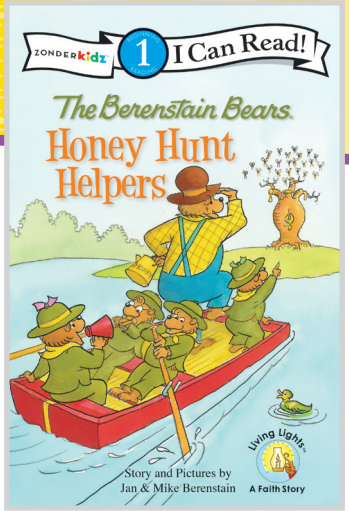

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears Honey Hunt Helpers

Author and Illustrator: Jan and Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Papa Bear and the scouts want to win a contest for the best honey. Papa knows about great honey at the wild bee tree. Papa and the scouts have a hard time getting there. Then they can't get the honey because of angry bees. They don't end up winning, but they have quite an adventure.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did Papa want to do once he read the sign about the contest?
2. Name three things that the scouts helped Papa with while they were trying to find honey. You can go back through the book and let the pictures help you.
3. What would have happened to Papa had the scouts not been there to help?
4. Who won the honey prize? How did Papa and the scouts react?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize the first part of Leviticus 19:3 (NIrV): "All of you must have respect for your mother and father." How did the scouts respect Papa? Even though he is not Papa to all of the scouts, they still showed him respect. It can be hard not to grumble, complain, or have a bad attitude when things are not easy. The scouts remained helpful and kind, even when they kept getting into sticky situations. Use index cards to help you memorize the verse. Put each word or phrase on index cards. Then shuffle the cards and organize them in order until you have the verse memorized.

Losing/Winning: Winning is fun! Losing can be hard. Being a good loser means that when you lose, you do not complain, argue, or get so upset that you hurt someone else. You can accept that someone else won. Maybe you'll win the next time! Papa Bear did not win the honey contest this time; Farmer Ben won the prize for best honey. Did you know there is also an appropriate way to win? When you win something, be sure to act politely, be modest, and say thank-you. Don't brag about your win or make fun of someone who lost. Practice winning and losing well by playing a game like memory. Practice congratulating the winner and enjoy playing the game whether you win or lose.

Be Prepared: Look through the story again and point out what dangers the scouts and Papa encountered in nature. The scouts knew how to help Papa in each situation. These are skills they had learned or knew about. It's a good idea to be prepared. One good skill that does not take any gear and is always helpful is to be aware of your surroundings. When you are in nature, notice where lakes, rivers, hills, and trees are. Stop and turn around once in a while to see what your surroundings look like from another direction. Look up; look around. When in the city, notice signs, buildings, and parks. Practice this skill by playing "I Spy" and see if you notice new details even in familiar surroundings.

Buzz-Buzz! Bees are actually very important to our ecosystem. Papa Bear just wanted good honey, but there is more to bees than honey! Bees help plants grow by taking sticky pollen from one plant to another. These plants grow, multiply, and are food for other insects and animals. Draw several flowers on paper and place them around the room. Use Cheetos or glitter as pollen in the middle of one flower. Have readers be the bees and pick up pollen with their fingers. Then have them pollinate all but one flower. Illustrate that most of the flowers will grow and be healthy for other animals, but the one that was not pollinated dies.

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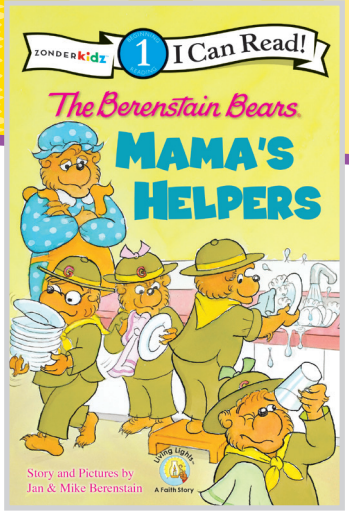

BEGINING 1 READING

The Berenstain Bears Mama's Helpers

Author and Illustrator: Jan and Mike Berenstain

About the Book

For their next good deed, the Good Deed Scouts decide to help Mama. They help her with many different tasks—washing dishes, cleaning, and playing with Honey. They are the best helpers ever!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Scout Brother knew someone that the Good Deed Scouts could help. Whom did he suggest?
2. Starting on page 10, count how many chores the scouts helped with.
3. Which chore would you have liked most? Which one would you have liked the least? Why?
4. What was the scouts' attitude as they helped? Were they willing to help with each chore? Did they whine or complain?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Ephesians 6:2 (NIrV): "Scripture says, 'Honor your father and mother.' That is the first commandment that has a promise." How do you honor your father and mother? The verse right before this says to obey them. They are to keep you safe, teach you about life, and to teach you about your relationship with God. You are to obey them, have good attitudes, listen to them, and love them. Use motions to help you memorize the verse and remember what it means to honor your father and mother.

Helping at Home: The scouts decided to help Mama with chores. She was glad for their help and found not just one chore but many for them to do! They did each job completely, with a good attitude, and even worked well together. Would you be able to do this too? How helpful are you at home? Do you help even when you are not asked? Create a chore chart and help your parents without being asked. Try your best to help with two or three chores for a week and then ask parents about adding another one.

Recycling: One of the chores that the scouts help with is taking out stacks of papers for recycling. They know this is showing respect for God's creation. Does your family recycle? What do you recycle? How do you help? Draw a picture of how you help. If your family does not recycle yet, an easy way to recycle and help your school or a nonprofit is to collect paper for a PaperGator. Place paper trash in a paper bag. When it is full drop the bag in a PaperGator! The school or nonprofit gets paid for your recycling!

Sibling Skills: The scouts said they would help Mama. One chore Mama asked them to do was to play with cranky Honey. Getting along with siblings is helpful! What did they do to entertain Honey? Do you have younger siblings? If not, perhaps you have cousins or friends in your neighborhood who are younger. Make an idea jar for ways to entertain and get along with siblings.

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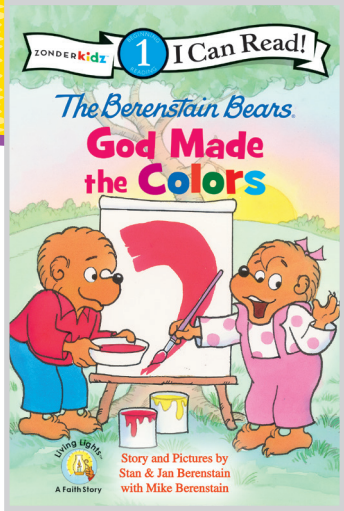

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears God Made the Colors

Author and Illustrator: Jan and Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Brother and Sister notice and show the many colors of God's amazing world. They point out examples for each color. They show how mixing colors creates new ones. Then they show that God made people different colors too. Colors also have different shades. Each day brings a rainbow of colors!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Name one more example of each color.
2. What three colors can we mix to create many more colors?
3. What is your favorite color?
4. How do Brother and Sister feel about so many colors?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Genesis 9:13 (NIrV): "I have put my rainbow in the clouds." What colors are in a rainbow? The rainbow was a sign of God's covenant with the earth after the flood. All the colors remind us of God's promises. Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a word or phrase after you as you throw the ball.

Wow, Colors! Brother and Sister show us many colors in one day. What color is your favorite? What do you like most in that color? In many professions and hobbies color is very important. For instance, artists know which colors to mix to get just the right shades. Color consultants often help homeowners create just the right feel for their home. Knowing the color wheel helps them understand color. On a paper plate, create a color wheel with paint, starting with the primary colors—yellow, red, and blue. Brother and Sister show us that all colors come from mixing these three in various ways.

Rhyme Time: Part of the fun of this story is that it rhymes words! Look through a few pages, picking out rhyming pairs. Rhyming words are ones that sound similar. Create and play a memory game with rhyming pairs, such as bee, tree; cat, bat; dress, mess. If you don't want to create your own, find one online to print and use.

God Moment: Brother and Sister make a very important point: "God made bears and people too of different color, different hue." Hue is just another word for color or shade of color. We are all people, no matter what color the skin is. Too many times skin color divides people. As a reminder that we are to love all people, just as God does, create this craft: trace and cut out the reader's handprint in several different colors. Attach them around the outside of a paper plate. In the middle write out John 3:16 and ask readers whom God loves. He loved "the world" (everyone!) so much that He sent His Son to live, die, and conquer death through resurrection. That's a lot of love for each one of us! Pray together that God will help you love people as He loves them.

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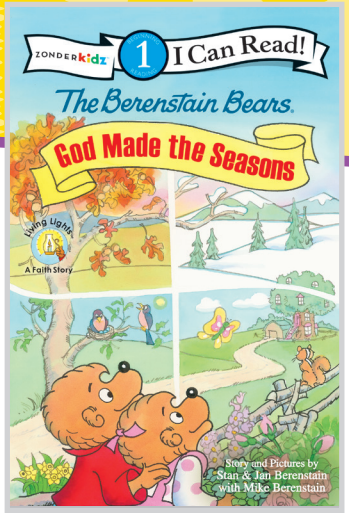

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears God Made the Seasons

Author and Illustrator: Jan and Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Brother and Sister love the different seasons for various reasons. They discuss the seasons and show how each one is unique.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Name the four seasons in order.
2. What are some fun activities Brother and Sister do in the winter?
3. What is your favorite season? Why?
4. What animals and insects did you see throughout the story?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIrV): "He has made everything beautiful in its time." What is appropriate to do during summer? Can you do the same things in the winter? God has a plan and a time for everything. When we follow Him in what He says is best for our lives, then we have His blessing. We can trust Him! Repeat the verse while jumping rope—one word or phrase per jump.

Act It Out: The activities we can do in the four seasons are very different. Play charades and guess the season for the activity that you are acting out. For instance, plant seeds (spring), go swimming (summer), go sledding (winter), and pick apples (fall).

Around the World: Did you know that not every country in the world has the four seasons at the same time we do? Print out a picture of the world. Point out the northern hemisphere. If you live in the northern hemisphere (like the United States of America), then June means the beginning of summer. But if you live in the southern hemisphere (like Australia or South Africa), June means the beginning of winter. This is because in June in the northern hemisphere the earth is closer to the sun. The southern hemisphere is away from the sun. On your map, write "June" and then put a sun on the northern hemisphere and snowflakes or a hat and scarf on the southern hemisphere. If readers are interested, continue researching and understanding the different seasons around the world.

Rhyme Time: We like to hear and say words that rhyme. It usually sounds nice to our ears. *God Made the Seasons* is a rhyming book. Pick a page and point out rhyming pairs. After pointing out several, Google "rhyming games for kids," and have readers practice hearing and choosing rhyming words. If technology is not available, give readers a word and then have them think of a rhyming partner. For instance, say "frog." Then readers find a word that rhymes with "frog," such as "log" or "bog." Then switch roles and play again!

