

HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS PRESENTS

# PICTURE PERFECT STORYTIME

People have been telling stories since the beginning of time, in many different places and in many different ways. Share the power of these stories with new listeners!

## TEN TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL STORYTIME

1. Choose books and materials that make you excited about storytime. The children will pick up on your enthusiasm and follow your lead.
2. Plan a variety of activities during storytime. Know that every storytime group will have different needs. If you overplan your storytime, you will be prepared if a group needs to be more active.
3. Define your storytime space. Use a rug or chairs and cushions to show the area where you'll be reading. Before beginning storytime, set expectations for your listeners so they'll know how to behave during storytime.
4. Practice reading the book aloud before taking it into storytime. Make note of any tricky passages or difficult words to read. Use sticky notes attached to the back of the book to remind yourself of questions you want to ask the group or facts/details you want to point out.
5. Use an opening routine to help children realize that storytime is starting. This may be a song that you sing together, a rhyme like "Crisscross Applesauce," or it can even be putting a magic reading hat on your head.
6. Introduce the book by reading the title. Depending on the age of the group, include the author and
- illustrator as well. Ask the children what they think the story will be about based on the front cover. Follow up with these predictions at the end.
7. Take natural pauses as you read the book. Ask questions, call attention to smaller details in the illustrations, define new vocabulary words, and make sure that the group is following the story line.
8. After finishing the book, spend a few minutes talking with your group. Ask them questions to see if they've made any connections with previous knowledge, or answer new questions that might have come up during the book. Let your group react and process the book together.
9. Get up and move once you finish a book. Your group will likely be ready for an activity after sitting for a book. This is especially important if you're reading to younger children who have a harder time sitting still.
10. Once your storytime is over, take some time within the next day to evaluate how it went. If this is a consistent group of children that you see on a regular basis, jot down notes about what elements worked well or what you would change for next time.





# BUILDER BROTHERS: BIG PLANS

BY DREW AND JONATHAN SCOTT  
ILLUSTRATED BY KIM SMITH

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Drew and Jonathan Scott, *New York Times* bestselling authors and hosts of the Emmy-nominated hit HGTV show *Property Brothers*, bring their winning blend of imagination, humor, and can-do know-how to their first picture book.

What will Drew and Jonathan do when their big plans don't go the way they'd hoped? Find out in this heartwarming new story from everyone's favorite twins.

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

- **BUILD A BIRDHOUSE:** Gather the materials suggested at the end of the book and follow the directions to help the children build and decorate their own birdhouses.
- **DREAM BIG:** Ask the children to imagine building their own dream treehouse. What would it look like? What should they include? What could they do in it? Brainstorm ideas, encouraging the children to be creative. Then give each child a large piece of paper and have them draw, illustrate and label their own treehouse.
- **WE BUILT THIS CITY:** Ask the children to think about the buildings in their hometown (e.g., houses, school, library, fire station) and make a list on a chart. Then provide small groups of children with a different building material, such as wooden blocks, Legos, Lincoln Logs, wooden planks, or magnetic tiles. Have each group work cooperatively to create a town. The children will need to decide which buildings to create and how to organize their town. They can place their buildings on a large piece of paper and draw roads, parks, and street signs to connect the buildings. Encourage them to be creative. There's no right way to build a town!
- **WHEN WE GROW UP:** Drew and Jonathan love to build and are always designing and creating, even when the grown-ups laugh at their big plans. Ask the children to turn-and-talk with a partner to discuss what they love doing and what they imagine they would like to do when they grow up. Then have the children write about their ideas and illustrate them. Collate the pages into a class book entitled, "When We Grow Up."
- **REUSE AND RECYCLE:** Provide the children with a variety of materials such as boxes, plastic containers, string, paper towel tubes, fabric, tape, and glue. Challenge them to work in small groups to use the materials to create something they've never seen before. Have the children present their creations to the rest of the group.







# GATOR, GATOR, GATOR!

BY DANIEL BERNSTROM  
ILLUSTRATED BY  
FRANN PRESTON-GANNON

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Put on your life jacket, hop in the boat, and raise your binoculars—it's time to go on an adventure!

Off you go, peering through the lush landscapes, looking for that gator! But each time you think you see it? Oops! Just a fox. Or some ducks! Or a snake. Maybe you'll never find the gator, gator, gator . . .

