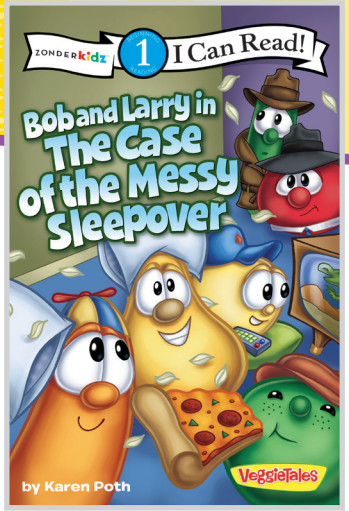

BEGINING READING 1

Bob and Larry in The Case of the Messy Sleepover

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Madame Blueberry calls Detectives Bob and Larry. Percy Pea and his friends had a sleepover. The room was a mess! No one was cleaning it up. They blamed each other and started fighting. Bob said God wants us to be helpful. They were sorry. They cleaned up the room together. Then they cleaned themselves by playing and having fun in the sprinkler!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do detectives do?
2. What did Madame Blueberry say was the problem? Was it that Percy Pea had a sleepover? That they were eating in their room? Or that no one would help her clean up the mess?
3. Who do you think made the mess? Did it really matter?
4. How did the boys manage to get along again? (See page 27.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Hebrews 6:10 (NIrV): "You showed [God's love] when you helped his people." Discuss how Percy and his friends were not showing God's love until Bob reminded them. How do you help people, even your parents and/or siblings? It seems that Percy and his friends did not want to help clean up. Sometimes it is hardest to be helpful and kind when we don't feel like it. Remember that helping when we don't feel like it shows God's love! Memorize this verse by repeating it in various ways—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Taking Responsibility: Percy Pea knew he would need to clean up his room. Madame Blueberry had asked for help, but no one would help her. What chores do you have at home? What could you help with? Make a chart with three or four chores or duties that you can take responsibility for, like making your bed each morning, putting toys away, taking dinner dishes into the kitchen, or packing your school snack.

Act It Out: Doing what is right isn't always easy. Percy and his friends did not want to clean up and help Madame Blueberry. Thinking of others and putting yourself second is hard to do! Once Percy and his friends helped clean up though, how did they feel? It looks like they had a good time together playing in the sprinkler! Act out a situation when you don't want to do what is right. For instance, maybe you have a friend over to play, but then you get tired. You just want to play in your room by yourself. What is the right thing to do? Show how you would choose to be considerate of your friend rather than just going off by yourself.

God Moment: How can being helpful and kind show God's love? We know that the most important commandments in the Bible are to love God and love others. When we are helpful and kind, we get along with others better. This brings people together rather than dividing friends. To remind ourselves to be helpful and kind and to show God's love, make a hand craft. Fold a piece of paper in half. Trace one hand so that the index finger and thumb touch the fold. Cut out the hand shape, being careful not to cut the fold at the index finger and thumb. Cut out the area in between these though. Unfold the hand print, and you should see two joined hands with a heart-shape in the middle. Write the memory verse (Hebrews 6:10) on the hands or write/dictate ways you can be helpful and kind and show God's love.

* For a picture of the craft, see, for instance, "Heartfelt Greetings" at http://krokotak.com/2012/11/heartfelt-greetings/ or "Valentine's Day Crafts with Kids" at http://hellocreativefamily.com/valentines-day-crafts-with-kids/.

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BEGINING READING 1

Bob and Larry in The Case of the Missing Patience

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Detectives Bob and Larry are to teach the Pod Squad to be great detectives. Mrs. Carrot called! She saw the Masked Door Slammer! They hurried off to catch him, but then things start to go wrong. As they were walking home, they ran across several crimes. They found the Bicycle Bandit: Lil' Pea! Laura Carrot says she was teaching him to ride his bike, but he was doing it all wrong. She wasn't very nice to him. Bob and Larry realize they got angry with the Pod Squad too when they did everything wrong. They weren't very nice either. They apologized and started to teach the Pod Squad in a better way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who were the teachers in this story? Who were the ones learning new skills?
2. How did the Pod Squad feel when Detectives Bob and Larry blamed them for missing the Masked Door Slammer? How could the detectives have handled this better?
3. What did Lil' Pea ruin with his bike? Did he mean to do these things?
4. How do you react when everything is going wrong?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Ephesians 4:32 (NIrV): "Be kind and tender to one another." What does it mean to be tender? (to show care, to be loving, etc.) When are you to be kind and tender? To whom are you to be kind and tender? It can be especially hard to be patient, kind, and tender when you are tired, frustrated, or when others are not being nice. Use a whiteboard and write out the verse. Then erase words as you commit the verse to memory.

Be Musical: Google "be patient kids' song" or "be kind kids' song," and choose a song to learn with readers. Start with learning the refrain and practicing it with them. Talk about when they have tried to be kind and patient. Have they tried to teach someone a new skill? How did it go?

Parallel Stories: It seemed like there were two different parts to this story—the detectives teaching the Pod Squad and then Laura Carrot teaching Lil' Pea. But what was the same for both Laura and the detectives? (See pages 27–29.) Draw a before-and-after picture for either the detectives or Laura. You can show how they felt sorry for treating their learners badly. At first it seemed like these were two different stories. By the end we see that the detectives and Laura both had the same problem and learned to have patience.

Explore Emotions: What do you do when things are not going your way? How do you feel? Have you learned some ways to calm yourself when you are frustrated? Sometimes when things are not going well, we feel terrible. To help yourself calm down, try to breathe deeply, count to ten slowly, take a short break, talk to an adult, or recite a memory verse.

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BEGINING READING 1

Petunia and the Good Knight

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Everyone came to the Castle of Scone to see the Great Pie Games! Princess Petunia watched. Many brave men were ready for the games. The Duke of Scone helped the losers. Then he lost against Stormy Knight. Princess Petunia was chosen to pick the big winner of the games. She chose the Duke of Scone because he kept helping others!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Several kinds of pies are name on page 17. What is your favorite kind of pie?
2. How did it happen that Petunia would name the big winner?
3. Why did Petunia choose the Duke of Scone as the Great Pie Games winner? How did the other contestants feel?
4. Name the ways the Duke of Scone helped others.

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." How might you look out just for your own good? Who are the "others" that you could look out for? When you look out for the good of others, you do things to help them. Who in the story helped others? Repeat the verse in various ways to memorize it—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Nice List: Look at the story again and see what is described as being nice. First though, why is bragging not nice? (p. 11) When someone brags, they want all the attention. They want people to notice how good they are. This doesn't make others want to be friends with a bragging person. Look now at what actions are nice. Make a chart, starting with the examples in the story, of what is nice and what is not. (Helping the knight who lost is nice.) Then add your own examples to the chart. Write or draw pictures in your chart.

Acts of Kindness: Try to make it a habit to think of others! Google "acts of kindness for kids" and then choose five to ten ideas to try this next week. Make sure you check the ideas with your mom or dad to be sure they are safe for you to do. Make hearts to give as you are intentionally kind to someone. The heart can say something like this: "God 1st! Others 2nd! Me 3rd!" or "Jesus loves you, and I do too!"

Imagine: If available, watch Chuck Swindoll's Paws & Tales DVD called *Putting Others First*. The second episode "The Hire Principle" is about putting others first and should be about 15 minutes long. Then discuss how it is alike and different from *Princess Petunia and the Good Knight*. Can you think of ways your parents put you first rather than themselves? What are some other examples of not being selfish but thinking of others?

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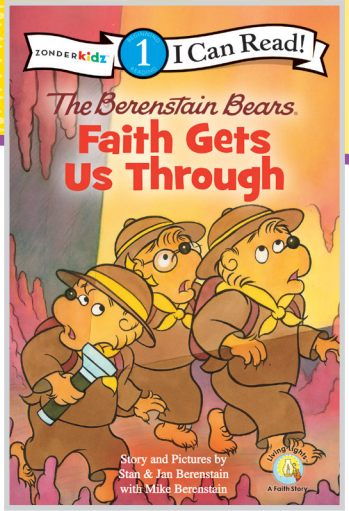

BEGINING 1 READING

The Berenstain Bears Faith Gets Us Through

Author and Illustrator: Stan & Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain

About the Book

The Bear Scouts wanted to earn their Cave Adventure Merit Badges. They headed to Spooky Cave. Scout Papa led them and told them he knew all about caves. They went into the cave and learned all about caves. Then they had trouble finding their way out. They fell into a stream that took them outside the cave! God kept them safe, and they earned their badges!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the scouts go to earn their Cave Adventure Merit Badges?
2. What did Papa forget about echoes and sound in caves?
3. Did Papa really seem to know all about caves? What did he know? What did he forget about?
4. What did the scouts say about the adventure when it was over? Did they seem to like the cave?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 23:4 (NIrV): Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid. You are with me." What are some "dark valleys" or hard times that make you afraid? How can we not be afraid? Use the Index Card Shuffle to memorize the verse. Put each word or phrase on index cards. Shuffle and organize them to practice the verse.

Be Creative: Look through the story to see what the merit badges look like. They are pretty basic! Think about the cave and what the scouts learned. Then design a more creative Cave Adventure Merit Badge. Cut out a circle of construction paper. Then draw, color, and design a smaller white circle to put on top of the construction paper. If you want to wear it, attach it to your clothing with a safety pin or a circle of masking tape on the back. If another reader is completing this project as well, share your badges with each other and explain why you chose the design you did.

Science of Sound: Have you noticed how sounds are different in different locations? Papa says there is an echo in the cave. This means that sounds bounce off the walls, and your ears hear the sounds again. Noise is made of sound waves though, so these waves caused the stalactite to fall down. Put your hand on your throat and make some noise. What do you notice? Then hold an opened book right in front of and close to your face. Make some sounds and notice what it sounds like. Then take the book away and make the same sounds. What differences do you notice? Do a Google search to see what animals use sound waves to hunt or to move around safely.