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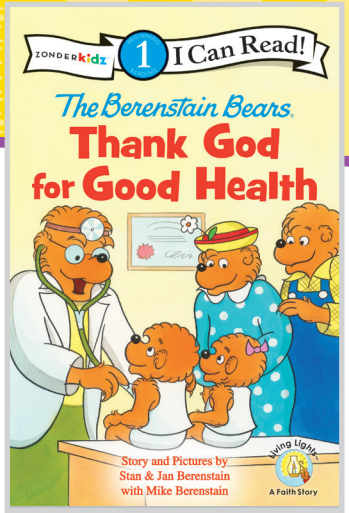

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears Thank God for Good Health

Author and Illustrator: Jan and Mike Berenstain

About the Book

It is time for Brother and Sister's checkup. They go see Dr. Grizzly. She checks them over. They seem to be healthy! Papa needs to cut back on desserts though. Brother and Sister are brave for their booster shot. They are thankful for good health!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do Papa and Mama pray to God for every day? (See page 7.)
2. How do Brother and Sister feel about a booster shot at first? How do you know? How is the shot once they get it?
3. Name several ways Dr. Grizzly checks to see if the cubs are healthy. (She checks their eyes, ears, weight, and tummies.)
4. Which one in the family needs to care for himself better?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 3:7–8 (NIrV): "Have respect for the LORD and avoid evil. That will bring health to your body." Any time we follow God's instructions, we are respecting the Lord. The Bible tells us that this will bring health. After practicing the verse a few times, write the verse on a whiteboard. Then start wiping off all but the beginning letters of each word. Keep practicing until readers have the verse memorized.

Healthy Habits: Do you have healthy habits? Name several ways you can take care of yourself (brush teeth morning and evening, wash hands, make good food choices, run and play). One of the best ways to keep yourself healthy is to wash your hands with soap and water. Germs that make us sick will get washed off! To show readers how easily germs spread, shake some glitter or pepper into their hands. Then have readers shake hands. Discuss results—did the pretend germs spread? If readers are able to shake several hands, then see if everyone has "germs." Then wash really well with soap and water. Remember that washing your hands is very important!

Tools of the Trade: Dr. Grizzly used a stethoscope to check the cubs. What does a stethoscope help the doctor do? Why would a doctor need to listen to your heart? The heart is a very important muscle that sends blood around your body. The doctor makes sure it sounds like it is working well. To make your own stethoscope, attach a funnel to a short piece of plastic hose. You should be able to hear a friend's heart! To make a stethoscope just for play, you can use pipe cleaners for the tubes and ear pieces (to go around your ears) and then add a foil disc at the end. This one will not allow you to hear a person's heart though!

Print Concepts: In a story, when a person speaks, it is called dialogue. In cartoons, dialogue is shown with word bubbles. In written stories, dialogue is shown by these marks before and after what is said: " ". Look at the first line of the story: "Mama," said Brother Bear, "may we go out to play?" What does Brother Bear actually say? ("Mama, may we go out to play?") If readers are able, pick another page, and read it out loud. Have the reader join you in reading just the dialogue. Then pick a page and redraw it as a cartoon with word bubbles. For instance, for page 14, readers could draw the doctor and Sister. Then a word bubble (without the quotation marks) for Dr. Grizzly would say, "Hop up, Sister. It is your turn first."

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READING 2 WITH HELP

Made by God Big Bugs, Little Bugs

About the Book

Bugs are amazing! God made big bugs and little bugs, like butterflies, goliath beetles, lightning bugs, and praying mantises.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does a table of contents tell readers?
2. Why do lightning bugs glow? (See page 22.)
3. Which bug would you most like to encounter? Why?
4. Compare and contrast how long butterflies and lightning bugs live. Which ones usually live longer? Could a butterfly live longer than a lightning bug?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize John 1:3 (NIrV): "All things were made through [God]." God made all of creation, including the bugs you learned about! He has made amazing and beautiful creatures. Learn this verse and remember that we know to thank God for His amazing creation! To help you memorize the verse, play hangman using the key words. Then practice saying the completed verse.

Sorting Numbers: How many kinds of each bug are there? The book tells how many kinds of butterflies, lightning bugs, and praying mantises there are. Research how many kinds of goliath beetles there are. Then talk about these numbers and write them on index cards along with a picture. Organize them from smallest to largest. Next, get a ruler and see how long/wide each bug is. Research how long the praying mantis is. Write these findings on index cards. Then organize these from smallest to largest.

I Can Draw: Look up all the different types of butterflies listed on page 9. Then choose one of the four bugs. Google "how to draw . . ." and get paper and pencil ready. Choose a clip that takes readers through a drawing step-by-step. Pause the clip as needed. Then have readers title their drawing and write out one interesting fact next to their drawing.

I Know! Create a trivia card for each bug. You can either use information you learned in B*ig Bugs, Little Bugs*, or you can do further research. Fold a piece of paper. On the outside, write your question. Inside, write your answer or draw a picture of the bug.

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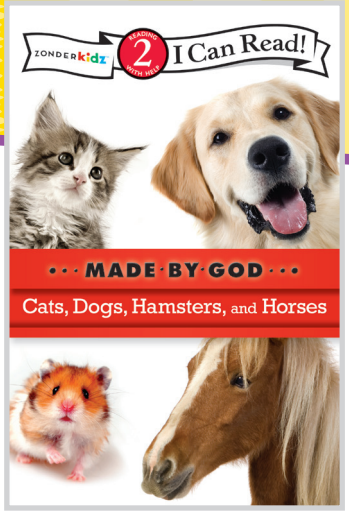

READING 2 WITH HELP

Made by God Cats, Dogs, Hamsters, and Horses

About the Book

God made all the animals. Some make good pets, like cats, dogs, hamsters, and horses. Each of these has unique needs and characteristics. They have become friends to many people!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. ***Before Reading***: What do you know about each of these animals? What do you hope you learn? ***After Reading:*** Did you learn what you were hoping? What is one new fact you learned?
2. Why do cats not need baths? (See page 9.)
3. Name some reasons that dogs make good pets for families. (See page 15.)
4. Which animal do you think needs the most care? Why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Psalm 104:24 (NIrV): "LORD, you have made so many things! . . . The earth is full of your creatures." God made all of creation! He has made amazing and beautiful creatures. Learn this verse and remember that we know to thank God for His amazing creation! Memorize the verse by repeating the verse in various ways—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Pet Care: Do you have a pet? Which of the four kinds of animals described would you love to have? Why? What would make this a good pet for your family? Research to see what you would have to do to take care of this pet each day or week. Print out or make a chore chart so you can see what goes into keeping this pet healthy and happy. Study the list and see what you could do and what you would need help with.

Career Path: Doctors who take care of animals are called veterinarians or vets. Did you know that there are different kinds of vets? Look up these types of vets and write down what kinds of animals they work with: Food Animal Practice vets, Equine vets, Companion animal vets. If you like animals, science, medicine, and studying, then you might enjoy becoming a vet. What are other kinds of jobs that are similar to being a veterinarian?

Speak Animal: If you know the book or movie of Dr. Doolittle or the TV show *Martha Speaks*, you know that they are made-up stories of people speaking to and understanding animals. Wouldn't it be fun to be able to talk to your cat or dog? Although we are not Dr. Doolittle or Martha, we can understand some of what animals are saying by their body language and sounds. Look back through *Cats, Dogs, Hamsters, and Horses* and make a list to understand what these animals do when they are upset, happy, scared, or nervous.

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READING 2 WITH HELP

Made by God Our Feathered Friends

About the Book

God made all kinds of birds! Some unique ones are big eagles, little hummingbirds, fast roadrunners, and nocturnal owls. Learn about these amazing birds!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which birds are called birds of prey? What does this mean?
2. Which of these birds is the smallest?
3. Which bird is nocturnal? What does this mean?
4. Which of these birds have you seen in the wild? Which have you seen in the zoo?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Genesis 1:22 (NIrV) which tells about Creation: "Let there be more and more birds on the earth." Isn't it amazing that God mentions birds specifically while creating the whole world? He sees and cares about details. Practice memorizing this verse with a whiteboard. Erase words as you commit the verse to memory.

Feed the Birds: Have you ever seen hummingbirds? They are small, fast, and fun to watch. Hummingbirds are attracted to red, so you can make a simple hummingbird feeder out of a red plastic cup. You'll also need a marker, scissors, and twine. Cut two half-moon shapes on either side of the cup. Attach the twine to the top of the cup as a hanger. When readers get home, they can combine sugar and water to make the nectar to fill the feeder. For a hummingbird nectar recipe go online.

Print Concepts: Two types of literature or stories are nonfiction and fiction. Nonfiction stories are explanations or facts about the world. Stories that are fiction are made up, imaginative, or not real. Be a detective to compare and contrast two books—*Our Feathered Friends* and any fiction book. Make a chart and begin looking at both books. Look at the covers, the first pages, the pictures/illustrations, and anything else. If more guidance is needed, write out these key words to paste under either fiction or nonfiction: made up; true; tells a story; teaches readers; read to enjoy; read to learn.

Measure Me: *Our Feathered Friends* gives several measurements. Can you picture how big or tall these are? For instance, how big is an eagle's nest? Using a tape measure, measure ten feet across the room. That is how big across an eagle's nest can be! What can you do in that size area? Can you do a cartwheel? Do you think your bed would fit in an eagle's nest that is that big? Next, measure 20–28 inches up from the floor. That is how tall many owls are! How does that compare to your arm? What else is about that height? Then measure 3–4 inches. This is how little a hummingbird is. What else is about that size? How tall is a roadrunner? How does this compare to a hummingbird?

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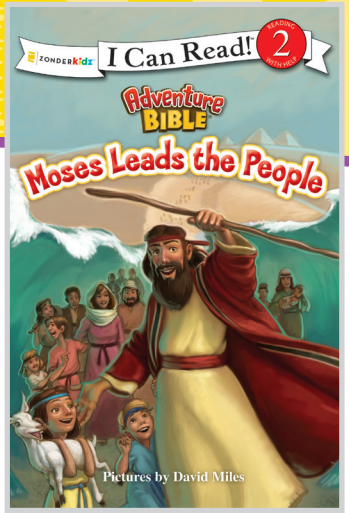

READING 2 WITH HELP

Moses Leads the People

Illustrator: David Miles

About the Book

God spoke to Moses through a burning bush to tell him to help the Israelites return to the Promised Land. Moses and Aaron used tools God gave them to persuade Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves leave. Then God helped them with miracles, like having them cross the Red Sea on dry ground. They followed God who led them out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did God ask Moses to do for Him?
2. What did Pharaoh tell Moses when Moses asked for the Israelites to be freed?
3. What tools did God give Moses and Aaron to change Pharaoh's mind?
4. Name some of the ways that God was with Moses and the Israelites.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize any part of Exodus 15:2 (NIrV): "The LORD gives me strength and protects me. He has saved me." The Israelites realized that the Lord protected them and saved them when they finally got away from slavery and Egypt. He will do the same for you, if you trust Him and stay close to Him. Put each word or phrase of the verse on index cards. Shuffle and organize them in the order they belong. Continue practicing until you have the verse memorized.

