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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
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Cry, the Beloved Country

BY ALAN PATON



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Note to Teacher: This book contains potentially controversial elements including racism, religious references, and violence. To be consistent with the book, this activity pack uses the terms “black,” “native,” “colored,” and “whites” to differentiate between groups of South Africa. In addition, to emulate Alan Paton’s style, characters’ quotations begin with an em-dash (—) rather than quotation marks in examples of monologues and dialogues.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Prediction

Objective: Predicting the meaning of a book's title

Activity

Cry, the Beloved Country is a novel about South Africa during the time of apartheid. In your groups, read the description of the book on the back panel and discuss the possible meanings of the book's title and how it relates to the concepts of love, hope, courage, and endurance. List your answers on the chart below.

PREDICTION CHART

Idea or Concept	Title's Possible Meaning
Love	
Hope	
Courage	
Endurance	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Author Influences

Objective: Understanding the relationship between authors' experiences and themes in their writing

Activity

Often authors will draw on their own life experiences as a basis for their writing. The introduction to *Cry, the Beloved Country* describes many details about Alan Paton's life. Complete the chart below with events from his life that could possibly be used in the book.

Alan Paton's Life

Where was he born?	
When was he born?	
What were his earliest memories?	
What was his family life like?	
What kind of schooling did he have?	
What jobs did he hold?	
What social and political activities were of concern to him?	
Who served as some of the major influences on his attitudes and his writing?	
What were some of the specific events in South Africa that influenced his writing?	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 9

Descriptive Language

Objective: Understanding the importance of descriptive language

Activity 1

In this chapter, the problems of finding adequate housing in Johannesburg are described in detail. In your group, discuss the alternatives for the homeless in Johannesburg, and draw a picture or construct a collage of the type of homes in Shanty Town. Then use the Internet to find pictures of Shanty Town in Johannesburg.

Activity 2

Overcrowding and lack of sufficient housing is the reason given for the problem of homelessness in Johannesburg; there are many additional reasons for homelessness in the United States. In your groups, use the library and the Internet to research some of the causes and proposed solutions of homelessness in this country. Present your findings to your class.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 12

Debate

Objective: Preparing arguments and participating in a debate

Activity

Cry, the Beloved Country delves into the problems of social justice in a racially diverse country—one in which the power and wealth are controlled by a small minority of white people.

A formal debate consists of two individuals or teams presenting opposing views on one subject. Each side is given a chance to state its opinion as well as respond to the other side's opinion. In your group, prepare an argument on one of the topics below based on the opinion assigned by your teacher. In constructing your argument, you should use examples from *Cry, the Beloved Country* to support your specific points. You may conduct research on your topic by using the library, the Internet, or other available sources. If you feel you can build a strong enough argument by appealing to your audience purely on an emotional or logical level, you may take that approach. Be sure to consider the opposing side's possible approach, and prepare a response.

Topic 1—"I say we shall always have native crime to fear until the native people of this country have worthy purposes to inspire them and worthy goals to work for. For it is only because they see neither purpose nor goal that they turn to drink and crime and prostitution." (Pg. 107)

Topic 2—"And some cry for the cutting up of South Africa without delay into separate areas, where white can live without black, and black without white, where black can farm their own land and mine their own minerals and administer their own laws." (Pg. 109)

Topic 3—"...we fear not only the loss of our possessions, but the loss of our superiority and the loss of our whiteness. Some say it is true that crime is bad, but would this not be worse? Is it not better to hold what we have, and to pay the price of it with fear? And others say, can such fear be endured?...Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear.... For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much." (Pgs. 110–111)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 20**Tone and Style****Objective:** Writing in another person's style**Activity**

All people have different styles when they are writing. Prior to his death, Arthur Jarvis was writing a pamphlet entitled, "The Truth of Native Crime." Due to the burglary at his home, he never finished his writing. Assume the role of Arthur, and complete his essay beginning with his last three words—"It is time..." (Pg. 179) You may want to spend time reviewing the beginning of his essay to identify different elements of his style, such as sentence structure, use of imagery, degree of formality, etc. You should use reference materials, particularly information about Abraham Lincoln, to develop recommendations that you think Arthur would offer in the writing.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 25**Character Comparison****Objective:** Understanding similarities and differences in characters**Activity**

Physically Stephen Kumalo and James Jarvis are opposite—Stephen is black, and James is white. However, the two men have many similarities in lifestyle, attitudes, and relationships. Review the interaction between the two men, and complete the chart below listing as many similarities and differences as you can identify.

Similarities	Differences