Connect with Science: The Bear Scouts learn about caves. They see and learn about stalactites and stalagmites. On page 10 Papa shares a rhyme with the scouts to remember the words and meanings. Another way is to notice that "stalactites" has a "c" in it, so those are the formations on the ceiling (also a "c"). Stalagmites have a "g" in the word, so they come up from the ground or grow to meet the ones on the ceiling. Try to create your own stalagmites with sand, water, and a paper plate. Pour the sand and water into a bowl or bucket. Then drip a handful of sand onto the paper plate. Let the sand drip slowly out of the bottom of your hand so that it creates a formation like a stalagmite.*

*For a picture and examples, see Debi Huang, "How to Make Drip Castles with Kids," *Go Explore Nature.com*, accessed September 27, 2017, http://goexplorenature.com/2011/08/how-to-make-drip-castles-with-kids.html.

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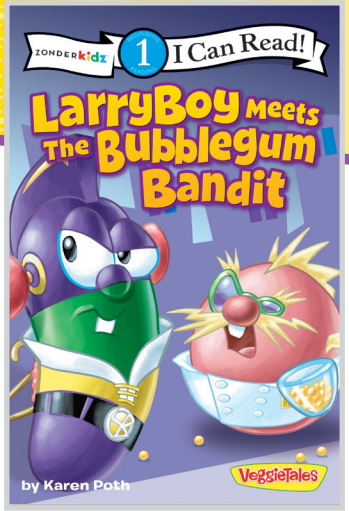

BEGINING READING 1

LarryBoy Meets the Bubblegum Bandit

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Mayor Blueberry notices several strange things—the school is a mess, the yard boy was not working, and the swim team was not swimming. The mayor called LarryBoy for help with the laziness! But LarryBoy didn't feel like being a superhero that day. Alfred reminded him that God does not want us to be lazy. Then Alfred and LarryBoy realized that the gum from Bubba was making everyone lazy! Everyone spit out their gum, and Bumblyburg was saved!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Mayor Blueberry keep thinking, "Something must be wrong!"?
2. What did LarryBoy get from his friend Bubba?
3. Who was Bubba really?
4. Why was being lazy bad? What did Alfred tell LarryBoy to get him to help those in need? (See page 17.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 12:24 (NIrV): "Hands that work hard will rule. But people who are lazy will be forced to work." What does this verse have to do with our story? Were people working hard or being lazy? Put motions to the verse to help readers memorize it.

Print Concepts: Sentences are complete thoughts. This story is made up of lots of sentences. Look at the first several sentences. What do you notice about the very first letter of each sentence? Each sentence begins with a capital letter! What do you notice about the very end of each sentence? Each sentence ends with some kind of punctuation—a period, an exclamation mark, or sometimes a question mark. Pick one sentence to copy as it is written. Be careful of the first letter and the end punctuation! Then see if you can write a sentence on your own, keeping these guidelines for great sentences in mind.

Get Moving: Would you rather be lazy or get to work? Are there good times to relax? Yes, there are times to relax and let your body rest. But to be lazy means that you don't have energy when you probably should. Maybe being lazy is a pattern that is not good. One of the ways to not be lazy is to do and enjoy physical activities! Set up a rotation of four stations and go around it once or twice. (1) Place a masking tape X on the floor. Have readers balance on one leg and then the other for ten seconds each. (2) If there is room, do a small sprint run, touching the floor at each end. (3) In another area practice and complete ten jumping jacks. (4) Gently toss a bouncy ball back and forth (underhand) ten times with a friend.

Using Technology: Decide on a theme, like "doing your best," "messy," or "busy bees"! Then provide pairs of readers with iPads, digital cameras, or another device with which they can take pictures. Have them take five pictures around the school that illustrate their theme. Then have them share their pictures with the group or another team. Afterwards, have readers review how their theme connects with *LarryBoy Meets the Bubblegum Bandit*.

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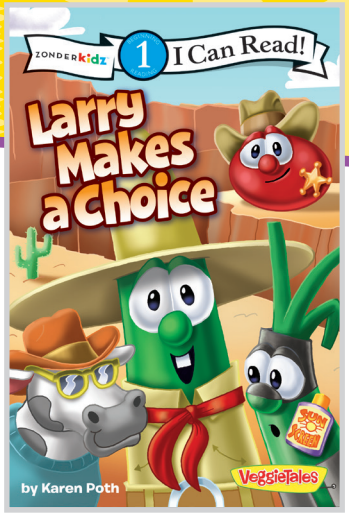

BEGINING READING 1

Larry Makes a Choice

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Larry was so excited! It was finally time for him to take his Cattle Drive test! Sheriff Bob told him to take 100 cows over the mountain. The scallions went along with Larry. They wanted to take the quicker route through the canyon though. Larry went along with them, but then changed his mind. He knew he needed to listen to the sheriff! He turned around and started over the mountain. Then he heard the scallions yell for help! He helped them and got back to town. He was a hero!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Before Reading:* Look at the first picture on pages 4–5. What do you notice about the scallions? (Look at the "wanted" poster.) This might be a clue about what they are really like!
2. Where did Sheriff Bob tell Larry to go with the cows?
3. What happened to the scallions in the canyon?
4. What did Larry remember that helped him to change his mind? Then he did the right thing.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Exodus 23:2 (NIrV): "Do not follow the crowd when they do what is wrong." Is it hard or easy for you to do what is right? Does it help when you have a friend who also wants to do right? Be careful of the "crowd" that you are in. Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a phrase after you as you throw the ball.

Good Friends: What is a good friend? How were the scallions good or bad friends to Larry? It is very important to have good friends. You can encourage each other to make the right choices. You can follow what God says is right. Write down several ways you can be a good friend (sharing, caring, letting others go first, helping). Then, in a group, have one reader stand up and share one of their favorites (toy, show, activity on the playground, color, book, etc.) or things they like to do (ride a bike, jump rope, skip, read, etc.). Then anyone who likes that too, can stand and say, "Me too!"

Doing the Right Thing: Make a list of right and wrong choices. Print them and cut them apart. Then have readers organize and paste them under the correct heading of "right" and "wrong." Talk through these and remind them that the activities are right or wrong according to what the Bible says, not what their friends say. Use these or other examples: pinch a friend, bite a sibling, take a friend's book away, spit out your food, yell at your mom, hug someone who got hurt, give someone else a turn on a swing, be respectful to a sub, pick up your room, be happy for someone who got something nice.

Print Concepts: Have readers point out names in *Larry Makes a Choice.* What is at the beginning of each name? A capital letter! Does it matter where the name is in the sentence? No matter where the name is in the sentence, it is capitalized. Go through and write down the first letters of the first few names (Cowboy Larry=C, L; Sheriff Bob=S, B; Scallion Brothers=S, B). Using handwriting practice paper, practice clearly writing these uppercase letters. If time permits, add the lowercase letters. For some creativity, use paints, glitter glue, or white crayon on black construction paper to practice letters.

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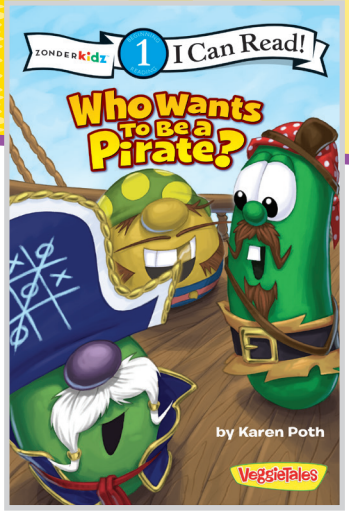

BEGINING 1 READING

Who Wants to Be a Pirate?

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything have fun doing nothing together. Then Pirate Larry decides he wants to do something more exciting. They dream about and think about trying a few different things. But it all sounds dangerous and like a bad idea. They decide they are happy with doing nothing, as that is how God made them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. List a few of the things that the pirates do in one of their normal days. (See pages 6–7).
2. On pages 12, 15, and 17, look at the pictures that have fuzzy or a scalloped edge. What does this mean? Is it really happening or a dream?
3. What was wrong with the pirates being Taters? What was wrong about sailing to Cookie Island?
4. What did the pirates decide about trying something new and different? Do you agree?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 139:14 (NIrV): "How you made me is amazing and wonderful. I praise you for that." How are you special? What do you like to do? What do you not like? Repeat the verse while jumping rope—one word or phrase per jump.

I Can Do It: The main point of the story is about being ourselves. We are special, and we can be content. That is great! But let's think about this: is being lazy and doing nothing all the time a great idea? God wants us to be his hands and feet and to make a difference in people's lives. What can you do to love others for God? You do have a special way to love people that others may not. Think about your special way of reaching out: Can you make and write someone a card to encourage them? Can you visit with your grandma and just spend time making her feel special? Can you pick up trash in your neighborhood? Can you play with a lonely or new classmate? Choose and write down one idea! Report back on how you were the hands and feet of Jesus.

New Adventure: The pirates started to dream about a new adventure. Pirate Larry was tired of doing nothing. What did they think might be exciting? What new adventure do you think would be exciting to try? Many people think that traveling someplace new would be an exciting adventure. Create a word search puzzle (google word search puzzle maker) with these words: adventure, excitement, new, fun, explore, travel, passport, train, car, airplane, tickets, sightsee, missions, love, Jesus.

Self-Esteem Craft: Write the reader's name down the length of a paper. Then for each letter of her name, have her choose a positive character trait. Google and print out a character trait list, and help her look up words that are not familiar. Then decorate the page with stickers, stamps, glitter, or whatever the reader can find outside. Talk about what makes each person special is their character and the talents that God gives us.