Remember: The Israelites, often called Jews, still celebrate how God watched over their firstborn. He passed over their doors that had blood marking the doorframes rather than allowing them to be killed. This festival is called Passover now. What do the Jewish do to celebrate Passover? They have a special Seder dinner and do certain things to remember what happened. They prepare for this special time, and have readings and songs during the special dinner. The Seder plate has six things on it that remind them of what happened when the Israelites left Egypt. Provide each reader with a paper plate and pictures of these six items. Then briefly describe each one as they place it on their plate. Google Seder Meal to get a list of the six items.

God Moment: What do we learn about God from the story *Moses Leads the People*? How did He speak to Moses? When the Israelites were in the desert, how did they know of God's presence? Once the Israelites started off, the pillar of cloud and then of fire guided them. This was God's presence. He was always with them. When the pillars stopped, they stopped. When the pillars moved, they followed. These pillars were a miracle, and other nations saw them and heard about them too. They realized that the Israelites were special. Since God never changes, we should realize that if we are His children, He is always with us. He will lead and guide us. As a reminder, create your own pillars of cloud and fire. Draw fire and clouds and cut them out to form pillars. Color in the fire, and if possible, use pulled apart cotton balls to fill in the cloud. Paste a straw or popsicle stick in between the two so that one side is the pillar of cloud, and the other side is the pillar of fire. Then write "God guides us" on the popsicle stick or on one of the pillars.

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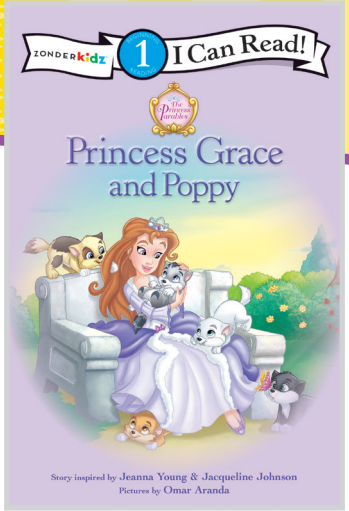

BEGINING READING 1

Princess Grace and Poppy

Author and Illustrator: Jeanna Young and Jacqueline Johnson; Omar Aranda

About the Book

Princess Grace finds five kittens. She wants to keep them and promises to take care of them. Her father, the king, says she can keep them. Her kitten, Poppy, loves to play. But then Poppy goes missing. Grace and her family look and look and finally find Poppy! They are all thankful.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How many daughters does the king have? How many kittens does Grace find?
2. On pages 16 and 17, clues are given to figure out which sisters are Charity and Faith. Which ones are they?
3. Explain how Grace's prayers are answered when she finds Poppy. (See pages 26–27.)
4. Where would you have looked for a missing kitten? Would you have been brave enough to look in the Black Woods?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Ephesians 4:32 (NIrV): "Be kind and tender to one another." Put motions to this verse and practice it. How can you be kind and tender? What could you do or not do that would be kind to your siblings?

Pray: Princess Grace knew that she could pray to God. When did she pray? What and how did she pray? Think of prayer as talking and listening to God. The Bible says that He hears us when we pray. Psalm 66:19 says, "But God has surely listened. He has heard my prayer." Praying is not magic, but it is powerful. Sometimes it can be hard to know what to pray. Then you can pray Scripture. For instance, you could pray the memory verse, Ephesians 4:32, like this: *Dear Jesus, Please help me to be kind and tender toward my sister. Amen.* Make a praying hands craft and write "God hears me when I pray" on the inside of the hands. (Trace a hand on a folded piece of paper so that the side of the hand is on the fold. Being careful to not cut the fold, cut the handprint out.)

Lost and Found: Princess Grace found five kittens and wanted to keep them. She loved the kittens and was very upset when Poppy went missing. She wanted to find the kitten right away! She searched and searched. It took time and prayer, but God helped her find Poppy. Do you have the patience for finding words? Create a word search puzzle (Google "create a word search"). Use words from the story, such as "Grace, Joy, Faith, Charity, Hope, Kittens, Poppy, Castle, King, Lost, Found, Prayer." Find the hidden words! It may take some time to find all of them.

Help Each Other: Do you have siblings? Do you get along most of the time? Or is it hard to get along? Getting along with people of all kinds is a very important skill. Start practicing now with your siblings! Learn some phrases to use and skills. Role-play and practice these phrases and skills. Brainstorm some good phrases to use: "May I play with that when you are done?" "Would you like to play with me?" "May I go after you?" If you want a toy or book that a friend or sibling has, be sure not to touch it until you politely ask to have a turn. Then hold out your hand and wait for them to be done. Do not yell or scream. Have fun acting and practicing!

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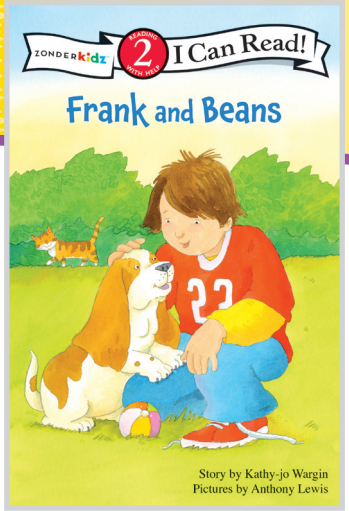

READING 2 WITH HELP

Frank and Beans

Author and Illustrator: Kathy-jo Wargin; Anthony Lewis

About the Book

Frank wanted a puppy and saw a sign that his neighbor, Mrs. Nelson, had puppies for sale. When he and his parents went to buy one, she didn't have any more. He was upset. Then Mrs. Nelson brought him a dog that needed care. Frank was not excited because it was an older dog. The dog got sad in the night. Frank let it sleep on his bed, and they became friends.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What has Frank always wanted?
2. Why did Mrs. Nelson look sad when the family got to her house?
3. How did Frank's mom think God made things right for Frank? What did Frank think?
4. How did the dog get named? Have you named a pet? How?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize any part of Proverbs 3:5 (NIrV): "Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding." How does this verse apply to *Frank and Beans*? What was Frank's mom encouraging him to remember? When we trust in the Lord, we don't have to lose hope or be upset. We can pray, ask God to help us see what He has planned, and then trust that He will help us. Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a phrase as you throw the ball.

Explore Emotions: How did Frank look when he found out there were no more puppies? How did he feel? How did he look and feel when Mrs. Nelson gave him an older dog? It's alright for Frank to feel mad, sad, and unhappy. But there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to react when we feel these ways. Talk about good choices to make when feeling mad, sad, and unhappy.

Grown is Good: Frank's mom says that puppies are a lot of work. If you are in a classroom setting, take a poll of your classmates to see who would prefer a puppy or a grown dog. Then make a bar graph to show the results. What makes a grown dog less work? Research five reasons a grown dog would make a great pet. Then make a simple origami or paper plate dog craft and write the reasons on the back.

Imagine: What might have happened if Frank had gotten one of the puppies? Imagine what his life would have been like. What would he have to teach the puppy? What would he have named it? Was Frank's mom right that puppies are a lot of work? Write or dictate the rest of the story, explaining how Frank and the puppy would have gotten along. Draw a picture to go along with your story.

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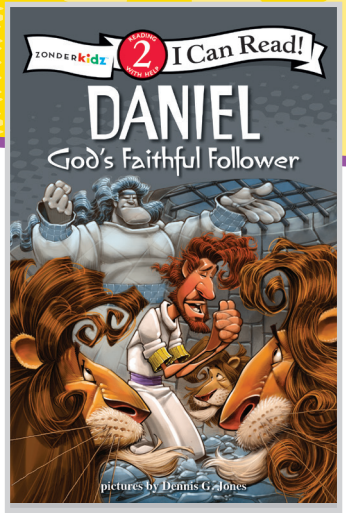

READING 2 WITH HELP

Daniel, God's Faithful Follower

Illustrator: Dennis G. Jones

About the Book

Daniel was one of the king's helpers. He was so good that the other helpers became jealous. They decided to get Daniel in trouble. When Daniel disobeyed the new law to pray only to the king, the helpers took him to the king to be punished. The king was sad but had to throw Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel prayed to God for protection. God sent an angel to keep the lions away from Daniel! The king saw how great Daniel's God was and told everyone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How did the king's other helpers feel about Daniel? What was their plan?
2. Did Daniel break the new law? Why?
3. Why didn't the lions eat Daniel?
4. Were any of the illustrations surprising? How so?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 141:1 (NIrV): "I call out to you, LORD. Come quickly to help me." Repeat the verse while jumping rope—one word or phrase per jump. Daniel prayed to God and still had to face the lions, but he just kept praying and trusting that God would help him.

God Moment: Once the king knew that God had kept Daniel safe, he told all the people about Daniel's God. Have you told friends about God? The story of Daniel really happened, so you could tell friends about this true story. Or you could tell them something that God has done in your own life. Find and learn a kids' song about one of God's attributes—God is good, God is amazing, God is love, etc.

Watch: Daniel knew that God was with him all the time. He prayed to God regularly. Print out a clock (or draw one) and attach the minute and hour hands with a brad so you can move them around (or use two pencils instead). On the clock face, write out "God Watches Over Us All the Time!" Then pick three times that Daniel might have prayed each day (9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.). Help students place the minute and hour hands to correctly reflect these times.

Be a Daniel: Daniel is a good example to us to pray regularly, to do the right thing according to God even when we might get in trouble, and to have courage. Sometimes it can be hard to know what is right. That is why we have the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and study the Bible to learn about what God says is right and to know what pleases Him. Google "ten commandments for kids." Print out and start to learn a simplified version of the Ten Commandments. Talk about them and pray that God will help you remember them.

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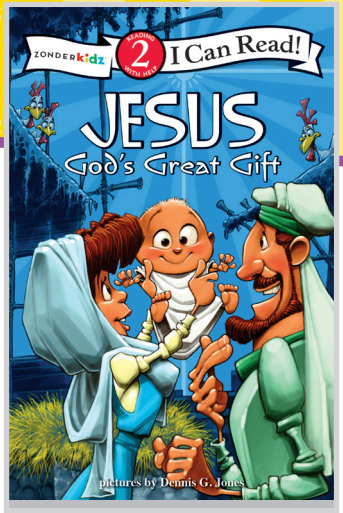

READING 2 WITH HELP

Jesus, God's Great Gift

Illustrator: Dennis G. Jones

About the Book

Mary and Joseph had to make their way to Bethlehem along with many others. The only place they could find to stay was a barn. Baby Jesus was born. Mary knew he was special. A star and angels told shepherds Jesus had been born. They went to go see him. Awhile later, wise men also visited Jesus and gave him gifts. Jesus grew up and did special things to tell people about God and that He saves us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What happened when Joseph tried to find a place for them to sleep?
2. What sign showed that Jesus was born?
3. How would you have reacted to angels singing about Jesus? How did the shepherds feel?
4. What two things did the shepherds do once they saw Jesus? What did the wise men do?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize any part of Luke 2:11 (NIrV): "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord." This was the news that an angel brought to the shepherds. It was news of great joy for everyone. Once Jesus grew up and started preaching, people realized what a special gift from God Jesus was. Clap at each syllable as readers say their memory verse. Keep practicing until the verse is memorized.

