

BAKER'S DOZEN SELECTIONS

WORDLESS MINI LESSONS

The wordless or nearly wordless Baker's Dozen selections are paired with engaging activities designed to help parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators enrich young learners' reading experiences while supporting the development of early reading comprehension skills. Each activity aligns with early childhood academic standards to ensure meaningful learning.

Bear With Me by Kerascoët

Random House Studio, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2023

Every Little Kindness by Marta Barolj

Chronicle Books, 2021

Oscar's Tower of Flowers by Lauren Tobia

Candlewick Press, 2021

The Fisherman & the Whale by Jessica Lanan

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2019

Field Trip to the Moon by John Hare

Margaret Ferguson Books, 2019

The Carpenter by Bruna Barros

Gibbs Smith, 2017

Sidewalk Flowers by JonArno Lawson,

illustrated by Sydney Smith

Groundwood Books, House of Anansi Press, 2015

The Girl and the Bicycle by Mark Pett

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2014

Daisy Gets Lost by Chris Raschka

Schwartz & Wade Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2013

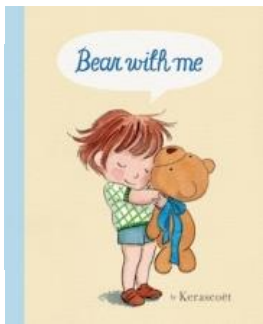
Chalk by Bill Thomson

Marshall Cavendish Children, 2010

The Lion & the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney

Little, Brown and Company, 2009

Pennsylvania Department of Education. *Academic Standards for English Language Arts: Grades PreK-5* (2014)
Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood: Kindergarten (2016)



Bear with Me
By Kerascoët

Tips for Using with Children

This storybook calls out for expressive reading, even though there are only three printed words in the book! For example, read the words “Bear With Me”—*loudly and tearfully* when the father takes Bear to the washer, with *great effort* when the child tries to fit Bear into the book bag, *proudly* when the child shows her painting, and *joyfully* when the child hugs Bear on returning home. Children who are beginning to read can notice that the size and design of letters as well as the punctuation help us decide how to read the words with expression. On re-reading, adults can point to the words, and encourage children to read them dramatically.

As a follow-up activity, invite children to bring a favorite item/toy for ‘show and tell’, perhaps one that they miss when they are at school, or maybe one that they, too, have had “forever.”

Tips for Using with Families

After examining the cover illustration, adults and children can notice that the first pages show a gift arriving for a new baby. Consider together whether that might be the bear and baby from the book's cover. If so, the child has probably loved this bear since infancy.

When reading this book with *younger children*, adults can point to each picture and use simple words to describe what's happening. This POINT AND TELL technique will help children's vocabulary grow. Children may want to “read” along with adults and label or describe some of the pictures themselves. Simply pointing and saying one word is a good start to becoming a reader.

Older children will be eager to examine the pictures more closely and answer questions about what's happening in them (e.g. “Oh! Oh! What do you think the Mommy is saying now?”) Help children relate the story to how they feel about their own favorite toys.

This almost wordless book uses the title phrase to illustrate the bond a child shares with their stuffed teddy bear. Since the very beginning, this duo has shared a daily routine and are rarely apart. Readers can relate to the feelings this little child has when facing the first day of school without bear. Their uncertainty at the start of the school day transitions to a story of resilience, as the child carries bear with them, not physically, but in their heart and through their actions. The thought of readers missing the opportunity to read a story filled with examples of love, bravery, and friendship is frankly, well, unBEARable.

CC.1.1.K.B: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

CC.1.5.K.F: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.



Every Little Kindness
by Marta Bartolj

When a young woman is searching for her lost dog, she demonstrates an act of kindness that passes from person to person within her community. Within muted illustrations, a splash of red highlights the thread of good deeds that weaves through the community and connects strangers in unexpected ways. Whether it is opening a door, inviting someone to play, offering a seat, or returning a lost pet to its loving owner, every little kindness has an impact and the potential to ripple far beyond what we imagine.