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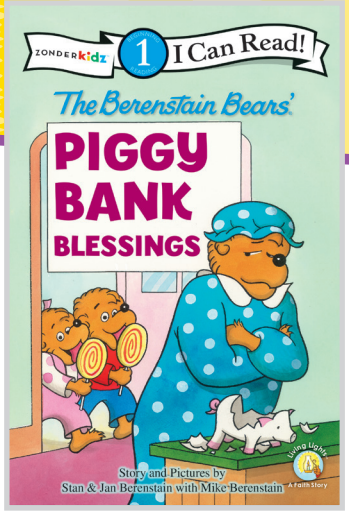

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears' Piggy Bank Blessings

Author and Illustrator: Stan & Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Brother and Sister ask Mama Bear for things all the time. So she decides to teach them about money. She gets them a piggy bank. They start to work for their money and put it in their bank for something special. Then they decided on something special, so they broke their bank and headed to the store. Mama was disappointed at first, as they were licking lollipops. Then the cubs handed Mama her birthday present, and she was surprised and glad! They had learned how to save and spend on something special.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Mama say that Brother couldn't have the truck as well as the toy plane?
2. What kinds of jobs did Brother and Sister do to earn money?
3. How did Brother and Sister get the money out of their piggy bank? What did you think they would spend their money on?
4. Did the cubs buy their lollipops? How did they get the candy?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Proverbs 13:11 (NIrV): "Money gathered little by little grows." How do you gather money? Do you have a piggy bank of some kind? What do you like to save for? Use motions with the verse to memorize it!

Piggy Banks: Mama Bear wanted to teach the cubs how to save for something special. They learned that it takes money to buy things. They got a piggy bank and started putting money they earned in it. Being careful with money is a good habit to start early. Often three jars are a good way to start—spending (for small things you might enjoy right away), saving (save for something special), and tithing (money to give back to God through your church). Make simple banks out of coffee tins, toilet paper rolls, or small plastic bottles. Decorate them and label them!

Money: Print a picture of money, and learn the names of each coin. How much is each coin worth? Write it next to each coin. Color each coin in and talk about how many coins it takes to make a dollar. If actual money is available, allow readers to handle it so that they can see the difference in size and color. Challenge readers to see if they can figure out how to make certain amounts (for instance, 35 cents or 50 cents).

Mind Your Manners: Look at pages 4–5. What good manners do you read about? Brother and Sister both asked, "May I . . . ?" This is a sign of good manners rather than demanding something or whining. Practice good manners with the game called "Mother, may I?" Google for the specific instructions and suggestions. It is similar to the red light, green light game or Simon Says. Readers will enjoy this active game, as they remember to use their manners!

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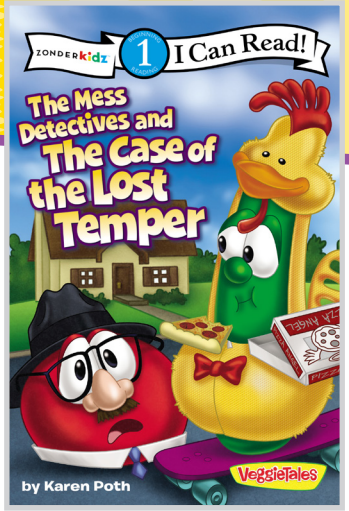

BEGINING READING 1

The Mess Detectives and the Case of the Lost Temper

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Detectives Bob and Larry are trying to find the Masked Door Slammer. Bob is in a bad mood. They follow a trail, but it doesn't lead anywhere. Bob gets more and more upset. They put on costumes to try to catch the Slammer. Then Bob lost his temper! Larry pointed out that Bob was just like the Masked Door Slammer, and Bob knew he needed to change. Then they found out that the door slamming had just been the wind this time! Mystery solved!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who were Detectives Bob and Larry trying to catch?
2. What were some things that made Bob mad? What was the last thing that made Bob lose his temper?
3. How did Larry help Bob realize that losing his temper was wrong? How did Bob respond?
4. What did Laura Carrot say about the door slamming?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 29:11 (NIrV): "Foolish people let their anger run wild. But wise people keep themselves under control." How can anger run wild? What do you feel like when you get angry? What kind of a person keeps himself under control? Repeat the verse while jumping rope—one word or phrase per jump until you have it memorized!

Self-Control: Have you had those days when you are in a bad mood and then nothing goes right? What do you do? How can you regain control of your bad mood and turn it into a good day? To be able to put away your bad mood and start fresh is to have self-control. Draw a picture of yourself. Then tell how you feel when you are upset. How does your head feel? Your tummy? Your hands and feet? Then write or draw ways that you can feel better without hurting yourself, hurting others, or ruining things around you. You could take a short walk, put yourself in time-out, jump rope, punch a pillow, or swing. You can tell someone how you are feeling.

Art and Anger: This is one project you can have students practice for when they are upset. They crinkle up a white piece of paper as tightly as they can. Then unfold it. Use markers or crayons to then color in the shapes they see. They can turn their anger into something beautiful!*

Ball of Calm: There are all kinds of ways to get calm. One that might have helped Detective Larry is to squish a "stress ball" to get calm. Make yourself one so that you can use it when you get upset, antsy, or angry. Get three balloons, rice, a funnel, and scissors. Stretch one balloon and then fill it with about a 1/3 cup of rice. (If it gets stuck, use a pencil to free up the neck.) Tie this balloon and cut the extra off. Then snip the top of the second balloon off, and put the first balloon in it. Do the same with the third, but then tie it off.

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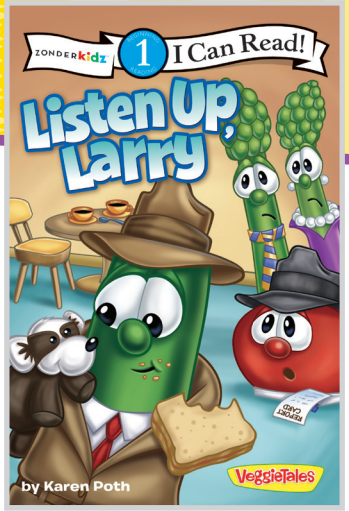

BEGINING READING 1

Listen Up, Larry

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Detectives Bob and Larry are called to the Asparagus home! Junior is not doing well in school. He is not listening. Larry leaves and doesn't listen to Bob's directions. Larry gets lost and wishes he'd listened! He finally makes it to the Asparagus home, but it is so late that they are in bed! Junior and Larry decide they want to start listening. Larry apologizes to Bob.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was happening with Junior Asparagus?
2. Who besides Junior had trouble listening?
3. What happened to Larry after he left Bob and didn't listen to the directions?
4. When Bob told Larry to turn left, but Bob turned right, where did they end up?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Proverbs 1:5 (NIrV): "Let wise people listen and add to what they have learned." Listening well is a skill to be learned! In the Bible listening is more than just hearing. It means that you understand and apply what you hear. Play hangman using the key words. Then practice saying the completed verse.

Have Fun: Review the rules for the game Simon Says. Remember that only when readers hear "Simon says . . ." do they actually do what is said. Take turns calling what actions should be taken. Point out to readers that this is just a fun game. In life though it is important to listen and then apply this to your life. For example, if your mom says that the stove is hot, what does that mean? To really hear her means that you know the stove is hot, so you will stay away from it. Or maybe it also means that you are to keep your smaller siblings from the hot stove. Think of other times you are told something. Then say, "So what this means is . . ." and fill in the last part of the sentence.

Origami: Google "easy origami for kids" and have readers choose one. Then in pairs have one reader tell the other reader how to create the shape. Review good communication skills—speak clearly, listen carefully, then have the listener repeat what they think they are to do. Be patient with each other! Then have them switch roles and make a second easy origami shape. Finish the activity by asking readers what they learned about working together and listening to each other.

Hello around the World: How many languages do you know? Learning another language takes very good listening skills. You have to train your ears to hear different sounds. Then you have to train your tongue to create different sounds! Practice new listening skills by learning how to say "Hi!" in a few different languages. If possible, print out a map to see where the countries are for the languages you learn. Google "Hello to All the Children of the World" or "hello in languages for kids" to find sound bites or songs to learn hello in a few different languages!

ZONDERkidz I Can Read!

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BEGINING 1 READING

LarryBoy and the Mudslingers

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Bad Apple and Curly the worm had a plan. They wanted to get those Veggies. They started a mud fight at the water park. It got out of control, and everyone was throwing mud. Everyone was upset! Then Alfred tested the mud and realized that it was a trap. They had to stop and forgive each other for the mud to lose its grip. LarryBoy listened and started forgiving. Soon everyone forgave each other, and the mud went away. Everyone played on the water slides then and had a good time!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who started throwing mud? Was it meant to be for fun or to be for evil?
2. What did Alfred realize about the mud?
3. Who was the first one to stop throwing mud? Did others then follow his example?
4. What kinds of things make you mad? When you get mad or upset does it make others upset too or happy?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize part of Luke 11:4 (NIrV): "Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us." Sin is anything that is wrong. We need to ask God to forgive us and wipe us clean. When God forgives us, we don't need to feel guilty or sad anymore! Then we need to learn to forgive people who treat us badly. This is a good verse to memorize and remember as we learn to get along with others! Repeat the verse in various ways—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Be Musical: Music can help us remember what to do. Google "Saying Sorry Songs for Kids" and listen to a song or two. Then talk about how the song was the same or different from *LarryBoy and the Mudslingers*. Try to learn the refrain of the song so that you can remember the right thing to do. Talk about the times you've had to say sorry and how it's worked out in the end.

Say Sorry: Saying you're sorry takes practice. You need to have the right attitude too and really mean that you are sorry for whatever happened. Create an ice-cream cone apology to help you remember how to say you're sorry. Draw or cut out a cone and four scoops. On the scoops write these phrases: (1) I'm sorry for . . ., (2) It was wrong because . . ., (3) Next time I will . . ., (4) Will you forgive me? When you try to right a wrong, it is like offering your friend the ice-cream cone. It is sweeter to forgive and make up rather than just trying to ignore what happened.

Choices: When should you say you are sorry? Let's look at some things that might happen in a day and see which ones we would need to apologize for. Print off and cut apart the scenarios. Then make a two-sided chart with a smiley face on one side and a frown on the other. Glue them on the appropriate side. Which ones should we apologize for? Can you think of others we should write in? Do you need to apologize for any on the smiley face side?

> **Scenarios:** I yelled at my friend. I called someone a bad name. I made fun of someone. I pushed someone. I pinched someone. I said something nice to my friend. I let someone else go on the swing first. I invited a lonely friend to sit by me at lunch. I gave a classmate a tissue when she was crying. I helped my friend get something heavy off the shelf.

