

"Whoosh" [Lonnie Johnson: Creator of the Super Soaker!]- 4th grade lesson plan

As a boy, Lonnie Johnson, could never find enough room around the house to put all the spare parts he used for tinkering. He loved building, creating, and experimenting. From launching homemade rockets at school to nearly catching his mom's kitchen on fire, he would try one thing after another. He wanted to be an engineer, however, test results showed that he might not be a very good one, but he didn't let that discouragement stop him. He worked hard and later became an engineer for NASA, where, along with many other things, helped design the probe that traveled to Jupiter for exploration.

Before long, Lonnie had a big workshop and lots of ideas flowing. While tinkering with another invention, Lonnie came across a fun way to blast water. He designed and built a prototype water gun. He tried and tried to get a toy company to make it, but that idea, along with many of his other ideas, soon fell apart, and Lonnie found himself and his family having to leave their home. Lonnie had dealt with challenges before. He knew a lot about problem solving and still believed in his inventions. He continued to work hard, and in time that hard work helped him succeed! A company agreed to make his water gun. They called it the "Super Soaker".

Each super soaker that was sold, put a little bit more money into Lonnie's pocket. That allowed him to spend many more years inventing and creating all kinds of great things for people. His determination and hard work had paid off!

Go to this YouTube video to preview the book and/or share the book with the class with this video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=969auCarGmw>

Lesson Plan: Read to the students the book "Whoosh" by Chris Barton

What were some of the challenges in Lonnie's life? What are some of your challenges?

- He didn't always have a lot of room to work.
- Sometimes he was discouraged for one reason or another
- He tried and failed multiple times.

What does determination mean? It is a quality that makes you continue trying to do or achieve something that may be difficult.

What are some synonyms for the word determination?

perseverance, steadfastness, will power, persistence

How did Lonnie handle the difficulties he faced?

- He kept trying, often doing things in a different way.

What can we learn from Lonnie's life story?

- Do what you enjoy
- Keep Trying
- We can do hard things.
- Just because someone says you're not good at something doesn't mean you should quit. Keep working at it if it's something you want.

Optional: Meet Lonnie! "The NASA Scientist Who Invented the Super Soaker":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYq6aKLuSk0>

"Making a Big Splash with the Super Soaker"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW71vqyY4ll>