Tips for Using with Children

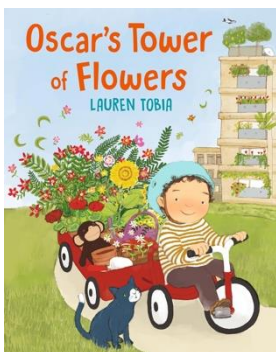
The use of the color red to highlight caring actions provides an opportunity for children to predict what might happen next. Children will enjoy identifying the red items and then thinking about what the next helpful act might be. They also might like to create drawings of themselves doing something nice for another, and using the color red to highlight their action. Brainstorm with children a list of small acts of kindness that they can do for others at home and in the classroom community, and if possible, put some into action within the community, such as providing water bottles for delivery personnel, or painting encouraging messages or pictures on rocks and placing them in a public space.

Tips for Using with Families

When reading a wordless book with children, adults can choose to provide narrative on some pages, and they can also choose to offer a few moments of quiet for children to observe and interpret what they see. Children can take the lead in turning pages so that adults can follow their pace and pose questions when something causes their child to pause. Adults can point out the different ways that people in the story are demonstrating kindness, and connect the story to their child's daily routine. Thinking about your child's day, were there ways that someone provided a simple act of kindness for them? Was there an opportunity where they provided kindness to another?

CC.1.2.PK.G: With prompting and support, answer questions to connect illustrations to the written word. Match pictures to ideas, objects, or steps in a sequence .

CC.1.5.PK.E: Use simple sentences; express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, speaking clearly enough to be understood by most audiences.



Oscar's Tower of Flowers
by Lauren Tobia

When someone Oscar loves leaves for a trip, his nurturing caregiver engages him in the process of planting and growing. His green thumb serves him well, and before long their cozy apartment is filled with plants and flowers. Oscar visits each neighbor in the building, offering plants in a gesture of friendship and kindness and demonstrating how every person can contribute to the spirit of community. Through illustrated panels and brightly colored spreads, this wordless book sends a message of growth, neighborliness, and love.

Tips for Using with Children

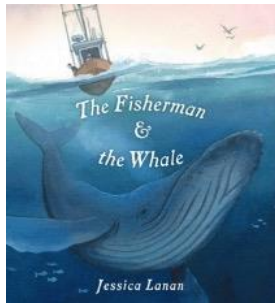
Gardening and growing provides an opportunity for children to care for living things. Provide children with some soil, seeds, and a variety of containers for planting. In the story, Oscar used pots, dishes, mugs, yogurt cups, teapots, and more for planting. What other containers could be recycled for planting? It took time for Oscar's plants to grow. Consider including a calendar or journal where children can regularly observe and record changes. Before planting, compare the characteristics of the seeds from different packets, with opportunities for counting, sorting, and creating patterns.

Tips for Using with Families

Encourage adults to spend some time with the book, observing the illustrations and recognizing the freedom for both adults and children to tell the story in their own words. Point out that the end pages at the front and back of the book provide a hint to the story. Adults can take time to compare the apartments inside the front cover with those inside the back cover, and can prompt their child to do the same. When looking at the illustrations, adults can consider and guess what might draw their child's eye based on their child's specific interests. When enjoying a wordless book, adults can provide some of the narrative by labeling and describing what they see, and also let children tell the story by asking open-ended questions.

CC.1.4.K.B: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to focus on one specific topic.

CC.1.2.K.C: With prompting and support, make a connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.



The Fisherman & the Whale
by Jessica Lanan

As a father and son end their day at sea, the young boy spots a whale caught in fishing lines. Although resistant at first, the boy's father gives in to his son's urgent plea and swims to the creature in need, carefully cutting the whale free from captivity. This book is wordless; however, the watercolor illustrations speak volumes about empathy and the connection among all living creatures. An author's note at the end of the book requests this book be read as a fable rather than a guide to whale rescue, but also provides information about the realistic consequences of whale entanglement that sets the stage for the story. Quiet and powerful, this book will capture readers' hearts as they read and revisit the story.