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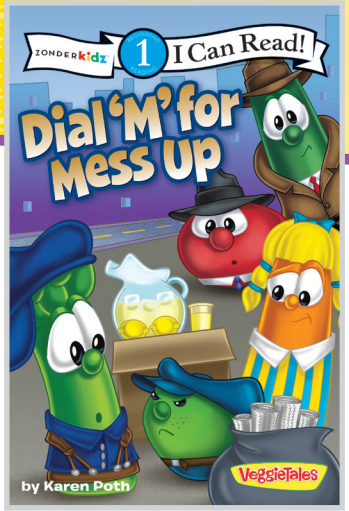

BEGINING READING 1

Dial 'M' for Mess Up

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Percy Pea lost Laura Carrot's money from selling newspapers. She forgave him and wasn't upset. But then Junior lost Percy's money from selling lemonade. Rather than forgiving Junior, Percy got upset! Because Percy wasn't forgiving, Laura didn't want to forgive Percy either. In the end Percy saw that he was wrong. He forgave Junior for losing his money.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did Laura do when she found out that Percy had lost her money?
2. What did Percy do when he found out that Junior had lost his money?
3. The Bible tells us to forgive those who do wrong so that God will forgive us. Who obeyed God?
4. When do we see everyone getting along rather than having troubles? Do you think it was hard for Laura and Percy to forgive others for losing their hard-earned money?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Matthew 5:7 (NIrV): "Blessed are those who show mercy. They will be shown mercy." Look up what mercy means. How is mercy shown in the story you read? Put each word or phrase of the verse on index cards. Shuffle them and organize them in order. Then you can try leaving out some phrases and see if you can remember the missing ones!

Forgiveness: What exactly is forgiveness? It means letting go of the hurt when something is not right. It's not saying that it's alright that it happened. But it means letting go of the grudge. Did you know that there are whole-body benefits to forgiveness? Draw or print out a gingerbread-type person. Then draw a line down the middle of the person. Color the left side black. Next to the person write what happens if you don't forgive: hold a grudge, anger, hurt, bitterness. Then on the other side, the white side, write some of the benefits of forgiveness: peace, happiness, healing, freedom. Start healthy patterns now! Even when you don't feel like you want to forgive or it feels better to hold onto a grudge, let go and allow God to finish the story. Pray for God's help in forgiving those who have hurt us.

Check the Bible: This story is based on a parable that Jesus told about a king, servants, and money owed. Read Matthew 18:21–35. Then map out and review how these tell a similar story. If possible, make pictures of these story parts and have readers match them up. If not, use words on index cards that readers can put together. Match these similar parts: Laura, King, Percy, First Servant, Junior, Second Servant. How are the endings different though? (In the parable the first servant was thrown in jail. In the VeggieTale story they all forgave each other and were friends again.) Which ending do you prefer? Why?

See Forgiveness: To picture forgiveness and making things right, Google "forgiveness science experiments." Then choose a short video that says it is for kids. You might find one with water, pepper, and soap. Others use colored water and showing how sin or unforgiveness come into our lives but that Jesus' death and resurrection takes our sin away. Watch the video demonstration and then relate it back to *Dial 'M' for Mess Up*. Finish up by asking readers if they have questions. Do they want to pray to ask Jesus for forgiveness? Or do they want to pray to ask God to help them forgive others?

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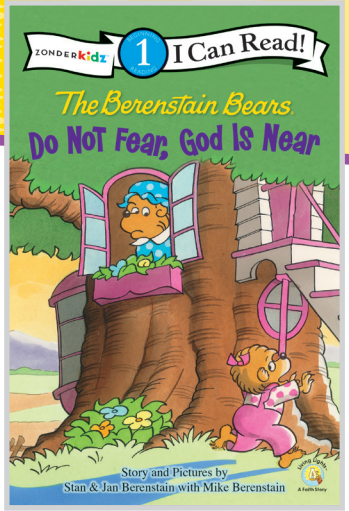

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears Do Not Fear, God Is Near

Author and Illustrator: Stan and Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain

About the Book

When Sister Bear was little, she was afraid of many things. Soon she wasn't afraid of quite so many, but she still did not like spooky shadows. They scared her. Brother made fun of her. Then Papa Bear showed her how to make creative, fun shadows with a flashlight. Sister Bear learned that shadows don't have to be scary! Brother turned out to be scared of shadows a bit, but he remembered that God was watching over him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was Sister most afraid of? What are you afraid of?
2. What was Sister brave about?
3. What did Sister learn about shadows?
4. Who was afraid of shadows in the end? What did Brother remember as he was going to sleep?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 34:4 (NIrV): "I looked to the LORD, and he answered me. He saved me from everything I was afraid of." What are you afraid of? Do you remember that God is with you? He can make you brave! Use motions to help you remember the words to the verse! Work on memorizing it so that you can repeat it when you are afraid.

Shadow Fun: Papa Bear shows Sister that shadows do not have to be scary. He says that shadows are made when something gets in the way of the light. Use a flashlight or a lamp to shine light on a wall. Then make shapes, using your hands. See if you can make the same shapes that Papa shows Sister. You can search for others as well by typing in "easy hand shadow puppets."

Trust God: What does it mean to trust God when you are afraid? What can you do to show that you are trusting God? You can recite a verse you have learned. You can pray and talk to God about what you are afraid of and ask for His help. You can talk to a parent. You can read in your Bible about how others have trusted God and what happened. You can be thankful, because you can't be afraid and thankful at the same time. Choose one of these ways to trust God and draw a picture of it. At the top, write the title, "Trust God!"

God Moment: There is power in the name of Jesus! When you are afraid, call on Jesus. Say the name of Jesus. To remember this when you are afraid, print off a coloring sheet of the name of Jesus. Color and decorate it! Thank Jesus that He is with you and will make you brave.

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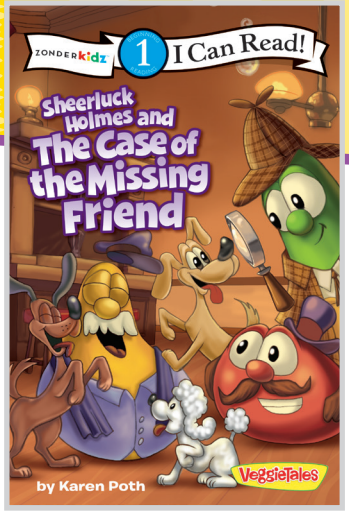

BEGINING READING 1

Sheerluck Holmes and The Case of the Missing Friend

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Sniffy seems to be missing! No one seemed to know anything about Sniffy. Then they said that his feelings got hurt during a dart game. He wrote a note and left. They finally found him and said they were sorry. Sniffy forgave them. They learned to be kind to each other!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the problem that the policeman tells the detectives about?
2. Does it seem that Sniffy has been kidnapped? How do you know?
3. Why did Watson turn the lights out? Did his plan work? What did they learn about Sniffy?
4. What did Nommy say when they found Sniffy? What would have happened if Sniffy hadn't forgiven them?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 17:17 (NIrV): "A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes." Are you a good friend? Do you help others when there is trouble? Do you go get help if a friend gets hurt? Do you have good friends who will help you? Having and being a good friend is very important in life! Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a phrase after you as you throw the ball.

Being Kind: Words are powerful! Sometimes when we say things, we don't realize we are being unkind. Think about your words and how you say them. In the story everyone got mad at Sniffy for losing the dart game. I wonder what was said? Were they kind words? Get a piece of construction paper. Draw a big heart. Fill it with kind things you can say, like "Please. Want to play with me? Well done! You are kind! We can be friends." Then cut it apart to make a puzzle. Notice that when you put these kind words together it fills hearts up with kindness!

Setting: What or where is London? The first page gives you details of the setting—the time and place of the story. Read the page again. Do you know where London is? Look at a map to see where this big city is. How far is it from where you live? An author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, wrote some famous mysteries about a detective called Sherlock Holmes and his assistant, Dr. Watson over 100 years ago. They solved cases together, just like Sheerluck and Bobby. Can you name the settings of other stories? For instance, what is the setting of *Beauty and the Beast*? (a castle, woods, long time ago) What about *Spiderman*? *Goldilocks*?

Puzzle It Out: Write out the alphabet and assign one number for each letter (1–26). So, letter A=1, B=2, C=3, etc. Then puzzle out the keywords to reveal the truth to live by:

1, 12, 23, 1, 25, 19

2, 5

11, 9, 14, 4

20, 15

15, 20, 8, 5, 18, 19

Talk about ways to do this!

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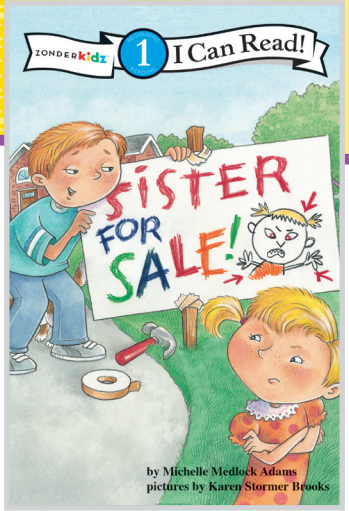

BEGINING 1 READING

Sister for Sale!

Author and Illustrator: Michelle Medlock Adams, Karen Stormer Brooks

About the Book

Ally Grace's brother is tired of her. He wants to write an ad to sell her. She is too much for him and won't stop all day. She yells at him, won't share her toys, and snores at night. Then he realizes that if she is gone, he won't have anyone to play with. He can learn to love her, just as God loves her!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What seems to be the problem with the boy's sister, Ally Grace?
2. Do you think Ally would share her toys with someone else? Why or why not?
3. What makes Ally's brother change his mind about selling Ally? (See pages 30–32.)
4. Do you have siblings? How well do you get along with your siblings?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize 1 John 4:7 (NIrV) in English and/or Spanish: "Let us love one another, because love comes from God." Repeat the verse in various ways—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice to memorize it. What does it mean to love one another? How can you show that you love someone?

Rad Vocab: Make a Spanish-English dictionary! Choose five words in English from *Sister for Sale!* Make a booklet with one word per page. Then add the Spanish word. Practice saying it as you write it. Then draw a picture to illustrate its meaning. If time permits, make a memory game out of index cards and the words. Mix them up and then match the Spanish and English words.