God Moment: The title of this story is *Jesus, God's Great Gift*. Everyone likes gifts! Giving and getting gifts can be fun. Usually we get *things* as gifts, not people. How is Jesus a present? How can we receive Him? What does He give us?

Setting: You can see through the pictures that *Jesus, God's Great Gift* was not recent. There are no cars, gas stations, roads, or hotels pictured. Jesus was born about 2,000 years ago in the town of Bethlehem, in what today is the Middle East. The memory verse also calls it the City of David. It was named the City of David because King David was born there too, many years before Jesus. Often cities are named because of the founder or another famous person—like Denver, named for James W. Denver. Other times it is something special or amazing in the area that gives a city its name. For instance, Chicago was named *shikaakwa* or *chicagoua*, the French word for the wild garlic that grew in the area. Another way to name a city was referring to something spiritual. Los Angeles was named "The Angels," but had a much longer Spanish name at first. How was your city or town named? Find out and draw a picture of the origin.

Print Concepts: On pages 6–9 we see a pattern! It's a similar event at each place. This is called repetition. Stories often use this to make a point. What was the point in *Jesus, God's Great Gift*? What other stories use repeated events, phrases, or words? Even songs use repetition, either in the chorus or a similar phrase in different verses. Since the birth of Jesus is the reason we celebrate Christmas, look at your favorite Christmas song. What word, phrase, or chorus is repeated? You probably remember this part of the song well, as repetition helps anchor things in our minds. Sing the song! If you can, print out the words (lyrics), then highlight or underline the repetition.

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READING 2 WITH HELP

Troo Makes a Splash

Author and Illustrator: Cheryl Crouch; Kevin Zimmer

About the Book

Troo and Keewa want to enjoy the water but the river is moving too fast. They stop the river with rocks and logs to make a pool. They have so much fun! Then Rilla comes and tells them that stopping the river made it dry. This hurts the water rats, fish, and bugs that need the river. Troo, Keewa, and Rilla learn to think of others and not just about what they want.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is Rilla's biggest secret?
2. Why is it a problem that Troo and Keewa have stopped the river?
3. What could Troo and Keewa have done instead of stopping the river?
4. What does Rilla learn because of this experience?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Philippians 2:4 (NIrV): "None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others." Every time we do something it affects others around us. If you want to play on your own, then what does that mean for your siblings? If you want to yell and be crazy on the trampoline that your friend is also on, how does this affect him? Talk about how your actions affect others. Then start memorizing Philippians 2:4. Play hangman using key words. Then practice saying the completed verse.

Think of Others: Part of the memory verse says to look out for the good of others. What can you do that will be good for others? Brainstorm and write down ways to serve. Title your paper "Doing Good for Others—Philippians 2:4." Then write down four ways to do good in these categories: say something nice or encouraging, help a sibling or friend, share something, and pray for someone. If possible, have the reader share afterwards how this all worked out.

Cause and Effect: Things in our world often happen as a result of some other action. We call this cause and effect. A cause is the reason or why something happens. An effect is the result or what happened. When it rains, the effect or result is that the ground gets wet and flowers grow. Sometimes cause and effect is not fun: you do something naughty, so you get sent to your room. Sort out and notice these scrambled causes and effects from *Troo Makes a Splash*. Each cause will have just one effect. Add more causes and effects, as time permits, or add a few from their own lives.

Causes: Troo and Keewa start to think of others; Rilla tells Troo that fish are trapped; Troo and Keewa stop the river

Effects: Rilla and the water rats get upset; Rilla will think of others too; Troo is sorry

Rainforest Animals: This series is called Rainforest Friends. The last page tells us about some of the animals in the story that live in the rainforest. Research and find actual pictures of each one—a tree kangaroo, a cuscus, a water rat, a zygoptera or damselfly, and a New Guinea Tigerfish.

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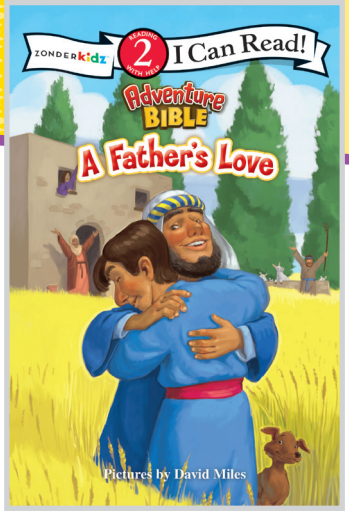

READING 2 WITH HELP

A Father's Love

Illustrator: David Miles

About the Book

Jesus tells a story to show that God is always glad when people ask for forgiveness. The story is about a father with two sons. One son asks for his inheritance and leaves home to go have fun. Then the money is gone, and the son wants to go home. The father is glad to have him home and forgives his son. They even have a party because he has returned!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who tells this story? What does page 31 say is the point of the story?
2. What does the younger son do with all his money?
3. What would have been some better options for the younger son rather than spending all his money on fun? (for example, not waste all his money, stay home, work)
4. Was the father upset about the money being gone? How did he feel about his younger son coming home?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Luke 15:32 (NIrV): "He was lost. And now he is found." This part of verse 32 speaks about the younger son who returned home. Luke 15 tells three parables about lost and found items. With each one, when it is found, Jesus says there is great joy, celebration, and gladness! The end of *A Father's Love* says that God the Father celebrates when his children come home. What does this mean when God's child comes home? It means that God has a celebration when someone realizes they need God to forgive them.

Parables: Do you like stories? Hearing a great storyteller is a treat. Jesus was a great storyteller, and often told stories called parables. These are stories with one central truth. Read Matthew 13:10–17 to see what Jesus says about why He taught in parables. He points out that those who were not His disciples did not always understand the parables (verse 11). Explain to readers how people can have a hard heart and not be open to Jesus and His teachings. Others may have a soft heart.

Cause and Effect: Review the key words from *A Father's Love*. First write out the alphabet and assign one number each letter (1–26) so, letter A=1, B=2, C=3, etc. Then puzzle out these key words:

a. **16, 1, 18, 1, 2, 12, 5**

b. **19, 15, 14, 19**

c. **12, 15, 19, 20**

d. **6, 15, 21, 14, 4**

e. **3, 5, 12, 5, 2, 18, 1, 20, 5**

f. **6, 15, 18, 7, 9, 22, 5**

g. **12, 15, 22, 5**

I'm Sorry! It can be hard to say you're sorry. Sometimes we think it means we are weak. It is actually a sign of strength, humbleness, and a heart that pleases Jesus when we can apologize. Having a right attitude is important too. You have to mean it when you apologize. Google "four-part apology" and create your own poster as a guide. Use the four-part apology to mend relationships when something goes wrong. Then work with a partner to practice saying the four-part apology.

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READING 2 WITH HELP

Jonah, God's Messenger

Illustrator: Dennis G. Jones

About the Book

Jonah was a prophet. God asked him to go to Nineveh to tell people about Him. Jonah did not want to go to *those* people. He got on a ship going in the opposite direction. God sent a storm, Jonah was thrown into the sea, and a big fish swallowed him for three days. When Jonah was finally sorry, the fish spit him out. He then obeyed and went to Nineveh.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh like God had asked?
2. Did Jonah arrive in Tarshish? Why not?
3. What happened when Jonah was in the big fish for three days and nights?
4. What did Jonah tell the people of Nineveh? What happened?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Jonah 3:1–2 (NIrV): "The LORD said, 'Go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce to its people the message I give you.'" What was God's message? How many times did God tell Jonah to go to Nineveh? Use a whiteboard. Write out the verse and then erase words as you commit the verse to memory.

Prophet: The prophets of the Bible were God's spokesmen. They shared the words of God—words of encouragement, of warning, of teaching. They reminded Israel of God's love for them. All the prophets brought important messages. There are sixteen books of prophecy in the Bible. Four are called the "major" prophets only because the books are longer—Isaiah, Jeremiah (Lamentations—sometimes included as a major prophetic book, also written by Jeremiah), Ezekiel, and Daniel. Twelve books are called the minor prophets because the books are much shorter. These are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

God Moment: What do you think about Jonah not wanting to go to "those" people? He knew that people of Nineveh were wicked, and he did not think they deserved God's grace. Jonah must have forgotten that no one deserves God's grace; God loves, forgives, and searches out everyone—whether we think we are deserving or not. We cannot be good enough or do enough for God to earn His forgiveness. Talk about how much God loves everyone, no matter what.

Listening: Sometimes in the Bible, we are told that people heard God's voice—Jonah, Moses, and Samuel, for instance. People today say they "hear" God, but it is not usually His voice out loud. What do they mean? Remember that prayer is talking to and listening to God. When we take time to listen, we can get a strong feeling, be reminded of a verse, or have a thought just appear in our minds. Sometimes we feel we *must* speak, and our heart starts to beat fast. Give God time to speak, and learn to listen to how He speaks. Have the reader close his eyes or blindfold him. Then whisper directions or sounds to have him follow and make his way across a room. Did he have to tune-in to your voice? Did he have to not listen to other sounds?

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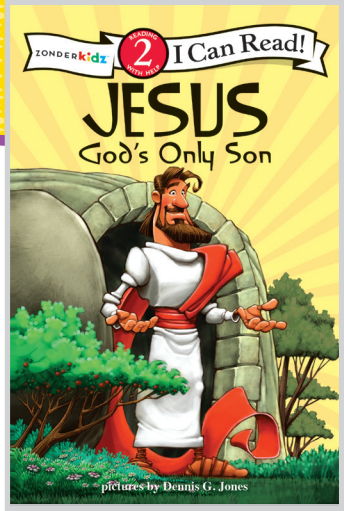

READING 2 WITH HELP

Jesus, God's Only Son

Illustrator: Dennis G. Jones

About the Book

God's son Jesus was taken away by soldiers. He was put on a cross and died. His friends buried him, and guards stood in front of the cave. When his friends went back to the cave, it was empty! An angel told them that Jesus was risen, just as he said he would. His friends were so happy to see Jesus! But then Jesus went up to heaven and said he would see them again there.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus doing when the soldiers and Judas came for him?
2. What happened to Jesus on the cross?
3. What did you think had happened to Jesus when you read that the cave was empty? What did the angel tell Jesus' friends?
4. Where did Jesus go and how?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Luke 24:34 (NIrV): "It's true! The Lord has risen!" Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a phrase after you as you throw the ball.