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

• **SIMPLY SIMILES:** After you read the story aloud, discuss the similes that the author uses (e.g., "His skin's like nails" "His temper's hot like sauce" and "He is silent like a secret"). Explain what a simile is, and then ask the children to think of other similes. List them on a chart, and then have the children choose one to record and illustrate.

• **DOWN THE BAYOU:** Define "bayou" for the children and discuss where you would find a bayou (e.g., Louisiana, Texas). Ask the children to describe the bayou in this story. What does it look like? What animals live there? As a group, create a mural depicting the bayou. Include the water, plant life, and animals. This can be drawn, painted, or designed as a collage.

• **ALL ABOUT ALLIGATORS:** The little girl in this story is searching for an alligator. As a group (for younger children) or individually (for older children), research alligators using the internet or nonfiction books. Create a chart of facts. Then have the children choose one of the facts to write and illustrate on a poster. Older children can write an informational report about the alligator using their research.

• **GATOR GAMES:** This story can be a great springboard for movement activities. After reading the book, play a hide-and-seek game in which the children pretend to be the animals hiding along the bayou (e.g., gator, fox, snake, rat, duck). Have two other children pretend to be the girl and her friend from the story and search for their hidden friends. The game ends when the seekers find the hidden gator. You can also play a tag game in which a few children are the "gators" and they try to tag as many children as they can.

• **HAVE A GOOD TRIP!:** In this story, the little girl asks a friend to join her on a boat ride to search for gators. Have the children choose a friend in the group and imagine a trip that they wish they could take together. Where would they go? What would they do? Have them write a story about their trip.





# THE GROUCHY LADYBUG

## BY ERIC CARLE

### ABOUT THE BOOK

As children follow the Grouchy Ladybug on her journey, they will learn the important concepts of time, size, and shape, as well as the benefits of friendship and good manners.

For generations, *The Grouchy Ladybug* has delighted readers of all ages with the story of a bad-tempered bug who won't say "please" or "thank you," won't share, and thinks she is bigger and better than anyone else. Readers will love how this testy ladybug introduces them to many new animals and learns that maybe being grouchy isn't always the best option.

### STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

• **WHAT TIME IS IT?:** The Grouchy Ladybug approaches a different animal at each hour of the day. Use a demonstration clock to model each of the times shown in the book as you read. After you finish the book, discuss how an analog clock shows time to the hour. Provide the children with a paper plate, a fastener, and two pre-cut hands to create their own clock to practice modelling times to the hour.

• **LET'S READ TOGETHER:** Divide the children into two groups. Explain that they will be reading the story together, but that one group will read the Grouchy Ladybug's statements while the other group reads all of the other animals' responses. Encourage the children to read with fluency and expression. For young children who are pre-readers, you can whisper the lines for them to repeat aloud. Remind the children to

listen to each other and



respond appropriately, so that the dialogue sounds natural and fluent.

• **LIST AND LEARN:** After reading the story aloud, make a list with the children of all the animals included in the story. Then have the children work with a partner to research one of these animals. Ask them to describe the animals.

• **UNDER THE SUN:** Ask the children what they notice about the sun on each page. Ask them why they think the illustrator painted the sun in different places. Discuss the rotation and orbit of the earth and what the sun looks like at different times of day. Have them draw pictures with the sun in different places and then ask them questions about the sun—(e.g., When is the sun lowest in the sky?).

• **PATTERN ON:** Ask the children to identify the many patterns included in this story. They should recognize that each animal the Grouchy Ladybug confronts is larger than the previous one; that both the size of the text and the size of the page increase as the animals get larger; that each time the Grouchy Ladybug challenges a creature to fight, it responds the same way; and that each time the Grouchy Ladybug replies by claiming that the animal is not big enough to fight. Finally, discuss how the Grouchy Ladybug ends up back where it had started.





# I'LL LOVE YOU TILL THE COWS COME HOME

BY KATHRYN CRISTALDI  
ILLUSTRATED BY KRISTYNA LITTEN

## ABOUT THE BOOK

This book extends the saying, “I’ll love you till the cows come home” to the humorous extreme. Along the way there are yaks in Cadillacs, sheep setting sail, frogs on big-wheeled bikes, and more in this great read-aloud.

*I'll Love You Till the Cows Come Home* is filled with warm, funny art and rhythmic, romping text, perfect for curling up with your little one at the end of the day . . . or anytime you want to express your love.