Sibling Love: Create a card for one of your siblings. Write out the ways you love your sibling! What do you enjoy about her? Add color, a picture, stickers, or anything else that will make it special. Review what Ally's brother realized about her that made Ally special. If you don't have a sibling, then write an ad: "Sibling Wanted!" Why would you want a sibling? What would be great about having a sibling?

Act It Out: Pretend that you are Ally Grace. What would she say and think about her brother? Would she put him up for sale? Choose one of the picture (scenes) from the story, and act it out with a partner. What did you realize when you were Ally Grace? What could she do differently to be a better sister? What could her brother do better?

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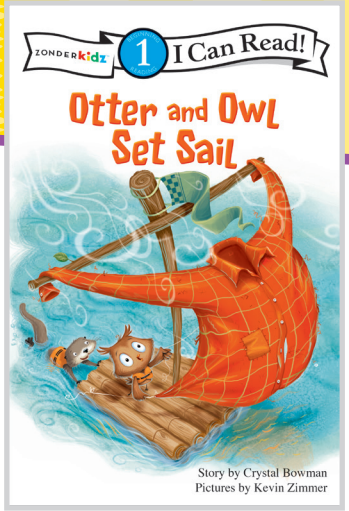

BEGINING READING 1

Otter and Owl Set Sail

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Kevin Zimmer

About the Book

Owl makes a sailboat and wants to sail. But the sailboat won't sail! He and Otter try various ways to make it sail. Nothing works. Otter points out that there is not any wind. They decide to wait for God to send wind. The next day is windy and the sailboat sails all the way across the pond!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Owl make a sailboat?
2. List two of the ways Owl and Otter try to make the sailboat sail.
3. Did you think any of the things Owl and Otter tried would work? Why or why not?
4. Look at page 24. How do you think Otter and Owl feel about their day of trying to sail? Look at page 32. What do you think they say once they really get to sail?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize a part of Jeremiah 32:17 (NIrV): "You have reached out your great and powerful arm. You have made the heavens and the earth. Nothing is too hard for you." What do you learn about God through the story? Play hangman using the key words such as great, powerful, arm, heaven, earth, and nothing. Then practice saying the completed verse.

Print Concepts: Do people know exactly what you think? How do we know what Owl was thinking about? Look at page six. We see his thought! The illustrator drew a cloud shape around it with little clouds showing the thought came from Owl. What do movies do to show a memory, a thought (like a daydream), or a hope for the future? (the screen goes wavy before the memory, it shows someone thinking, there is a "whoosh" sound effect that takes us to the dream, etc.) These are all ways that authors, illustrators, and movie makers help communicate what is happening inside someone's brain. Now it's your turn to practice. Draw a picture of yourself. Then draw a thought bubble and write or draw something that you've wondered about Jesus.

Recycle: (Prepare ahead for this activity by gathering up several items like an empty egg carton, a cereal box, twigs, and empty water bottles. Ideally they would be things for recycling or throwing away rather than purchased items.) What did Owl use for his sail? Is this usually what sails are made of? Recycling or repurposing materials has become popular. It's also quite an art. You have to think about an object in a new and unusual way. Take several items, combine them, and make something new and useful. Be creative! Talk through ideas together, and if possible, work in pairs.

God Moment: *Otter and Owl Set Sail* shows us that God controls the weather. Read about Jesus, the Son of God, doing this very thing in Mark 4:35–41. Find a coloring page and color it as you listen to the story. (Google "Jesus calms the storm coloring page" and choose a favorite.) God's spoken word is powerful! He calmed the storm. Are you ever afraid of thunder, lightning, or a storm? Pray that God will calm you and help you to remember that He controls even the weather!

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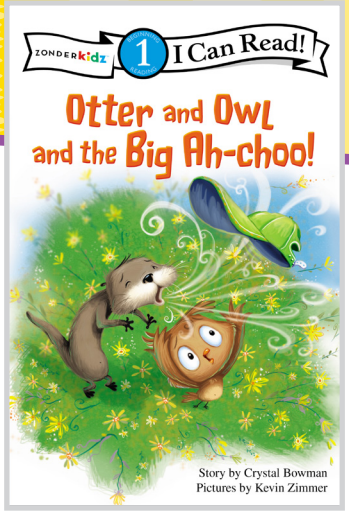

BEGINING READING 1

Otter and Owl and the Big Ah-choo!

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Kevin Zimmer

About the Book

Owl has a new green cap. Otter comes to play with Owl. He starts sneezing. They kept going different places and trying different activities. Otter kept sneezing. Why is he sneezing? Then Owl thought it must be him! Owl gave Otter his green cap to remember him by, but then leaves. Otter then realized that the green cap is making him sneeze! They put it away and play together again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the problem that Otter is trying to figure out?
2. Name two different activities that Otter and Owl do together.
3. What did you think was causing Otter's sneezing?
4. What did you like best about this story? (Or what page do you like most?)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 17:17 (NIrV): "A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes." How did Owl and Otter help each other? What would you have done? 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.

Mind Your Manners: Look at page 5. What does Owl say after Otter gives him a compliment? (thank you) This is good manners! Now look at pages 6 and 7. What do you see Otter doing? What could he have done better? (covered his sneeze) What does Owl say after Otter sneezes? (Bless you.) This shows good manners! What did Otter say after he blew off Owl's cap? (I'm sorry.) This shows good manners! Another time to show good manners is to say thank you for a gift or a kindness. Think of someone in your life who you should thank. How about thanking your mom for packing your lunch? Or a friend for being kind? Or your school secretary for giving you a bandage? Think of a person and something for which you should say thanks! Color, create, and write (dictate) a card and then give it to them!

Friends: How are Otter and Owl the same? How are they different? Do you think their differences or their similarities matter more to them? Look in the story for ways that they show each other kindness. Do you see how unselfish they are? They put the other person first. Have readers act out different scenes to show kindness in friendships. Make up some of their own.

ABC: Choose five letters of the alphabet (preferably the letter of the week or the most recent ones). Then find several words in the story that start with each of these letters. For example, if one of your letters is "B," then you might write "back, blew, big" next to the letter. Then practice writing the uppercase and lowercase letters in different colors.

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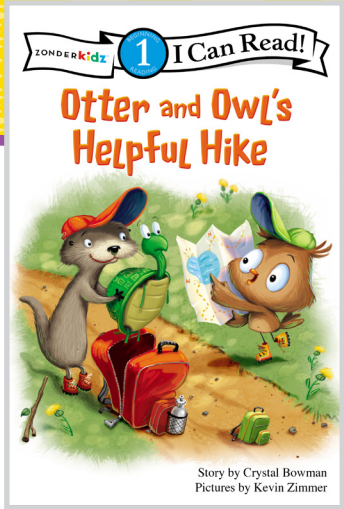

BEGINING 1 READING

Otter and Owl's Helpful Hike

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Kevin Zimmer

About the Book

Otter invites Owl to go on a hike. As they hike through the woods, they find animals in need of help. They stop to help. Otter gets a little hurt each time. They get to Owl's house, and Otter needs to rest. His head and finger hurt. Owl takes care of him. They have dinner together and realize that God takes care of animals and they do too!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How are Owl and Otter helpful?
2. Do you think Otter should have kept helping animals after he got hurt? Why or why not?
3. In what order did Otter and Owl help these animals? Deer, turtle, bird
4. Did Otter and Owl have to help these animals? Why did they help them?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Job 12:10 (NIrV): "He holds the life of every creature in his hand." Who is this talking about? Now read Luke 12:6–7. God knows birds! And he knows everything about us. He cares for us. Repeat the verse from Job in various ways to work on memorizing it—using different inflections, rhythm, or a soft and then loud voice.

Rhyme It: Owl and Otter had quite a hike! Practice rhyming with the word "hike." In ten seconds say as many words as you can that rhyme with hike! Keep count! Now use as many rhyming words as you can to make one sentence. For example, "Mike and Ike like to bike and hike across the dike." If time permits, pick another simple word from the story to rhyme.

God's Workers: What does it mean to be the hands and feet of Christ? How are Otter and Owl showing God's love to the animals in the woods? If you believe in Jesus, then you get to show others God's love! You can do this by helping those in need. It also means that you have to have listening ears and eyes to see needs around you. Make yourself a "business card" to show that you are in the business of being the hands and feet of Jesus. You can use an index card, write your name on it, some of your abilities, and "I am God's worker!" You may still be young, but you can list any of these, if fitting: lots of energy, happy worker, strong, can reach small spaces, ready to help. If a parent allows you to, give your business card to someone who might need your help.

Connect with Math: There are a lot of bugs in this story. Count all the mosquitoes that you find. Since there are a lot, you may want to use tally marks! How many did you count? Look at pages 14 and 15. Make a math equation to add up the mosquitoes on these two pages. (4+2=6) Which page has the most mosquitoes? For extra fun, starting on page 26, count the ice cubes in Otter's bag. Are there the same number of ice cubes each time the bag is pictured? Be a careful observer!

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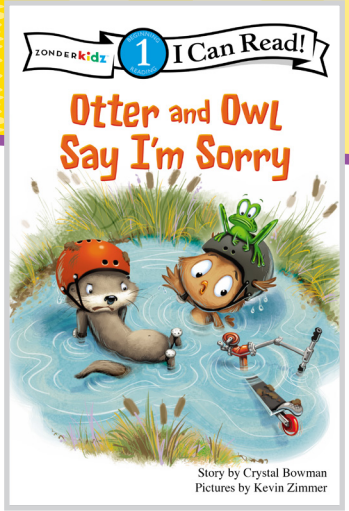

BEGINING READING 1

Otter and Owl Say I'm Sorry

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Kevin Zimmer

About the Book

Otter has a new scooter and lets Owl take a ride. Owl says they should try it on the steep hill. They go so fast and crash into a pond! The front tire is bent. Otter gets upset and goes home. Owl is sad. He writes Otter a note to ask for forgiveness. Otter forgives Owl because God wants him to. Otter was able to fix his scooter, so they go for a ride again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Otter share with Owl?
2. What is the difference from page 9 to 10? How are the friends feeling?
3. What happened to the scooter after their accident in the pond?
4. Why did Owl write Otter a note? Do you think this was a good idea or not needed?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Ephesians 4:32 (NIrV): "Forgive one another, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done." What does it mean to forgive someone? When we have done wrong, God will forgive us. What did Christ do? Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again so that we could be forgiven! Because of God's example, we must also forgive others who do wrong. Put motions to the verse to help you memorize it!