Connect with Math: Jesus died, was buried for three days, and then rose. He did stay with his disciples for forty days after He rose. Then he said he had to go so that our helper, the Holy Spirit, could come. So, all believers have the help and power of the Holy Spirit in them! It was 10 days after Jesus went to heaven that the Holy Spirit came. Make a timeline to show these different events!

Go Tell! Jesus said to tell everyone about God. You can start by praying each day that God will help you to show his love. Look for ways to help others and then let them know that Jesus loves them and wants us to help each other. Be respectful of your teachers and other adults in your life. If they compliment you, tell them that you know being respectful makes God happy. Invite your friends to church and talk about things you've learned or done at church. Always do your best to point to Jesus by your words and actions! Create this reminder (as a poster, bookmark, or card): write "Jesus" in the middle. Then draw a number of arrows that point to the word "Jesus". Pray that Jesus would use you to point others to Him.

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BEGINING READING 1

Princess Faith's Garden Surprise

Author and Illustrator: Jeanna Young and Jacqueline Johnson; Omar Aranda

About the Book

Princess Faith discovers a secret garden on their castle grounds. She and her sisters get permission to grow flowers. It is not easy. It takes several tries before Princess Faith and her sisters can get flowers to grow. They learn that faith can grow like seeds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who is Buttercup? Whose pet is this?
2. How did Princess Faith feel about the bats and spider webs (page 8)?
3. How does this well-known proverb fit the story: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!"
4. What lesson does Princess Faith learn in the end and thanks God for? (See page 32.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Matthew 13:23 (NIrV): "But the seed that fell on good soil is like those who hear the message and understand it." Repeat the verse as different animals. Use a fish voice (your finger jostles your lips as you talk), hiss like a snake on the "s" sounds, or jump like a kangaroo as you repeat the verse. This verse talks about hearing what Jesus says, understanding it, and allowing it to change your life. Then you will grow and be as healthy as plants that grow in good soil.

Stick with It: Look up "perseverance." (Explain how to look up words in dictionaries as you help readers find the word.) How did Princess Faith and her sisters persevere? When things get hard, what can you do? Is just giving up a good option? You can keep praying and trusting God. Princess Faith asked her father, the king, for advice. He gave her wise advice. These are good ways to keep hope and persevere when life is hard. Make a storyboard (write or draw snapshots from the story) and then act out the main scenes of gardening from *Princess Faith's Garden Surprise*. Imagine what would have happened if the sisters had given up. Act this out and then talk about the differences.

Gardening: Gather materials to grow your own plant. What will you need? To grow a healthy plant, you will need good soil in a container, seeds of some kind (flower, vegetable, or greenery), water, and sun (check to see what that type of plant needs). Then tend it and watch it grow in the next weeks. What do plants need to grow? Compare this to having faith in God. What does faith need to grow?

Parables: *Princess Faith's Garden Surprise* is based on a parable from Matthew 13. A parable is often the tool Jesus used to explain something about life. Read the parable in verses 1–9. Create a three-column side-by-side chart to compare the story and parable as you read. Keep the third column to understand what Jesus was telling His listeners. Read Matthew 13:18–23 or paraphrase it as you help readers understand that our hearts need to be soft like the good soil. We want to listen to Jesus, grow deep roots (see activity 3), and produce good fruit (do good things for Jesus).

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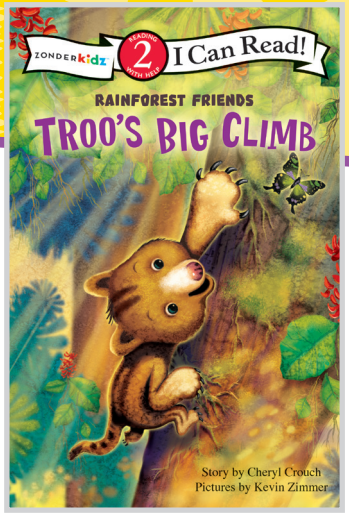

READING 2 WITH HELP

Troo's Big Climb

Author and Illustrator: Cheryl Crouch, Kevin Zimmer

About the Book

Troo thinks he can climb the tallest tree in the rainforest. His friend Rilla doesn't believe him. His parents think he is a baby and won't allow it. He wants to show them all! He climbs to the very top but falls. Rilla and his parents rush to him. Troo is hurt but ok. He learns why his parents had told him not to climb the tree. He would obey now!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why wouldn't Rilla climb the tall tree? Why did Troo want to climb it?
2. How did Troo feel when he first reached the top of the tree?
3. What happened at the top of the tree that caused Troo to fall to the ground?
4. Why did Troo's parents not want him to climb the big tree?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Ephesians 6:1 (NIrV): "Children, obey your parents ... Obey them because it's the right thing to do." Are you to obey your parents only when you agree? When are you to obey them? Parents are given to children to help them and love them. Repeat the verse as different animals! Use a fish voice (your finger jostles your lips as you talk), hiss like a snake on the "s" sounds, or jump like a kangaroo as you repeat the verse.

Obedience: Parents and teachers often have many rules. We are to obey and listen. Some rules are meant to keep you safe. Others are to teach you what God says is important. Some are to teach you to care for your body. Some rules help you get along with others better. Other rules even prepare you for caring for yourself once you leave home. List the types of rules—Safety, God Says So, Real World, Health, Getting Along with Others. Then provide readers with examples of each rule. Have readers decide what category each rule bellows in. Some may fit in more than one category: Don't go to the bathroom on your own when in a public place. Don't play with matches. Look both ways when crossing streets. Tell the truth. Apologize and ask for forgiveness. Listen to your parents. Share toys. Be kind. Take turns. Don't cut in line. Do your chores. Use your allowance wisely. Save money.

Sound Like . . . : On page 20 and 23 we see words that are in all capital letters. Read these words again. Words like this are examples of onomatopoeia. This means that the words sound like a sound. Can you think of other words that create sounds? Like *eek, whoosh, sizzle, ping.* Using words like these in writing helps readers see and understand your story. In one column write these words that create a sound: horse, cow, phone, bacon cooking, owl, clock, hands. Then create a column with sounds: ring, moo, neigh, sizzle, who-who, tick-tock, clap. Then match up the items with the sounds by drawing a line to connect the two. Add several of your own! You could also read the words that create sounds and then have the readers give you the sound out loud!

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READING 2 WITH HELP

Brave Queen Esther

Illustrator: David Miles

About the Book

The king of the land needed a queen. His servants brought him Esther. He loved her very much and made her queen. Haman, an evil friend of the king's, did not like the Jews or Mordecai, Esther's cousin. Haman had the king agree to kill all the Jews. When Esther told him that she and Mordecai were Jews, the king was very upset with Haman. Haman was taken away, and the king trusted Mordecai instead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Write these four parts on index cards so readers can manipulate them. Put these four parts of the story in order: (1) The king is angry with Haman. (2) Haman speaks to the king about getting rid of all the Jews. (3) Esther tells the king that she is Jewish. (4) The king makes Esther his queen. (For an extra challenge, add more parts for readers to place in the correct sequence.)
2. How are Haman and Mordecai different?
3. What was Esther's secret?
4. How do the Jewish people still celebrate God helping them escape Haman's plan?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Isaiah 43:1 (NIrV): "[The LORD] says, 'Do not be afraid ... You belong to me.'" God is bigger than our problems! He sees everything and knows what is best. It is good to be able to trust him! After practicing the verse a few times, start wiping off all but the beginning letters of each word. Keep practicing until readers have the verse memorized.

Puzzle It Out: Queen Esther had to listen, pray, and decide what to do to help her people. It took God's wisdom to know what to do and when. Read Esther 4:15–16 (NIrV) to see what Esther and Mordecai did to be ready for talking to the king. Create a word search puzzle (Google "create a word search"). Use words from the story, such as "Prayer, Fasting, Jews, Esther, Mordecai, Queen, Rules, Saved, Brave, Cousins."

God Moment: God is sovereign. This means that God knows and sees everything. He is in complete control. Even when things seem impossible, God can do it. This means we don't need to worry and we can trust him. God did the impossible and saved the Jews through Esther! Gather up a small jar and an index card. Fill the jar with water. Place the index card over the mouth. What will happen when we turn the jar upside-down? It seems impossible that the water would stay put! Turn the jar over and let go of the index card. (It is best to try this over a sink or bucket, since once the index card gets wet or bent, the suction will loosen and then start to leak.) It seems impossible that the index card will not let the water out. The water is like life and all its problems. We want to make sure everything will stay in its proper place. Who controls it though, even when it seems like it might make a mess? God is like the index card, controlling the impossible. Take a moment to thank God for being sovereign and that we can trust him even with the impossible!

Remember: Jewish people remember God saving the Jews through Esther. This is called the Festival of Purim. Jews celebrate this festival in February or March. Often kids dress up. They give money and food to the poor. They have special treats as well. These traditions are all based on the events in the book of Esther. Read *Brave Queen Esther* again. Whenever Mordecai or Esther is mentioned, CHEER! Whenever Haman is mentioned, bang the table like a drum to drown out Haman's name, or you can make a drum out of a plastic cup and a pencil.

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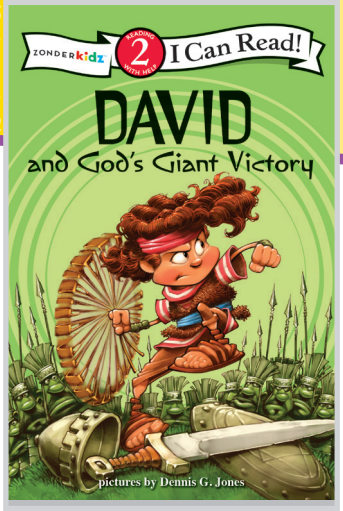

READING 2 WITH HELP

David and God's Giant Victory

Illustrator: Dennis G. Jones

About the Book

All the soldiers in Israel are afraid. A giant named Goliath yells for someone to fight him. David volunteers to face Goliath. David knows that God will help him and will fight for him. He has his slingshot and chooses five stones. His stone hits Goliath and makes him tumble over. David is thankful that God has helped him!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What experience did David have that would help him face the giant Goliath?
2. What does it show David doing before and after fighting Goliath?
3. What did Goliath think about David?
4. In whom did David trust? How did David think God would help him?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 68:35 (NIrV): "The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people." David had confidence in God and his power. He trusted that God would help him when facing Goliath. Remember this verse when you know you need God's help! Play hangman using the key words. Then practice saying the completed verse.

Practice, Practice: David knew God had given him abilities. He knew how to use a slingshot. David had also faced large, strong animals and had practiced being an accurate shot. He had his sling with him, he knew how to choose just the right stones, and he knew God would be with him. God had prepared David for this moment, and David was ready. What talents and abilities has God given you? As you get older and begin to practice certain talents, make sure you do your very best and learn as much as you can. No matter what it is, you can use it to glorify God. In a group, each practice hitting a target with a ball and see if you can get better and better at that!