Tips for Using with Children

Engage children in activities that can protect the environment and prevent harm to living creatures by talking about ways they can help. For example, children can use paper on both sides to reduce waste, turn off things like lights and the water faucet when not in use, reuse items such as plastic bags, and recycle their trash. Adults can model these practices, too, and help children connect how these activities have an impact beyond their classroom or home. Children may also want to learn more about different types of whales, how they breathe, what they eat, and other fun facts.

Tips for Using with Families

Wordless books invite children to co-author the story, as they make predictions, think critically, and recognize story structure. Encourage adults to start with the cover of the book when reading with children, asking them to think about what they see and predict what might happen in the story. When reading the story together, adults can ask questions that prompt narration such as, "What do you see in this picture?" or "How do you think the character is feeling?" Children may need more time to look at each page when reading, so adults can let them take the lead in turning pages when they feel ready. After reading, respond to children's concern for the whale by reminding them of things we all can do to make the world safer for our pets and other animals. One simple practice that can be introduced is to cut plastic six-pack beverage rings before recycling or discarding them, so that fish and other animals don't get stuck inside the circles.

[*Enjoy a virtual reading of *The Fisherman & the Whale* by our former Assistant Director, Ellysa Stern Cahoy.*](#)

CC.1.2.PK.B: Answer questions about a text.

CC.1.2.PK.G: With prompting and support, answer questions to connect illustrations to the written word.



Field Trip to the Moon
by John Hare

Readers will be over the moon about this wordless picture book! When a young student dozes off during a field trip and is left behind, a group of friendly residents draw near, mesmerized by the effect of a colorful box of crayons on their mostly gray environment. Although we cannot see the students' or teacher's faces due to space helmets, the author/illustrator uses brilliant body language within his art to depict their emotions throughout the adventure. Imaginations will soar and allow this story to evolve and change each time it is read, so grab this book when ready for an out-of-this-world adventure.

Tips for Using with Children

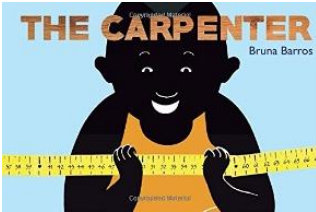
Revisit the story with children and look closely at the drawings created by the student and the space creatures. Adults can ask children to think about why the creatures chose colorful crayons for their drawings. Which color crayon is left in the student's box to use at the end of the story? Consider with children why the student erased the drawings before heading back home. Why was it important to clean up before leaving? Where are some places we visit where it is important to clean up after ourselves?

Tips for Using with Families

Wordless books provide a wonderful opportunity for readers to create a story in their own words. This builds vocabulary as well as creativity and imagination. Encourage adults to use the cover and title of the book as a guide to make their own predictions about the story and to practice this same strategy before reading with children. Assure adults that there is no right or wrong way to read a wordless book; in fact, the beauty of a wordless book is that the story is different upon each re-read. Children can take turns being the reader, too, and adults can support their reading by expanding on their ideas and helping them notice specifics in the pictures. This interaction will allow adults to see the book through the eyes of their children, as their children build stories around the detailed and meaningful illustrations.

CC.1.5.K.A: Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

CC.1.4.K.B: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to focus on one specific topic.



The Carpenter
by Bruna Barros

As a young boy's father uses his hands and tools to carefully work nearby, the boy uses his creativity and a simple folding ruler to bring creatures to life, drive a car, and build a house. The father and son appear to be working separately, but are closely connected, especially by the end of the story when imagination and reality merge into a fine adventure.

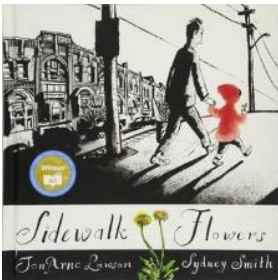
Tips for Using with Children

Obtain a folding ruler and show children how it can be bent into different shapes. Keep folding rulers in the play/art area to allow children to experiment with them. On subsequent readings, ask children to notice what kinds of tools the dad uses to design the boat. They will notice a clipboard used to hold the paper, a right-angle ruler used to draw straight lines, a pencil for erasing mistakes, and graph paper. Provide these objects for children to experiment with in their play/art area. Children may enjoy constructing their own boat out of household or recyclable materials and testing it in a small pool of water to see if it will float.