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

• **LOVE LETTERS:** Discuss how this story is a love story from parents to their child. Ask the children to write a “love letter” to their parents. They should glue the letter onto construction paper and decorate it, and then bring their letter home to present to their parents.

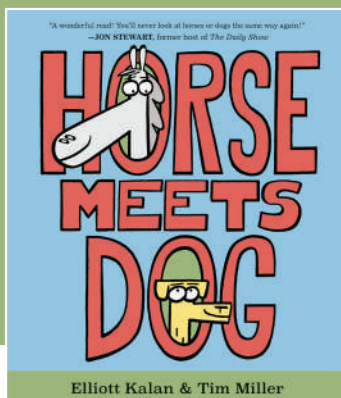
• **TILL THE COWS COME HOME AND OTHER EXPRESSIONS:** Discuss the phrase “till the cows come home,” and then ask the children if they know other expressions that use animal names (e.g., “hold your horses,” “let the cat out of the bag,” and “busy as a bee”). List the expressions on a chart. Then have the children choose one of these idioms to write down and illustrate.

• **ANIMAL ANTICS:** Cows in space? Sheep on a ship? Dancing deer and air-ballooning wolves? After reading the book, ask the children to recall some of the zany animal adventures in this book. Then ask the children to imagine their own animal antics, such as skateboarding skunks or hang gliding hermit crabs. They should write their idea and add a humorous illustration to share with the rest of the group.

• **LET’S GO!:** Ask the children to recall all of the ways the animals traveled in this story (e.g., spaceship, firetruck, car, cruise ship, hot air balloon, bike). Have the children work in small groups to create each mode of transportation out of boxes, corrugated cardboard, poster board, or other large material. Then the children can use these for imaginative play.

• **MUSIC TO MY EARS:** After reading the story, ask the children if they remember which instrument an animal was playing (the frogs play the violin). Ask if any of the children know how to play an instrument. Let the children create their own musical instrument using materials, such as cardboard tubes, rubber bands, plastic lids, and small boxes. Hold a “musical concert” so the children can demonstrate how their instruments work for the rest of the group.





# HORSE MEETS DOG

BY ELLIOTT KALAN  
ILLUSTRATED BY TIM MILLER

## ABOUT THE BOOK

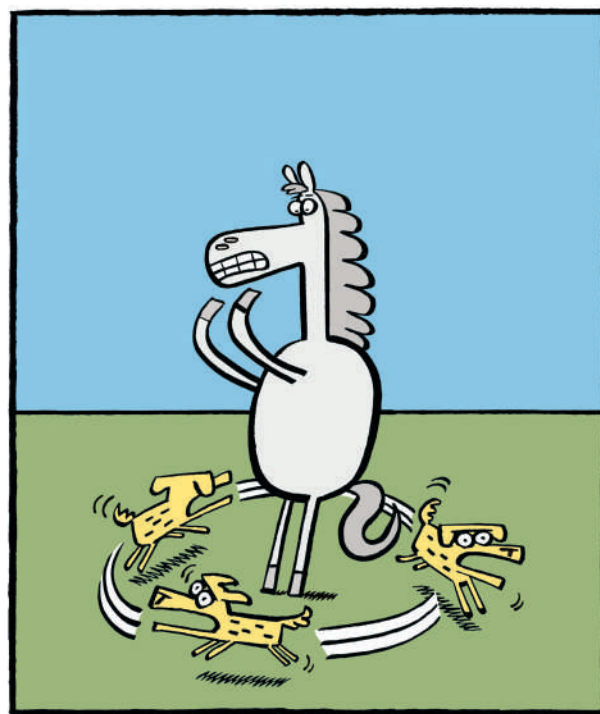
Horse is just an oversize dog with funny paws . . . according to Dog. And Dog?  
Just a tiny baby horse with a weird tail. That's what Horse thinks, anyway.

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

• **NAME THAT ANIMAL:** Show the children a web graphic organizer and explain that it is a helpful tool for recording details about a topic. Model how to use it by completing a web about a horse or a dog. Write the name of the animal in the center, and then have the children suggest characteristics of the animal for you to record in the surrounding bubbles. (For example, write “dog” in the center bubble, and then the children might suggest writing “has 4 legs,” “furry,” “barks,” and “likes to play fetch” in the surrounding bubbles.) Then ask the children to choose a different animal and have them complete their own web graphic organizer about the animal.