God is My Rock: God is the one who won the battle! He helped David defeat Goliath. First Samuel 17 tells the story of David and Goliath. David even tells Goliath, "The battle belongs to the LORD." He explains that God is the one fighting for him! Remember we also can lean on God and ask him to help us. Find a large rock about the size of a hand. Using different colored permanent markers, write "The battle belongs to the Lord!" on it.

Be Musical: There are many songs about God and how strong he is. Google "My God is So Big" and choose a song to learn. Read through the lyrics and discuss how this is similar or different from what *David and God's Giant Victory* tells about. Then decide on motions for the song. Perhaps the motions can reflect upon the story of David and our strong God! Then sing the song, use motions, and/or tap the rhythm with a pencil.

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READING 2 WITH HELP

Noah's Voyage

Illustrator: David Miles

About the Book

God was sorry he had made people. So God asked Noah to build an ark. God was going to save Noah, his family, and the animals. Noah listened, built the ark, and took care of the animals during the flood. When the water dried up, everyone left the ark. God sent a rainbow as a sign of his promise to never flood the earth again. Noah made an altar to honor God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Noah to build the ark?
2. Who are Noah's three sons? What did they do?
3. How did Noah know they would be leaving the ark soon? (See pages 26–27.)
4. What did God give Noah (and us) as a sign of his promise to never flood the earth again? What did Noah do to honor and thank God?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize one part of Genesis 9:13 (NIrV): "I have put my rainbow in the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth." Have you ever seen a rainbow? Isn't it amazing? Noah and his family were the first ones to see the rainbow. It was a sign from God that he would never flood the earth again. There have been smaller floods since then but never a flood over the whole earth. Repeat the verse as different animals! Use a fish voice (your finger jostles your lips as you talk), hiss like a snake on the "s" sounds, or jump like a kangaroo as you repeat the verse.

Stand Strong: What do you do when other students are not being respectful to a teacher or other adult? What do you do when others are not being nice to classmates? In the Bible God tells us to be kind (Ephesians 4:32) and to respect those in authority (Romans 13). It can be hard to do the right thing when others are doing wrong. Pray that God will give you strength to do what is right. Role-play some scenarios from the classroom and show how you can choose to stand strong. At the end of each, stand straight and tall and say, "Stand strong!"

Rainbows: God always keeps his promises, even those he made a long time ago. We learn about the first rainbow in the story about Noah. God says the rainbow is a symbol showing that God will never flood the whole earth again. Then we are also told that Noah built an altar to honor God. These both served as reminders of what happened. Find stones large enough to write on. Draw a rainbow or write "rainbow" on one so you can remember how God kept Noah safe. As you see an answer to prayer, write a word as a reminder and keep them together. Then you can look through them as you have hard times, pray about something, or need to remember that God keeps his promises.

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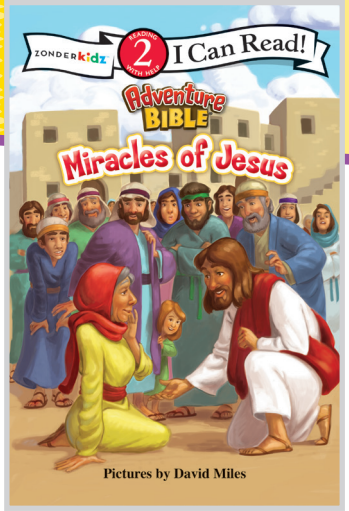

READING 2 WITH HELP

Miracles of Jesus

Illustrator: David Miles

About the Book

Jesus came to teach people about how much God loves them. He traveled all over and preached. He did more than just talk though. He touched people and made them well. Some he even raised from the dead. He healed Jairus' daughter. He healed a sick woman. He also fed 5,000 people with just five loaves and two fish.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What were some of the miracles of Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus go with Jairus? Do you think Jesus would have gone if Jairus hadn't had faith?
3. How many baskets of food were left from what the boy had?
4. How do you know that Jesus loves people?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Mark 6:2 (NIrV): "What are these remarkable miracles he is doing?" People who saw Jesus perform the miracles were amazed! Have you ever seen a miracle? It's something that cannot be explained other than happening because of the power of God. If it is nice outside, write the verse with sidewalk chalk on the sidewalk. Then have readers jump from one word to the next as they recite and learn it. If staying indoors, then write the verse out and have readers point to each word as they repeat it.

Jesus Loves Me: Learn about all Jesus has done for you by deciding to read and know the Bible throughout your whole life. Cut a heart shape out of a white paper plate. Use a hole punch to make holes around the edge about an inch apart. Then use ribbon or yarn of any color to "sew" the holes and make a nice pattern. Use the ends of the ribbon/yarn to make a loop to hang it up. On one side write "Jesus Loves Me!" and on the other write "I Love Jesus!" We can love Jesus by reading about him and knowing the Bible. Then we can share this love with others.

Share Jesus: Jesus came to show the world God's love. Today we are to share God's love. Does your church support any missionaries? Missionaries are people who have told God that they would go anywhere in the world to share Jesus with others. Sometimes it is for a short time; other times it is for their entire lives. Find out which missionaries your church or school support. Then make prayer cards for each family (use index cards). Write their names at the top. Then write the country where they live and work and how they are sharing Jesus with others. Pray for one family each day in the morning or at bed time.

What Just Happened? Jesus performed miracles when he traveled. Name the miracles shared in *Miracles of Jesus*. Do miracles happen today? Search and read about some present-day miracles. Often such stories come from missionaries, so you could Google "miracle missionary stories for kids." Then draw a picture to show what happened.

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BEGINING READING 1

Princess Charity's Golden Heart

Author and Illustrator: Jeanna Young and Jacqueline Johnson; Omar Aranda

About the Book

Princess Charity loves to ride her horse. But her father said she must not go on to Sir Richard's land. She agreed. Then she saw a boy get hurt! He was on Sir Richard's land. No one was helping him. Charity decided she had to help him. She brought him to the palace. He was Sir Richard's son. The king was proud of his daughter, Charity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Charity like? Do you like some of the same things?
2. Who is Daisy?
3. What happened to the boy in the buggy? (See pages 16–17.)
4. What did Princess Charity decide to do even though she was not to go on Sir Richard's land?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Mark 12:31 (NIrV): "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." This is one of the greatest commandments. How did Princess Charity show love for her neighbor? Repeat the verse in various ways—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Parables: Retell the story of the good Samaritan from Luke 10. As you tell the story, make a two-column chart comparison between the Samaritan and Charity. For Luke 10, share that a man was hurt and on the side of the road. He needed help. A priest went past him. Then a Levite passed him. Next a Samaritan came and took him to get help. How is this similar to *Princess Charity's Golden Heart*?

Figure It Out: Write out the alphabet and assign one number to each letter. So, letter A=1, B=2, C=3, etc. Figure out the words that have to do with the story. Then take each bold, underlined letter to figure out the answer to the question.

12, 21, 14, **3**, 8 = _____
14, 5, 9, 7, **8**, 2, 15, 18 = _____
4, **1**, 9, 19, 25 = _____
6, **18**, 9, 5, 14, 4 = _____
11, **9**, 14, 4, 14, 5, 19, 19 = _____
20, 18, 9, 16, 19 = _____
2, 15, **25** = _____

Who was the true neighbor in *Princess Charity's Golden Heart*? _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Be Helpful: Loving your neighbor and helping those in need are lessons we learn from *Princess Charity's Golden Heart*. To remember to help those who are hurt, draw or create a big Band-Aid out of tan-colored construction paper. Then write Mark 12:31 (NIrV) in the middle of the Band-Aid.

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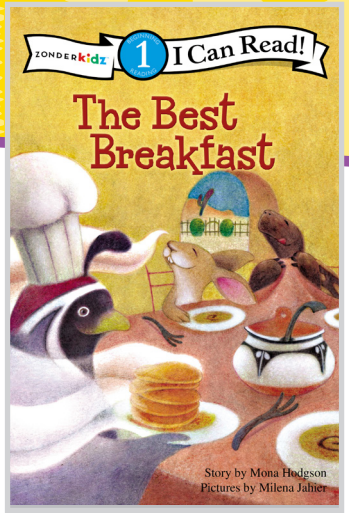

BEGINING 1 READING

The Best Breakfast

Author and Illustrator: Mona Hodgson, Milena Jahier

About the Book

Peck is excited to have a special breakfast for some of his friends! He wants it to be just right. When they arrive they bring food that he doesn't like. They all eat whatever they bring. He is afraid that's it's not just right because they don't like his breakfast. They tell him that they don't all like the same things, that God cares what's in their hearts, and that Peck brought them all together! It was just perfect! They had a wonderful time together then.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did some of Peck's friends bring to the special breakfast?
2. How did Peck feel about the different foods? What did he say? What did he do about those foods?
3. Did Peck stay sad when he thought his breakfast was not "just right"?
4. What did Hunter, Pokey, and Speedy say that helped Peck realize his breakfast was special and just right?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: HHave readers memorize Psalm 139:1 (NIrV): "LORD, you have seen what is in my heart. You know all about me." What does it mean that God sees our hearts? Is it talking about our heart pumping, or does it mean what we are like? It is really talking about why we do things and our attitudes. How does this make you feel? Put motions to the verse to help you memorize it.

God Seas: What did Peck want? He wanted breakfast to be a special time for his friends! That shows a very kind heart. He put a lot of work into their time. That kind of kindness is what God sees. Pouting about things not being "just right" would not please God though! Create large paper hearts that say, "I can change my attitude!" Then have readers trace over the letters with different colors (to show change). Alternately, and if possible, buy rainbow scratch art paper ahead of time. Then draw a heart and write on it. Explain to readers that this is a way to remember that even when things do not go as you thought, you can change your attitude! You can always choose your attitude.

Patterns: What pattern do you notice once the doorbell rings? A friend comes in. He or she brings a dish. We know what to expect when we notice patterns. Create a pattern of your own. The way we plan out a pattern is by using letters first—A, B, A, B, etc. or AA, BB, AA, BB, etc. Each time a letter changes, the pattern changes. Decide on a pattern. Then choose something to represent the pattern. For instance, a book (A), a ball (B), a book (A), a ball (B), etc. Make your pattern! Then have another reader figure out your pattern. Then make a second pattern. You can use any objects in the room, or you can print out small pictures to cut apart and use (three pictures at most).