Picture It: (Prepare ahead of time: bring a bowl, a pepper shaker, and liquid soap) Let's talk about forgiveness. Is it easy to forgive someone when they have done something wrong? Do we have to forgive? Remember our memory verse and that because God forgave us, we need to forgive others. Sin makes things dirty, even our hearts. (Fill the bowl with water. Shake some pepper onto the surface so that the pepper is visible.) This pepper is like sin. When we can ask God to help us forgive, just as he forgave us, see what happens? (Squeeze some liquid soap into the middle of the pepper water.) His forgiveness cleans away sin! See how the pepper moved away from the soap? This is what we want for our lives and what we need to do for others—keep sin away and be filled with God's forgiveness!

Practice, Practice: If scooters of any kind are available, set up a short obstacle course, and practice safe driving. Otter and Owl learned not to go too fast! What else do you notice about them? They have safety gear on—helmets, knee pads, and elbow pads. Maybe you have these at home but not at school. When out on a scooter, be sure to wear your safety gear! If scooters are not available, then set up an obstacle course and pretend to scooter through it. You can do a slalom section, a curve, and a section to go backwards.

Letters: Practice writing a letter, just as you see it on pages 24–25. Owl has written clearly, has addressed it to Otter, and has signed it. You can copy the letter, or you can write a similar one if you need to tell someone you're sorry. One of the reasons to tell someone you're sorry is so that you can be friends again. You don't want to hurt others or have others hurt you. We need to love and forgive, just as God loves and forgives us. Thank Jesus in a short prayer time for his love and forgiveness.

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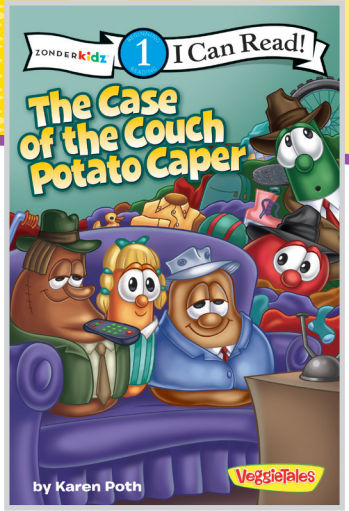

BEGINING READING 1

The Case of the Couch Potato Caper

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, Veggie Tales

About the Book

Laura Carrot was getting lazy. The Couch Potatoes moved into her house. She thought it was fun to watch TV all day and be lazy. Her room was a mess and she couldn't find her homework. Her mom was worried. Bob and Larry started to clean up Laura's room. They found all kinds of Laura's things, even her homework! Then she realized that God didn't want her to be lazy and that it wasn't so fun after all. They finished cleaning up and the Couch Potatoes left the house.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did Police Chief Scooter say was the problem?
2. How did the Couch Potatoes get in the Carrot home?
3. What happened when Bob and Larry started to clean up Laura's room? What did Laura realize about being lazy?
4. Do you like to be lazy? Is it easy to be lazy too long?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 6:6 (NIrV): "You people who don't want to work, think about the ant! Consider its ways and be wise!" Read the next two verses too. What makes the ant wise? How can you not be lazy? Be wise instead! The ant is wise because it does what it knows will be good for the future. Memorize this important reminder! Repeat the verse while throwing a ball back and forth. Have readers repeat a phrase after you as you throw the ball.

Patterns: What kind of a pattern did Laura get into? She got into a lazy pattern. That means that instead of working hard to get homework turned in, she came home and sat on the couch. Instead of keeping her room and toys tidy, she let everything go. She could have made much better choices and created better patterns for her life! Think about your patterns at home. Create a pattern on your paper using letters and/or pictures. (AABBAABB, etc. or ABCABCABC, etc. or ABABABAB, etc.) Then choose two or three items from the story with which to create your pattern (carrots, TV remotes, bears, etc.) Remember to create good behavior patterns.

The Big Clean-Up: One of the jobs God gave humans is making sure that everything he gives us is taken care of. Sometimes that means cleaning up … and that can mean at home, in the park, or at school. As a team, pick a place that needs some cleaning up and take some time to work on it, making sure that each person in the group has a job to do—no one should just be watching or sitting around. Ideas for this clean-up project could be as simple as picking up all the books in the reading corner of the classroom to something more complicated like taking trash bags and picking up paper in the parking lot of school.

Obey Parents: Laura Carrot didn't listen to her mom very well. Her mom had asked her to do her chores, but she wouldn't. That was a problem. Read Ephesians 6:1. What is the right thing to do? The four keys to obedience are: to obey right away, with a happy heart, all the way, and without complaining. Print out and cut out four key shapes. Put them on pipe cleaners, a key ring, or even a paper clip. Write the four keys to obedience on the keys and go through an example or two of each one with readers.

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BEGINING READING 1

Snug as a Bug

Author and Illustrator: Amy Imbody, Mike Gordon

About the Book

Mom asks Sam if he wants to sleep like bugs and animals. Sam thinks about each one. Then he decides that he wants to sleep like a child, in his own bed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. List the animals that Mom asks Sam about. Which one is your favorite?
2. Would you want to sleep somewhere other than your bed? Would you sleep well?
3. Look at the picture on pages 30–31. Try to find each animal that Sam and his mom had talked about. Are any missing?
4. Describe this book. Is it serious, funny, or boring? Look at the picture on pages 12–13. Does this help you understand what kind of story it is?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 139:13 (NIrV): "You created the deepest parts of my being. You put me together inside my mother's body." In the story each bug and animal had a place that was just right for sleeping. You can practice this verse by playing hangman and putting each letter in just the right spot.

Rhyme Time: *Snug as a Bug* uses words that rhyme. Go back through the story and find the pairs like snail/pail (page 5). Then write these words on index cards (or a whiteboard), mix them up, and have readers match them. Say the words out loud. Gray, pray, red, bed, sun, fun, snow, glow, ice, nice. Afterwards (if using index cards), play memory with these words to match the pairs.

My Place: What is your very favorite place? A camping spot, a tree house, a play tent, a dock at a lake, a library corner? Draw a picture of your favorite spot and share it with one other person. Explain what makes it special and what you like to do when you are there.

Silly Billy: A lot of the pictures make us giggle. What makes them funny? Look on pages 10–11. A snail doesn't wear a scarf. A bear wouldn't have a snowball fight. Try your hand at making people laugh. Have fun finding an object and using it in an unusual way—like your shoe for a phone. Then make up a funny, nonsense version of "Twinkle, Twinkle." For example: "Twinkle, twinkle, little snail! How I wonder what you are! Up above the world so high, like a bug in a lake! Twinkle, twinkle, little snail, how I wonder what you are!" You can also look up jokes (knock-knock jokes are a favorite!) and practice one or two to share at home.

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BEGINING 1 READING

All Is Fair When We Share

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Percy Pea is missing his toy. He is sure that his brother took it. The same brother who broke it. Detectives Bob and Larry want to solve this mystery. They talk to Percy, his mom, and then Lil' Pea. They find out that it is not as Percy had told them. Percy has trouble sharing. He learns that it is better to share and get along.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who does Percy Pea say took his Mighty Man toy? Is this really what happened?
2. What does Mom Pea say is the problem with her two sons?
3. Do you get along with your siblings? Do you ever have trouble sharing your toys?
4. Detectives Bob and Larry say that things get broken when you don't share (see page 25). What gets broken? How are friendships broken when we don't share?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Hebrews 13:16 (NIrV): "Don't forget to do good. Don't forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings." Repeat the verse while jumping rope—one word per jump. Or you can toss a ball or beanbag to each other with each person saying one word. This verse says that sharing with others is good. God is pleased. How does God feel about not sharing?

Caring & Sharing: Make bracelets, crosses, or bookmarks out of pipe cleaners. Readers can make one for themselves and one to share. They can share the pipe cleaner gift and the *All Is Fair When We Share* story with a new friend.

Don't Jump: Percy Pea jumped to the conclusion that Lil' Pea must have taken his Mighty Man toy because it was gone. Should he have been so sure that Lil' Pea took it? Was this a nice thing to do? What would have been a better way to have said that his Mighty Man was missing? Have readers write or dictate a letter from Percy Pea to the detectives explaining that the toy is missing. Help Percy not blame Lil' Pea; help him not to jump to conclusions! Remember not to jump to conclusions when you can't find your toys. Be nice instead and ask your siblings to help you find a missing toy.

Symbol: Look at pages 18–19. Where is the tape? Why is it there? Then look at page 29 where Percy takes the tape off the floor. What is he "saying" by taking the tape away? The tape is what we call a symbol in the story. At first it shows that the brothers are not getting along. When the tape goes away, Percy realizes that he needs to share and is ready to try. Create your own symbol to put on a door hanger to show that you are ready to share and get along with siblings and friends. Symbol ideas: a string of kids holding hands, hearts next to each other, circles overlapping. To create a door hanger, use a construction paper rectangle with a circle cut in the top.

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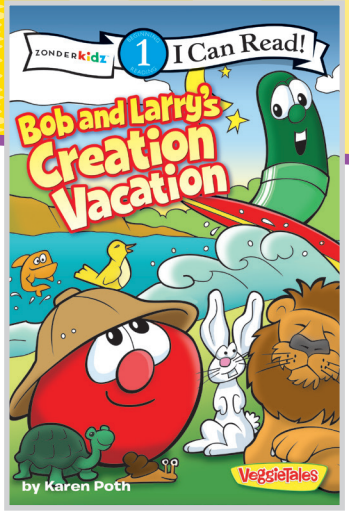

BEGINING READING 1

Bob and Larry's Creation Vacation

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Bob and Larry have planned a special trip. They are going to see all of God's creation in one week! Each day they experience one or two things that show what God created that day. For instance, on the sixth day they see all kinds of land creatures. On the seventh day they rested from a great vacation!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Look at page 7 where Larry has his bags packed. What has he packed? What activities did you think he might do?
2. Where would you go to use flippers, backpacks, snorkels, or binoculars? Then trace these items through the book to see how Bob and Larry used them.
3. List each day of Creation and what God made on each day.
4. At the beginning of the story Bob said they didn't have enough time to see all of God's creation. Larry said they sure did! Who do you think was right?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Genesis 1:31 (NIrV): "God saw everything he had made. And it was very good." Throw a ball back and forth, saying a word or phrase with each throw. Write the verse on a board to read at first as you toss the ball. Then erase it as you learn it. Alternately, have readers repeat phrases after you while you toss the ball.