• **PICK A PRESENT:** In this story, the horse and the dog give each other presents that are not suitable for each other. Why weren't horse and dog excited about their gifts? Discuss how to choose a present for another person. Then have the children write about someone special to them. What present would they choose for that person? Why is this gift a good choice? Have them include an illustration.

• **SAME OR DIFFERENT?:** Discuss the horse and the dog in this story. How are they alike (e.g., they both have four legs and they both eat)? How are they different (e.g., one is big and the other is small; one's tail goes up and the other's tail hangs down)? Model how to compare and contrast the horse and the dog by completing a Venn diagram. Then pair up the children. Have each child choose an animal. Have them record their animal on one side of the Venn diagram and instruct them to complete the diagram together. They should write characteristics that describe only their animal on their side of the diagram. They should record details that describe both animals in the overlapping space in the middle.



• **I DON'T UNDERSTAND!:** Discuss what happens in the story. Why is this story funny? Why are the animals confused? What is the misunderstanding? What do they say and do because they don't understand that they are different animals? What happens at the end?

• **ANIMAL TALK:** The horse and the dog often use speech bubbles to communicate in this story. Have the children imagine another conversation between these two characters. For example, what would happen if they realize they are not the same animal? What else might they discuss? Ask the children to draw the horse and the dog and convey their conversation with speech bubbles.



# HOW DO I LOVE THEE?

BY JENNIFER ADAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
CHRISTOPHER SILAS NEAL

## ABOUT THE BOOK

“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.”

Whether in soft sunlight or rain-drizzled night or winter’s frost-etched breath, three children share the love and joy of friendship while exploring the wonders of nature.

Bestselling author Jennifer Adams has reimagined Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s beloved “Sonnet 43,” best known by its opening lines, creating a lyrical, evocative ode to the love of family and friends. Christopher Silas Neal brings the poetry to life with his beautiful and imaginative illustrations.

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

• **LET ME COUNT THE WAYS:** Give the children a page that says at the top, “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.” Then have the children write a poem to a friend or family member. They should include all of the reasons why they care about this person, and all of the ways they can spend time together. They should add an illustration of themselves with this person.

• **SUNSET SILHOUETTE:** Share the last page of the story and discuss how the illustrator painted a beautiful evening sky with the houses silhouette against it. Then have the children use watercolors to paint a sunset or evening sky on a piece of paper. Their painting should fill the whole paper. While it is drying, the children should cut out silhouettes from black paper. (They can cut out houses and trees to make a neighborhood picture, or they can cut buildings and skyscrapers to make a city silhouette.) When their painting has dried, they should glue their silhouettes onto the sunset background.

Display these striking pictures so the children can admire each other’s artwork.

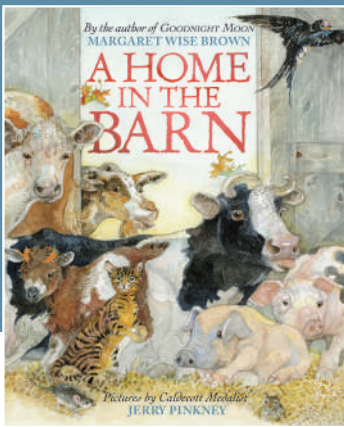
• **IN SEASON:** In the fall, the children in this story play in the leaves. In the winter, they go sledding and build a snowman. Ask the children to describe their favorite activity in each season. Have them create a picture divided into four quadrants or complete a 4-page booklet showing what they enjoy doing in each of the four seasons.

• **POETRY PARTY:** The author includes a note at the end of the book explaining that the famous poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote the poem on which this book is based. Provide the children with a collection of poems for them to read. (There are many wonderful poets for children, including Jack Prelutsky, Mary Ann Hoberman, Shel Silverstein, Naomi Shihab Nye, Lillian Hoban, Nikki Giovanni, and Judith Viorst.) Ask the children to choose their favorite poem to share with the group. Have a poetry party with poetry readings and refreshments to celebrate these wonderful poems.

• **I CARE:** Discuss how the children in this book show that they care for each other (e.g., they hold hands, they play together, they share). Brainstorm a list of ways to show kindness and caring for others. Ask the children to choose an act of kindness to perform. Follow up a week later. Did they complete their act of kindness? How did it make them feel?







