. WALKER BUILDS A BUSINESS by Rebel Girls, illustrated by Salini Perera

THE CRAYON MAN by Natascha Biebow, illustrated by Steven Salerno

HEDY LAMARR'S DOUBLE LIFE by Laurie Wallmark, illustrated by Katy Wu

WHOOSH! by Chris Barton, illustrated by Don Tate