Passport to the World: Create a passport out of folded paper. Write your name on the front. Take a trip around the world by looking up really different places. Look at a picture or two of each one: desert, rainforest, city (like Detroit or Paris), mountains, jungle, and Arctic Circle. As you visit each one, get a "stamp" in your passport (use stickers or any kind of classroom stamps). Are any parts of the world new to you? What part of God's world would you like to see someday?

Nature Walk: Go on a nature walk and talk about all that you see that God created. Take pictures of something that shows what God created each day (light/dark; sky/birds; water/land; something in the shape of the sun [circle], moon [crescent], or stars [glittering]; fish/birds; land animals/bugs; people; a place to rest). End your time by praying to thank God for his creation.

Creation Cube: Create a cube with the days of Creation on it. For a free template and instructions visit "Sunday School Resources." Help readers review the days of creation and ideas for pictures on each number. Review why there is not a number seven on the cube.

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BEGINING READING 1

Junior Battles to Be His Best

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Junior's dad encourages Junior to enter in the Bumblyburg Battle of the Bands. Junior doesn't think he is good enough on his tuba. Then he sees everyone else practicing for the competition. He feels left out. And he still doesn't feel good enough. He realizes that if he won't even try then he's already lost. He prays that God will give him courage to play some day. When the competition is tied, he agrees to play the last song with the Blues Band. They win! Junior is happy and thanks God for answering his prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What were Junior's reasons for not entering the competition? (See pages 5, 7, 10, and 18.)
2. What would you tell Junior if the Blues Band hadn't won the competition? Was he brave to try?
3. How did Junior get better and think he could try playing with the Blues Band? (He practiced and prayed. See pages 22–25.)
4. Who are you most like in this story? How?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Proverbs 3:26 (NIrV): "The LORD will be at your side. He will keep your feet from being caught in a trap." Write the verse on a whiteboard. Then erase a word or phrase each time you repeat it until readers have it memorized. See if readers know what all the words mean.

Connect with Math: Readers are to take a survey of their classmates. What is hard for them: math, reading, or playing with others? They must choose just one of these! Then instruct them how to make tally marks in boxes or how to create a bar graph to show the results. Tie this into the story again: practice things that are hard, be willing to try, and pray for God's help.

Practice, Practice: Junior had to practice his tuba to get better. Others in the bands probably had to practice a lot too. Are you learning something now that needs practice—reading, tying your shoe, jumping rope, math, writing words, piano, hula hoop? Pick one of these to practice together. Encourage each other, just as Junior's parents did. End your time by asking for God's help, just as Junior did.

Explore Emotions: This story tells of a hard time for Junior. How did Junior feel throughout the story? Look at the illustrations and what the author tells you. Discuss with readers what they do when they feel frustrated. What did Junior do when he felt bad? It is not appropriate or healthy to hurt someone else or to run away because we feel terrible. What is the right thing to do? When we feel frustrated, we can step away for a minute to calm down, go get a snack, ask an adult for help, or remember a Bible verse that we have learned. Choose a situation (like a sibling taking a favorite toy) and have readers practice these good strategies (role-play).

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BEGINING READING 1

Junior Comes Clean

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Detectives Bob and Larry are called to the Asparagus home. Junior's room is a mess! He says bad guys did it. Then Bob and Larry are called back. Milk got spilled! Junior says bad guys did it. Next they see Junior's clean room . . . with a big pile under the rug. Junior says bad guys did it. Then Junior admits that telling lies is never a good thing to do. The bad guys didn't do these things. Junior did them. He is forgiven, and the case is closed!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Junior say each time something bad happens? Why does he say this?
2. What was under the rug? Should the pile have been there?
3. What does Junior realize? (See page 27.) What does God want us to do? (See page 30.)
4. How did Junior feel when he was lying? (Scared and quiet—see pages 8, 24, and 25.) How did he feel at the end, after he was forgiven?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Zechariah 8:16 (NIrV): "Speak the truth to one other." Throw a ball back and forth, each saying a word of the verse until you have it memorized. Is it hard to always speak the truth? If truth is important to God, should it be important to us?

Be Musical: Google "cleanup song for kids" and listen to one of the songs a few times. Talk about why Junior didn't want to tell his parents and the detectives that he'd made the mess. What was a better way to handle his messy room? Learn a cleanup song and encourage readers to sing this while they obey their parents when it is time to clean up rather than blaming siblings or someone else.

Web of Lies: What happens when we lie? Often one lie leads to another lie. We have to explain the lies, and then we get all tangled up. Sometimes we can't remember what really happened or what was true. It leads to a tangled mess. Illustrate this with a ball of yarn. Ask readers a question that they make up an answer to. Then continue to ask follow-up questions to this "lie." After each question and answer weave another part to the web (around a chair). For instance, ask, "Who broke my china plate?" (Answer: Little Susie did!) Then, "How did she break it?" Continue to weave the story and web. Then explain to readers again that lies can lead to more lies, to embarrassment, to fear, and to shame. This is not God's plan! He wants us to tell the truth.

Pure Truth: If time and materials allow, illustrate how lying separates us from God. Forgiveness brings us back into a right relationship with God. Gather a small bowl of water, a peppershaker, cotton swabs (the double-ended stick swabs), liquid dish detergent, and some additional water. Then follow the instructions on Kids of Integrity for "Pure Truth."

* "Pure Truth," *Kids of Integrity*, accessed July 17, 2017, http://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/honesty/hands-options/pure-truth.

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BEGINING READING 1

Princess Petunia's Sweet Apple Pie

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Everyone is looking forward to the Scone County Fair. There are so many fun activities. The day ends with the King's Pie Contest. The winner gets the golden spatula and is in charge of next year's fair. Bump wants to win so that he can cancel the fair. Everyone else wants to win the contest and stop Bump! They need sugar from Bump, but it turns into a pie fight. Then Bump needs to use their oven. Petunia shows God's love by letting Bump use the oven. This means that her pie is not done. Bump wins the contest! Bump changes and says he would make next year the best ever!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What were the veggies looking forward to at the county fair?
2. Why didn't Bump like the fair?
3. What was Bump going to do with the fair if he won the contest? How did that change in the end?
4. Put these four parts of the story in order: (1) Bump promised to make next year's fair great! (2) Bump threw his pie at Duke. (3) The other knights need sugar. (4) Petunia took her pie out of the oven and put Bump's in. (Write these four parts on index cards so readers can manipulate them. For an extra challenge, add more parts for readers to place in the correct sequence.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize 1 John 3:17 (NIrV): "Suppose someone sees a brother or sister in need and is able to help them. And suppose that person doesn't take pity on these needy people. Then how can the love of God be in that person?" Talk about what this verse means. How does the story show that God's love was in Petunia? Practice memorizing the verse by putting motions to key words and repeating the verse.

Help Me, Help Me: It can be hard to help others. Often people only want to help others who are kind. God wants us to help those in need. We have to keep our eyes open to see those needs! See what needs to be done and help without being asked. Brainstorm ideas now: open the door for a mom with a baby stroller, clean up the living room at home, carry groceries in for Mom, help a frustrated sibling. Use twist ties to make yourself a reminder to be helpful—twist it around a belt loop, make a bracelet with several twist ties, or put it around a pencil.

Baking to Encourage: Learn about the different words in the story that have to do with baking. What is a "scone"? What is a "spatula"? What is a "shepherd's pie"? At home bake a sweet treat and think of someone who needs encouragement—at school, at church, in your family. Write or draw a picture to go along with it. Explain to this person that God wants us to help each other. This is your way of showing God's love!

Cycle of Kindness: Go back through the story again and help readers make a flow chart to show what actions led to good and bad consequences. For instance, "The knights needed sugar. (arrow) They asked Bump for sugar. (arrow) Bump threw his pie at Duke. (arrow) All the knights threw pies. (arrow) All the pies were ruined." Ask readers if this is a good or a bad ending. Did they all want ruined pies? Choices were made and veggies got upset. No one took a deep breath or walked away. Then look at the next set: "Bump needed an oven. (arrow) Petunia remembered what God says. (arrow) Petunia let Bump have the oven. (arrow) Bump won the contest." Is this a good or a bad ending? It seems like a bad ending, but what it really led to was Bump changing. He became a better veggie. It was probably hard for Petunia to be the first one to be kind. But she wanted to do what God says is right. This is not easy to do, but it is the right thing to do! Be the first person to show God's love and help to others.

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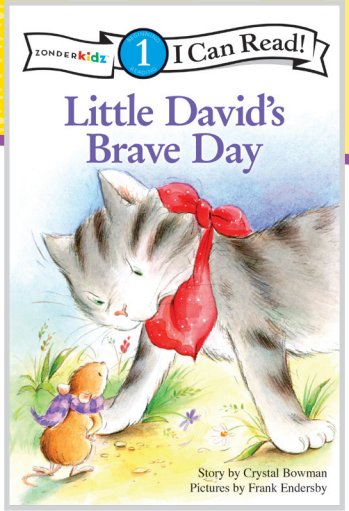

BEGINING 1 READING

Little David's Brave Day

Author and Illustrator: Crystal Bowman, Frank Endersby

About the Book

The mouse David and his brothers are stuck in their home. A big, mean cat named Goliath walks around their home every day. They are scared and hide. Then David decided that God would help him chase away Goliath. The next day he went outside and saw a hose that he could spray Goliath with. Goliath ran into a tree and ran away. He never came back! Little David knew God would help him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What animals are David and Goliath in this story?
2. What is the problem in the story? What was Goliath doing?
3. Why wouldn't David's brothers go out to chase Goliath away? What did David decide?
4. What did God help David do to get rid of Goliath?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Psalm 16:8 (NIrV): "I keep my eyes always on the Lord. He is at my right hand. So I will always be secure." To practice the verse, repeat it in various ways—using different rhythms or a soft and then loud voice. Talk about what it means to keep their eyes on the Lord. Why would he be at your right hand? We can be secure or safe because God is with us.