Food: What would you have liked to try at Peck's breakfast? Is it food that you normally eat for breakfast? Talk about the food that each one liked. How was it perfect for each animal? What do you usually eat for breakfast? What do other kids around the world eat for breakfast? Google this question and see if you can match up these countries and the common foods:

Japan, Brazil, Holland, Turkey, Australia, France

Rice, grilled fish, miso soup; hot chocolate, croissant, jam; cheese, tomatoes, olives; vegemite on toast; bread and butter with chocolate sprinkles; ham, cheese, bread

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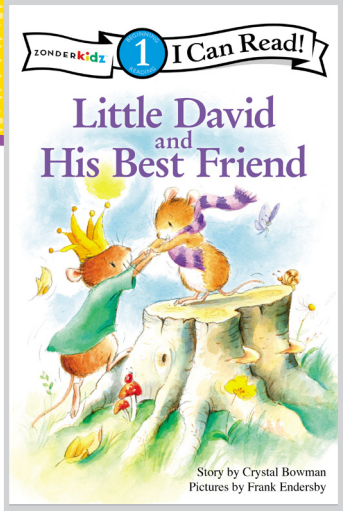

BEGINING READING 1

Little David and His Best Friend

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Frank Endersby

About the Book

The king liked Little David's music, so he asked him to stay in his house. That was fine until the people liked David more than the king. David was brave and chased big rats away. The king's son Jon and David were best friends. Then the king made David go away, and Jon was very sad. He knew God would take care of David. David went to live with his friend Sam until he could go back.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Before You Read: Look at the cover of the book. What do you think the story will be about?Who are the main characters?
2. Who is Jon? What do Jon and David do together?
3. What did David do about the big rats?
4. Why did the king send David away from his house after he chased the rats away? Where did David go?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 139:5 (NIrV): "You are all around me, behind me and in front of me. You hold me safe in your hand." What this verse points out is that anywhere we go, God is there. He holds us safe in his hand. Repeat the verse in various ways—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Act It Out: Choose one of the characters in the story. As the adult reads the story again, act out what happens. If there is more than one reader, take different parts. Then you can trade or choose another part for a second time through. Does being one of the characters make you understand the story in a new way?

Parts of a Book: Give the book to the reader. (If more than one reader is present, get extra books and/or pair up readers.) Write the parts of a book on sticky notes. (Title, author, front cover, illustrator, back cover, copyright page.) Have readers guess what the different parts are. Then explain each part—what it is and why it is important. Then let readers look over their placements again and make any changes. For extra practice, give readers another book. Add one for each of the following: the spine, main character, and title page.

Jealousy: The king got upset when he heard that others liked David more than him. What do we call this when someone wants what someone else has? Often we call it a "green-eyed monster." The king was jealous of David. He could have been happy, but instead he was jealous. Jealousy can make people do things that are not pleasing to God. Use a paper bag and turn it into a green-eyed monster puppet. Use green markers, googly eyes, construction paper, or whatever you have on hand. On his belly write "NO! Be thankful." Then have your completed puppet list things to be thankful for. Let's remember to be happy with what we have!

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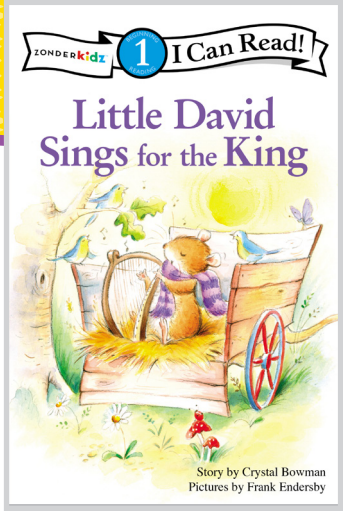

BEGINING 1 READING

Little David Sings for the King

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Frank Endersby

About the Book

Little David is the youngest in his family. His brothers say he is too young to play with them. But when a scary cat comes, he is the one to scare it away. Then a tall mouse comes from the king to ask for someone to help make the king happy. Little David is to go and play his harp for the king. He does, and it makes the king very happy. Even though David is small, he can do great things!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do David's brothers tell him when he asks to race with them?
2. What is David good at doing?
3. Who was the very tall mouse? What did he want?
4. What was David able to do even though he was little?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Matthew 7:7 (NIrV): "Ask, and it will be given to you." A few verses later in Matthew 7, the author explains, "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" Repeat the verse while jumping rope—one word or phrase per jump.

Be Musical: David and the king both feel better when they listen to music and sing. How do you feel when you hear music and/or sing? Do you play an instrument? You can make your own percussion instrument. Get an empty water bottle. Decorate the outside and fill the inside (up to about halfway) with rice or lentils. Then choose your favorite praise song on YouTube and use your shaker to add a beat to the music. Sing along, dance, and praise God!

Race: Set up a race and have fun like the mice in the first part of the story. Think of some different kinds of races to try. If a field or a gym is available, race to a finish line. Try it a few times and see if you can beat your own time. Then see who can build the tallest tower in a minute. (Or see if you can build a taller tower each time you try it!) Use blocks, candy, or anything else. Then see who can jump rope or hula-hoop the longest. Try jumping to a finish line on one leg. Find something small to balance on your head, and try to walk across the room and back without dropping it!

Reading Fun: Get a list of popcorn words from the teacher. Popcorn words are high-frequency words that keep popping up in almost everything you read. Go through them, and see how many you can spot in Little David Sings for the King. You can count "sat," if your popcorn word is "sit," as it's the same basic word. Highlight the popcorn words on the list your teacher gave you. Count them up! How many did you find in the story?

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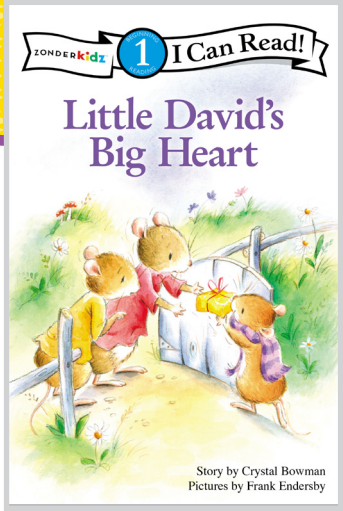

BEGINING 1 READING

Little David's Big Heart

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Frank Endersby

About the Book

Little David is part of a big family. Sam came to tell him and his father that God had chosen David to be king one day. His brothers didn't like this idea. David was a kind, little mouse though. He was kind to his brothers. He was brave for his friends in trouble. When the king heard about David being king one day, he had a party without David. David was thoughtful and sent a present anyway. The king then said David would be a good king!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does David's friend Sam tell him and his dad? What do David's brothers say to this news?
2. What was scaring Matt and Pat and how did David help them?
3. Why did the king say that David had a big heart?
4. Which is your favorite part of the story and why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIrV): "People look at the outside of a person. But the LORD looks at what is in the heart." Why did others in the story think David wouldn't be a good king? What did God see about Little David? What we look like doesn't matter. Who we are and how we act toward others does matter a lot. Memorize this important truth from the Bible. Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a phrase after you as you throw the ball.

Connect with Math: Let's go on a hunt and count up these various items from the story! Then make a bar graph to show how many you found of each. How many times do you see a red mushroom? How many times do you see a bird? Count the acorns! Then count the red ladybugs. Choose one more item to count and add to your bar graph. Then talk about the most, least, and hardest to find categories!

Compare: Little David is a mouse who is chosen to be king. This story is a mirror of David in the Old Testament of the Bible. Find out what parts are similar to David in the Bible! Then talk about how these details are similar or different to Little David's Big Heart.

- What instrument did David play? Read 1 Samuel 16:23. He played a _ _ _ _!
- Who was the prophet that came to tell David he would be king? Read 1 Samuel 16:13. His name was _ _ _ _ _ _!
- What animals did David fight off? Read 1 Samuel 17:36. He had fought a _ _ _ _ and a _ _ _ _!
- David was one of how many brothers? Was he the oldest or youngest? Read 1 Samuel 17:12 and 14. He was one of _ _ _ _ _ brothers. He was the _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _!

Kindness Wins: (Prepare ahead: bring in small jars or containers and popsicle sticks) What did others say about Little David? (kind, brave, big heart) What did David do even when he wasn't invited to the king's party? It takes a very kind person to do the right and kind thing even when others are not being nice. What do you do when your brother or sister is mean to you? Decide now that you can say something nice if this happens. Make a kindness jar to help you remember and practice kindness. Decorate a jar or container with "Kindness Wins!" Then brainstorm and write ways to be kind on the popsicle sticks that will fill the jar. (Share my toys, give a gift, draw a picture, take turns, give a hug, help my sibling.) Promise to pick one out each day to try!

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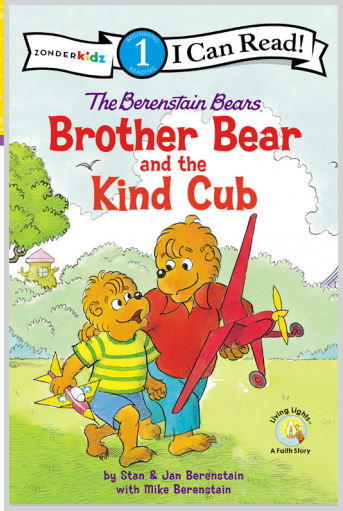

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears Brother Bear and the Kind Cub

Author: Stan and Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Brother Bear really likes model airplanes. He builds and flies them in the park. When a younger cub named Billy asks if he can help, Brother says yes. And later, when Brother asks to help some older cubs with a rocket, Billy convinces them to let Brother join in their group!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who taught Brother Bear about building and flying model airplanes?
2. What happened to Brother's airplane in the park on this day?
3. Name the four things Brother always says about the planes he builds and flies. (see page 15)
4. How does Brother's kindness come back to him?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize the following verse from Matthew 5:7: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Have readers write the words of the verse on 10 slips of paper. Shuffle the papers and have them reorganize the words into the verse. Do this as many times as necessary. Store the word puzzle in an envelope. Talk about what the word mercy means. How can they show mercy to others? How did Brother show mercy?

Hobby Fun: What hobbies do you have? Talk about your own hobbies with the readers and then make a list of things they do as hobbies. These might include collecting sports cards, playing video games, reading, drawing, playing a sport, playing an instrument. How can participating in a hobby give glory to God? Talk about how Brother was giving glory. If time, organize a small talent show to share hobbies with the group.

Just Plane Fun: Talk about rhyming words. Start with a familiar rhyme like -at (bat, cat, hat, rat, mat, flat, sat ...). Next have the group list all the rhyming words they can think of with the word "plane." Remind the class as you write their list on the chalkboard or chart paper that rhyming words do not have to be spelled the same (plane, plain, train). Next try different rhyming-word activities ... does anything rhyme with the kids' names, their street name, think of rhyming pairs (flat hat, top cop, rhyme time).

Kindness Counts: Talk about being kind. How can people show kindness to others? Does it always have to be something big and important or can you be kind in small and simple ways? Number a chart paper from 1 to 10 (or 1–5 for a smaller group). Set a goal—have each reader come to group the next time ready to talk about one way they showed kindness to someone in their friend group or family.