Tips for Using with Families

Because the book is wordless, adults may want to narrate what is happening in each picture and ask their child for their contributions. For some families a folding ruler may be something that is familiar to the adult but new to the child. Adults can take this opportunity to describe the different uses for a tool like this. Replicas of folding rulers can be made using poster board and paper fasteners. Discuss ways children could use these replicas when taking them home. After reading the story, families can spend time looking at the different tools on the inside of the front and back cover.

- CC.1.5.PK.E:** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, or writing to compose informative/explanatory texts.
- CC.1.3.PK.A:** With prompting and support, retell familiar stories including key details.
- CC.1.2.PK.A:** Engage in a group reading activity with purpose and understanding.



Sidewalk Flowers
by JonArno Lawson,
illustrated by
Sydney Smith

This charming story becomes new with every re-read. The author and illustrator work together beautifully to tell this poetic story through wordless illustration. The pen and ink panels, which begin in mainly black and white and incorporate more color as each page turns, show the beauty that can be found when we observe our surroundings. Shown through the eyes of a little girl walking home with her distracted father, the city is full of opportunities for recognition and kindness. The little girl collects flowers from the sidewalk, and then patiently waits for the right moment to present them to others along her way. Each page contains so much to see, so much to feel, and even without text, so much to wonder about and discuss.

Tips for Using with Children

Before reading the story, talk with children about why people take part in the tradition of giving flowers to another person. How does it feel when you receive flowers? How does it feel to give them to someone else? Ask children to become "detectives" when reading, looking for pages on which the little girl finds flowers, as well as pages on which she gives them away. It might be nice to take time after reading to create paper flowers or to go for a walk to collect flowers, pinecones, or leaves to give to another person of their choosing.

Tips for Using with Families

The beauty of a wordless book is that readers can tell the story in their own words. In this particular story, there is much to talk about. Adults may want to preview the book before reading it with children to consider what types of prompts and questions they wish to use when reading. For example, adults may ask questions such as: What does the little girl see while walking? In what places does she find flowers? What do you think she will do with the flowers she is collecting? As the little girl encounters a bird that has died, a man sleeping on a park bench, and a friendly dog out for a walk, adults can say, "I wonder what the little girl is thinking," or "What do you think the little girl is thinking about?" This allows children to express their thoughts and also helps adults gain insight into how the children are interpreting the events in the story. In this way, the book becomes a foundation for important conversations that help children make sense of the world around them.

- CC.1.3.K.B:** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- CC.1.4.K.A:** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts.



The Girl and the Bicycle
by Mark Pett

This is a touching wordless picture book about a young girl who spots a green bicycle in a store window and spends the next few seasons planning and earning money so she can make it her own. Things don't turn out the way she hoped, but her industriousness, ingenuity, and simple acts of generosity earn her more than money in her quest for the bike. It is a story about persistence that carries the message of selflessness and its sweet surprises.

Tips for Using with Children

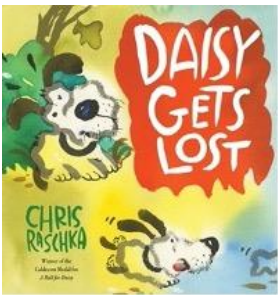
Show and talk about the book's cover, read the title, and point to the picture of the two children and the bicycle. What do they think will happen in this story? As you turn the pages, ask children to tell what's happening on each page. Ask questions that will help the children focus on the girl and what she is doing and why.

Tips for Using with Families

Because this is a wordless book, remind parents that it is important to page through this story at least twice, once to observe the pictures and then to tell the story in detail. It would be fun to give the characters in this story a name and perhaps find words to describe their personalities. This would build vocabulary and help develop an understanding of character. Try turn-taking, asking the child to "read" alternate pages to read/tell the story. This is an example of delayed gratification as the girl saves throughout the year to buy the bicycle. Discuss ways to encourage your child to save up for something special or for special events.

CC.1.3.PK.H: Answer questions to compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

CC.1.5.PK.A: Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.