Connect with the Bible: What story of the Bible is *Little David's Brave Day* similar to? Read the story of David and Goliath in a children's Bible or in 1 Samuel 17. Talk about similarities and differences between the Bible story and the retelling in *Little David's Brave Day*. Make a Venn diagram (two overlapping circles) to show the similarities (where the circles overlap) and differences (right and left parts of the circles). Write words or draw pictures for the similarities and differences.

What is the Word: With a partner, unscramble some key words for *Little David's Brave Day*: tholiGa (Goliath), daaifr (afraid), viDad (David), vbera (brave), dGo (God). Give readers the beginning letter, if they need a start. Then explain how these words fit into the story.

Be Musical: Little David trusts that God will help him. He knows that God makes him brave. God does not want them to be afraid. Find a kids' song about trusting in God or being brave (Google "trust in the Lord kids' songs." Practice the song (and maybe motions) as you listen to the song a few times!

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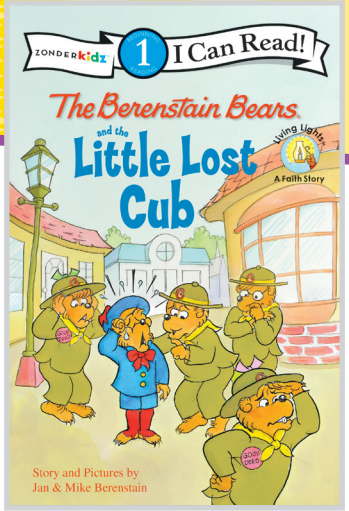

BEGINING 1 READING

The Berenstain Bears and the Little Lost Cub

Author and Illustrator: Jan & Mike Berenstain

About the Book

The Good Deed Scouts were in search for a good deed to do. They saw a lost cub and knew they could help him find his mom. They took him to a police officer who helped them. The cub was cared for and safe. The scouts took pictures around town to find his mom. Then they heard she was headed to the police station to find her lost cub. All was well!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Count all the places the scouts went to search for the mom of the lost cub.
2. What was the cub's payment? What did they seem to think about that?
3. When the scouts found the lost cub, what was the first thing they knew to do?
4. What kinds of things have you done as good deeds?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Hebrews 13:16 (NIrV): "Don't forget to do good. Don't forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings." Why are we to do good and share? Is it just because it makes us feel good? God is pleased when we sacrifice and put others first. Put phrases of the verse on index cards. Shuffle them and have readers organize them in order. Play this several times to help readers memorize the verse.

Lost and Found: Put flour or a pile of shaving cream on a cookie sheet. Hide five items that have to do with the story (for instance, a foam "G," play lips, a checker piece, a wood chip, a play police badge, etc.). Then have readers find these five items. Wash them off and have readers explain what the five lost items have to do with the story ("G" stands for the "Good Deed Scouts," play lips because the mom gives them kisses at the end, a checker piece because they play checkers at the police station, a wood chip because they search the playground, and a police badge because the officer helps them).

Helping Hands, Listening Ears: The Good Deed Scouts were looking for someone to help. Often in our daily lives people need help when we are not looking. Sometimes we think we don't have time to help. God wants us to help each other though. Pray that God helps us to use some of our five senses to find those who need help—eyes to see those who need help, ears to listen for needs, and hands to help those who need it. Then the first thing we should do is use our voices to pray that God would help us know what to do.

Stay Safe: The Good Deed Scouts found a lost cub. They knew to ask for help. A police officer is a good choice. You will probably be with one of your parents though, so always go to your parent first. If you yourself are lost, seek out a mom with kids or a cashier in a store and have them call 911. Remember that an adult should not ask for a kid's help. There is safety in numbers, so try to always stay with a group, just as the scouts did in our story. As a reminder, draw a number phone pad as you see it on a cell phone. Then have readers pretend to call 911. Talk about when to call 911. Add a blank line to their "phone" page for "home address" and "phone number." At pickup, explain to parents that you talked about safety and encourage them to talk to their readers about this again: how to access a phone to call 911 and learning their street address and their phone number. Encourage parents to post the "phone" page in their home where readers can see it.

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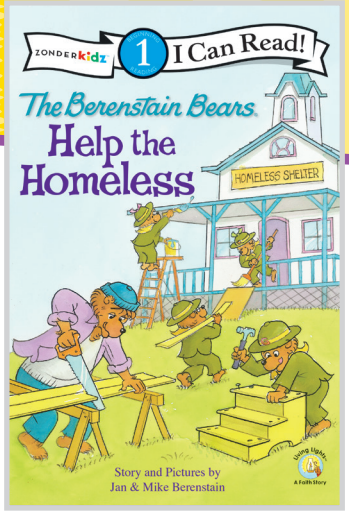

BEGINING READING 1

The Berenstain Bears Help the Homeless

Author and Illustrator: Jan & Mike Berenstain

About the Book

Widow McBear wants to help the homeless and has a house that needs fixing. The Good Deed Scouts help her by fixing up the house. They are scared of the old house and find bats and Old Tom there. Old Tom helps them turn the old house into the new Spook Hill Homeless Shelter.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why were the scouts scared about starting to fix up the home at night?
2. Do you wish you could help the scouts? Would you be brave like Fred or more scared like the others?
3. Who did all those eyes in the house belong to?
4. What is the house going to be used for?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have readers memorize Isaiah 58:7a (NIrV): "Share your food with hungry people. Provide homeless people with a place to stay." Put motions to the words or phrases to help readers remember the verse. Talk about ways to help those in need. Does their church provide food for schoolkids? Does their church help with homeless shelters or work in thrift stores that help homeless shelters?

Practical Skills: The scouts used all kinds of practical skills in fixing up the homeless shelter. What skills do you see and hear about in the story? Have you tried any of these? Allow readers to practice nailing by using a rubber mallet or a toy hammer on bubble wrap. Try placing "targets" for them to hit (use a circle of paper or stickers). This might be a good activity for an outside sidewalk, as it may get loud! Alternately, if wrenches, bolts, and nuts are available, teach readers how to assemble nuts and bolts and explain what they are used for.

Print Concepts: Look at pages 18–20 again. These pages show you "sound words" like creak, rattle, squeek, and whoosh. "Sound words" are called examples of onomatopoeia. They help readers actually feel what is happening. Comic books often insert sound words to help readers see what is happening. Make up your own story or comic with some sound words, like splash, sizzle, zing, crack, or buzz.

I See: How well do you see? Have you ever looked at something and not quite realized what it was? Or sometimes we see a person and think something about him that may not be true. For example, if we see a dirty person, what do we think? If we see someone in a shiny car, what do we think? We may think that dirty means not doing well. And we may think that shiny and clean means a lot of money. Sometimes this may be true, but it may not always be. Sometimes what we see isn't entirely reliable or true. Let's pray for eyes to see how God sees. He loves and cares for every person not for how they look. Create an optical illusion as shown in the link below as a reminder to be careful in trusting our eyes.

* "Make an Optical Illusion," *Science Sparks*, accessed July 19, 2017, http://www.science-sparks.com/2013/10/18/make-an-optical-illusion/.

ZONDERkidz I Can Read!

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BEGINING READING 1

The Fairest Town in the West

Author and Illustrator: Karen Poth, VeggieTales

About the Book

Sheriff Bob and Deputy Larry take good care of their town, Dodge Ball City. All the Veggies treat each other well, they follow the rules, and there is peace. But one day, the Ratt Scallion Gang comes to town and they have lots of bad habits. They steal, cheat, and are just plain mean. Bob and Larry let the gang know if they want to stay they need to follow the rules and treat everyone fairly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the name of the city Sheriff Bob and Deputy Larry live and work in?
2. Name three rules that Bob and Larry tell the Ratt Scallions to follow. Name the consequence for each one, if they do not follow the rule.
3. What does the word "fair" mean?
4. What do the Ratt Scallions decide to do?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Hide God's Word in Your Heart: Have the readers memorize this part of Proverbs 2:9: "Then you will understand what is right and just and fair." Cut 11 squares of paper for each reader. Have the readers write one word from the verse on each square so that the entire verse is written out. First, have the student(s) arrange the slips of paper in order of the verse and read several times. Next, leaving the words face-up, scramble the slips of paper and rearrange correctly, reading once again. Last, turn the slips over and shuffle the words. Then turn over and rearrange the slips without any assistance. Keep this up until the students can arrange the slips in correct order.

A Poor Choice: Talk about the word cheating. What does it mean to cheat? People cheat on tests, homework assignments, and at games. Why isn't this the right thing to do? Cheating is lying—and that breaks one of the ten commandments in the Bible. If you know someone is cheating, what should you do? Should you tell a friend or a responsible adult? Should you talk to the person who is cheating? Have you ever cheated? How can you fix that?

Play Fair: What does it mean to play fair? Talk about fairness with the group. Then do a few of these activities to demonstrate why it is best to be fair. After each activity, talk with the group about how things feel and how things could/should be different.

- Give the boys in the group five extra minutes in a break time and make the girls keep working.
- Give one student 10 books to put away and one student one book.
- Keep interrupting a student as he or she reads.
- Eat a delicious cookie in front of the group. Tell them how good it is and wouldn't they want one? Ask them how it makes them feel.

If I Were In Charge: Sometimes we think it would be fun to be in charge. Let's say each reader was in charge of their own town. Every town needs some rules to keep the people living there safe and happy. Share the 10 Commandments from the Bible. Talk briefly about them. Even though they are old rules, they are still very good rules! Now, list the rules they would have for the people in their towns. Write them on a chalkboard or chart paper. How would they enforce the rules? Would they put kids in jail like Bob and Larry said they would do to the Ratt Scallions? Are any of their rules similar to any of the commandments?

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