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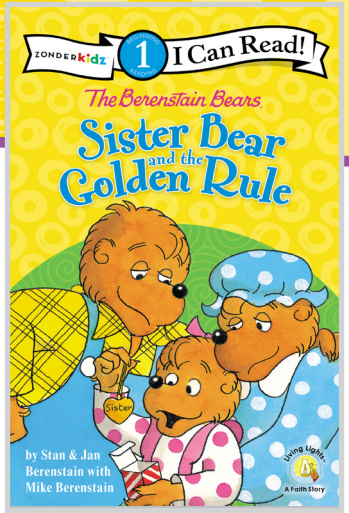

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears Brother Bear and the Golden Rule

Author: Stan and Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Sister Bear receives a golden locket for her birthday from Mama and Papa. It has the Golden Rule engraved on it and Mama and Papa tell her how important it is to treat others with respect—the way you want to be treated. Sister Bear has the chance to practice the Golden Rule when she meets the new girl in school—Suzy MacGrizzie. Suzy is not treated well by everyone but when Suzy returns Sister's locket after she drops it, Sister realizes how important the Golden Rule is.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who gives Sister Bear a locket for her birthday?
2. Say the Golden Rule. Where is it found in the Bible?
3. Read page 23 in the story again. Why did Sister feel bad about how she had treated Suzy? How does she fix the situation?
4. Look at pages 28–29. Point out three places that show cubs using the Golden Rule in their play. Explain each way.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize this verse: "Do to others what you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12) One of Sister Bear's favorite things to do is play ball with her brother and friends. Toss a ball back and forth with a friend, or across a circle of friends, saying one word from the verse with each toss until the group is reciting the verse smoothly. Then take turns having each person in the group tossing the ball up in the air and catching it all by themselves, saying a word for each toss up.

Color a Sampler: Get 8 ½ x 11 pieces of white paper and strips of brown paper (giving each reader one piece of white paper and two strips of brown that are about 9 x 1 and two strips of brown that are about 12 x 1 so that when laid along the edges of the white paper they make a frame). Have the readers write the Golden Rule—their memory verse from "Hide God's Word in Your Heart"—on the white paper and decorate with flowers, stars, and other designs. Then glue the brown frame strips along the edges. Post the samplers around the learning space or send home.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: What does it mean to respect others and what does it mean to respect yourself? Define "respect" as showing admiration for someone's qualities or talents or honoring someone as a human being by treating them well and recognizing them as someone who is worthy because they are children of God. Let children know this includes how they treat themselves. Then draw a T-chart on chart paper or a chalkboard, labeling the columns with Others and Yourself, and brainstorm ways to show respect. Now have the readers make a plan. How can I be more respectful in the next week? Talk about some easy ways to show others you follow the Golden Rule every day.

Buzz-Buzz: Play an If/Then prediction game. Make two columns on a chart paper or chalkboard. Label the left column IF and write the following statements:

- If Sister shows Mama and Papa respect by saying thank you for the locket then ...
- If Sister shows respect for Suzy by asking her to play then ...
- If Mama and Papa show respect for Sister by teaching her about respect then ...
- If Suzy shows respect for Sister by returning her locket then ...
- If you show respect for your teacher by listening to her read then ...
- If you show respect for your parent by cleaning your bedroom then ...
- If your sister shows respect for you by sharing her popcorn then ...
- If you show respect for yourself by going to bed on time then ...

Read each statement and have the readers predict the outcomes for the THEN column on the right. Write the predictions and then discuss the responses, especially if there are several different ones. Do all of the predictions reflect more respect?

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BEGINING READING 1

Mommy, May I Hug the Fish?

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Donna Christensen

About the Book

A young boy asks his mom what he can try and do. His mom says yes to some and no to others. Some are not safe for him to do on his own yet! He listens and learns from his mom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Name the activities that the young boy should not do by himself.
2. List the activities that the young boy can do.
3. What activities are you allowed to do on your own? What do you like to do most? Why?
4. How did the young boy seem to feel when his mom told him no? Did he get upset? Did he cry and yell? How do you feel when you are told no?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Isaiah 66:13 (NIrV): "As a mother comforts her child, I will comfort you." Who is the "I" in this verse? How can God comfort us? Do an index card shuffle game. Put each word or phrase on index cards. Then shuffle them and organize them in order.

Yes/No: Make a chart with "yes" on one side and "no" on the other. Then go through Mommy, May I Hug the Fish? again and list what the answer was for the different activities. Readers may write, draw, or dictate the answers. Then talk about why the mom's answers might have been yes and no. Do you think her answers might change as the boy gets older? Remind readers that it is a parent's responsibility to keep kids safe and those around them safe (even fish!).

Prayer Time: What does it mean to pray? Read the pages on prayer again (pages 24–27). When is a good time to pray? Do you pray in your family? God does care, and he wants us to pray to him. A good prayer tool is a prayer journal. Use a small photo book or make your own booklet. Fold three to four pieces of paper. Tape or staple the fold. On the front cover write "Prayer Journal." On the inside cover write "El Shamah, the God Who Hears." (If using a photo book, write on index cards to insert in the photo pages.) Read Psalm 17:6. Isn't it amazing that if we call out to God, he answers us? You may write out Psalm 17:6 under "El Shamah," if you like. On the next pages, write names of people that you can be praying for (family, friends, pastors, missionaries, teachers). When you get home, you can see about printing pictures to paste on the pages. Then try to pray for one or two of these each night before you go to bed!

Pet Care: What does the young boy want to do with his fish? Are these a good idea for fish? What kind of a pet could he hug and kiss? Tell what you know about taking care of pets, whether fish, cats, dogs, hamsters, or something else. Choose one pet and create a "pet care" poster. Draw a picture of the pet in the middle. On one side write, draw, or dictate three things that are important to do for this kind of pet (for example, for a fish you would need to change its water, feed it, and have the right kind of fish tank). On another side, write some things that are not good for this pet! A pet is fun to have, but it is also a responsibility! Your pets are counting on you to know how to best care for them.

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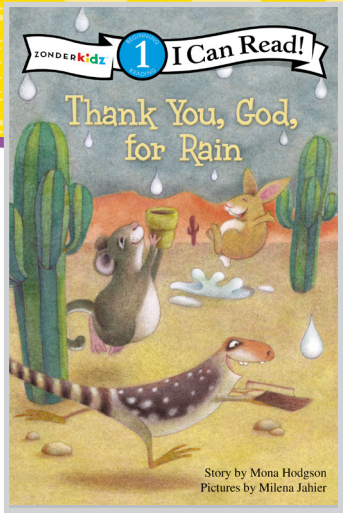

BEGINING 1 READING

Thank You, God, for Rain

Author and Illustrator: Mona Hodgson, Milena Jahier

About the Book

A storm is coming in the desert! Animals get ready with different ways to collect water. When the rain comes, they all collect rainwater and make sure their pool is filled. Then they can swim and splash when the day is hotter.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does, "Flash, Kaboom!" tell the animals?What is coming?
2. What are some unusual containers the animals use to collect water?
3. If you were an animal in the desert, what would you use to collect rain?
4. How did the storm help the desert animals?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 9:1 (NIrV): "LORD, I will give thanks to you with all my heart." Being thankful is so important! All good things come from God, so we can always thank him. What are you thankful for today? If it is nice outside, write the verse with sidewalk chalk on the sidewalk. Then have readers jump from one word to the next as they recite and learn it. If staying indoors, then write the verse out and have readers point to each word as they repeat it.

Rain: Rain is welcome in the desert. Do you like it when it rains? Or do you prefer sunshine? The desert animals prepared for the rain and were excited. They gathered it up. Make your own simple rain gauge to see how much rain you get during the next storm. Find a clear, empty, large/tall plastic bottle. Have an adult cut off the top a couple inches from the cap. Then invert that, take off the cap, and use a good tape to secure the upside-down top. Then get a ruler. Measure one-inch increments and mark circles around the bottle. Have readers find a secure place in their yard at home to anchor it and then record the rainfall.

Rainy Months: See how your state compares to a desert climate. We usually think that deserts do not get any rain or that they are only hot. Deserts do get a little rain, and some even get snow! Practice saying the months in order. Then get a printout of the months. Let's take the Sonoran Desert in Arizona, as an example. The rainiest month is usually February (0.19"!). Pick a color and draw raindrops on February. Then find out what the wettest month of the year is for your state. For instance, Michigan seemed to get the most rain in September! Pick another color and draw raindrops all over September.

Music Moment: Find a rain song and practice it with motions. (Google "rain song for kids" and choose one.) Are all of the songs about wanting rain to go away? Did you find somewhere rain is welcome? End your time by thanking God for the rain and water. Then perform your new song for parents at pickup or for other readers!

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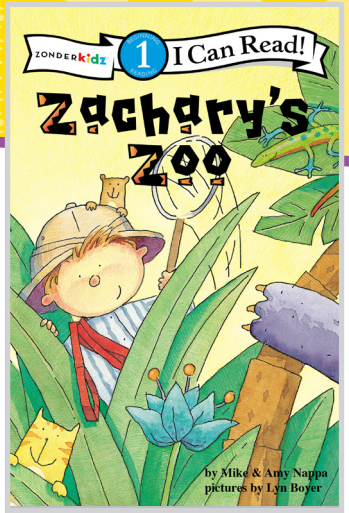

BEGINING 1 READING

Zachary's Zoo

Author and Illustrator: Mike and Amy Nappa, Lyn Boyer

About the Book

Zachary is a zookeeper—for all of his pets! He takes care of his tiger, bear, crocodile, shark, and eagle before he remembers to take care of himself. He feeds and gets each one what they need. He likes to take care of God's animals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is a zookeeper? Who is the zookeeper in the story?
2. Who is the tiger? How do you know?
3. How does Zachary say thank you to God with his actions?
4. What does Zachary's mom think about Crocodile being loose? How do you know?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Colossians 3:23 (NIrV): "Work at everything you do with all your heart." This verse goes on to say that we should act like we are working our very best for Jesus all the time. Work on memorizing the verse by repeating it as different animals. Use a fish voice (your finger jostles your lips as you talk), hiss like a snake on the "s" sounds, or jump like a kangaroo as you repeat the verse.

Pet Care: Does your family have a pet? Who takes care of it? How do you help take care of it? What do you like most about your pet? If you don't have a pet yet, or you'd like a new one, research it. What kind of care would it need? Draw a picture of it in the middle of a paper (or print out a picture and glue it on the paper). Then write or dictate several facts about its care.

Guess the Animal Riddle: Use your imagination to create an animal riddle! Look online for samples of riddle. Google "animal riddles for first grade," and then get your creative juices going! Think of your five senses when deciding what to include in your riddle: What color is it? What does it feel like? What sound does it make? If you want to get really creative, make a "lift the flap" window to show your animal answer!

Point of View: Sometimes it can be hard to see things from someone else's point of view. When we are thankful, we get to think about someone else. Talk about the story first: pretend you are one of the animals. What would the animal thank Zachary for? For example, Tiger might say, "Meow! Thank you for letting me outside first thing in the morning, Zookeeper Zachary! Meow!" After talking about different perspectives in the story, decide to whom you will write a thank-you note. Your mom? Your dad? Your sibling? Your teacher? Another option is to write out and create a thank-you note from one of the animals to Zachary. Use color, stickers, stamps, or whatever you have to decorate the card. You will really brighten someone's day!

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