# A HOME IN THE BARN

BY MARGARET WISE BROWN  
ILLUSTRATED BY JERRY PINKNEY

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Perfect for fans of *Goodnight Moon*, *The Runaway Bunny*, and *Big Red Barn*, this never-before-published picture book from beloved children's book author Margaret Wise Brown tells the comforting, snowy story of animals seeking shelter from the cold in a big warm barn.

Brought to beautiful life by Caldecott Medalist and multiple award-winner Jerry Pinkney, this is a must-have for every child's library and is perfect for cozy wintertime readings.

"Outside in the cold, hear the wind rattle, come to the barn, keep warm with the cattle . . ."

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

- **BABY BOOM:** Reread the page, "Mooooooooo. A cow had a calf." Ask the children if they know the names of other animal babies (e.g., cat/kitten and dog/puppy). Teach them some new animal baby names that they might not know, such as goat/kid, goose/gosling, kangaroo/joeey, and swan/cygnets.

- **FUNNY FARM:** This illustrator included many animal sounds in the pictures, such as "SQUEAK SQUEAK" for the mice and "NEIGH HRUMPH HRUMPH" for the horses. Have children create a paper bag puppet of their favorite farm animal. When they use their puppets, encourage the children to make the appropriate animal sound to match their puppet.

- **DOWN ON THE FARM:** Ask the children to describe the farm in this story. What buildings does it have? What animals live there? Have the children work together to create a model of the farm, including the barn, the fence, and the animals. They can use boxes or cardboard for the barn and fence, and modelling clay for creating the animals.

- **DAY AND NIGHT:** In this story, most of the animals wake up in the morning, except for the mice and bats who are going to sleep. Discuss the difference between nocturnal and diurnal animals and create a chart that lists animals in both categories.

- **WAX POETIC:** After reading this poetic story about animals on a farm, ask the children to choose another animal habitat (e.g., ocean or rainforest) and as a group, write a poem about the animals that live in this habitat. Have the children make watercolor illustrations to accompany their poetic text to match the style of Pinkney's beautiful watercolor paintings.







Story by Tammi Sauer

Pictures by Alison Friend

# MAKING A FRIEND

BY TAMMI SAUER  
ILLUSTRATED BY ALISON FRIEND

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Beaver is good at making just about everything . . . but not friends. One winter day, Beaver sees some snowflakes in the sky and gets a great idea: he'll make a friend. Yes! A snowman will be a great friend!

But when the snowman proves to be a little cold, Beaver discovers that he may have unknowingly "made" another buddy instead.

## STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

- **PAY A COMPLIMENT:** Discuss what a compliment is, and how it feels to give and receive compliments. Then pass out a folded slip of paper to each child with a friend's name written inside. Each child should fill out a compliment slip for the child whose name is written on the paper. Compliment slips should have spaces for the recipient's name, a message, and the child's signature. (For example: "To Rachel/ You tried so hard at jump rope! Great job!/ Your friend, Hannah") Place the compliments in a basket and pass them out when they have all been completed. Expect to see lots of smiles!

- **TEAM UP:** Beaver and Raccoon build a snowman together. Discuss what would have happened if Raccoon had not come along. Why was it better for Beaver to build the snowman with Raccoon? What happened as they were building? Pair the children and ask them to think about an activity that would be easier and more enjoyable to do with a friend. Ask them to describe the activity and explain why they would want to do this with a friend.

- **CAN WE TALK?:** Discuss why and how people become friends. Explain that people become friends as they get to know one another. Tell the children that they will have an opportunity to interview a friend in the group and get to know each other better. Brainstorm a list of questions that the children might want to ask each other and write them on a chart. (For example, "What is your favorite sport?" or "Do you like to do art projects?") Then give each child a partner and have them take turns interviewing each other by asking and

answering questions. Older children can write down their questions and their friend's responses. Younger children can share their friend's responses with the group by telling what they learned about their friend.

- **FRIENDSHIP FUN:** Have a Friendship Day celebration! Have the children make beaded bracelets, decorated bookmarks, or colorful pictures to exchange with a friend. Make a Friendship Day banner to hang in the class and bring in refreshments (or make them as a group, if possible) to add to the fun.

- **WHAT A DAY!:** Ask the children: "If you could spend a whole day with a friend, who would you choose? Why? Where would you want to go with your friend? What would you do there?" Have the children write and illustrate a story about how they would imagine sharing a wonderful day with a friend.