Daisy Gets Lost
by Chris Raschka

With only a few words, Raschka tells the story of Daisy, a dog who, while playing with her blue ball, gets distracted, chases a squirrel, and winds up getting lost. Separated, Daisy and her owner, a little girl, are worried and frightened until they call out to each other and this joyfully reunites them. Children will love describing the action of the story using the bright, soulful illustrations to guide the way. Children will also enjoy hearing *A Ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschka.

Tips for Using with Children

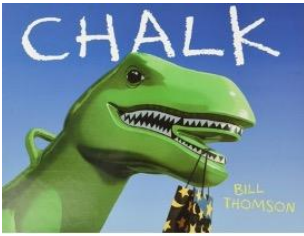
Since this book only has a few words, have children take turns describing the action and the feelings expressed in the illustrations. Ask probing questions to support more detailed language expressions. Children will want to tell their own stories of when they, a pet, or a family member was lost and how they felt. After reading the book, show them the picture of Daisy in the woods and the little girl looking for each other. Tell them this is like a map and ask them how the two might find each other. Provide construction paper and other materials such as pieces of yarn, tissue paper, small colored cut-out shapes, glue, and crayons. Suggest that they draw a map of people and/or pets trying to find each other.

Tips for Using with Families

Explain to families that a wordless picture book allows a child the opportunity to practice language and comprehension. They must interpret the story by looking closely at the pictures—the scenery, the action, and the expressions of feelings in the characters. Taking turns on every other page allows the children to hear and understand the adult's interpretation and also have a chance to do their own thinking. Family members can ask children questions – such as "Why do you think she feels that way?" or "Why does she look happy?" – to help them further express their thoughts. Share with families how to repeat and expand upon the child's use of language. For example, the child says, "Doggie scared," and the adult says, "Yes, the little doggie looks scared."

CC.1.1.PK.D: Recognize and name end punctuation.

CC.1.4.PK.A: Draw/dictate to compose informative/ explanatory texts examining a topic.



Chalk
by Bill Thomson

Imagine a world where whatever you draw with a piece of chalk springs to life. A shining sun and beautiful butterflies fill the pages of this wonderfully illustrated story as children on a playground realize that the bag of chalk they found contains some magic. But what happens when one of the children decides to draw a ferocious dinosaur on the pavement? Discover the creativity within this wordless picture book as you watch your children's vivid expressions and allow their imaginations to guide them in telling the story. It's an adventure you don't want to miss!

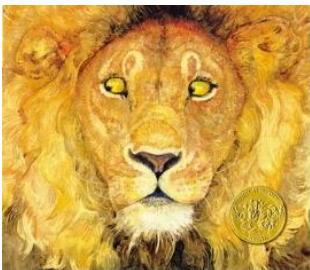
Tips for Using with Children

Allow children's imaginations (and vocabulary) to soar as they invent words to accompany the illustrations in this book. Children will love to tell the story in their own way. A fun extension activity is to ask children to imagine that they are with the other children in the story. How would they stop the dinosaur? What would they draw with their piece of chalk? Provide chalk, and allow children to draw a picture and describe what might happen if their drawing came to life. The pictures could be collected into a special book designed by the children.

Tips for Using with Families

Before sharing this story with a child, families may want to preview the book and think of some questions that they want to ask their child when reading. Questions like "What did the children find?" and "How do you think they felt when the dinosaur came to life?" will help spark children's storytelling. Families can set the stage for children by asking them to think about times they have drawn with chalk outside. In what ways can chalk drawings be erased? It might be a good idea to talk with children about the ending of the story, too. For example, families can ask children what they think will happen next. These questions can help to fill the pages of a wordless picture book with a LOT of interesting conversation!

CC.1.2.PK.G: With prompting and support, answer questions to connect illustrations to the written word.



The Lion & the Mouse
by Jerry Pinkney

Pinkney's Caldecott Award winning book shares one of Aesop's fables centered on simple acts of animal kindness. A lion spares a tiny mouse; the mouse rescues the lion from a poacher's trap. Told with expressive, full-page illustrations and a nearly wordless text, the story will absorb young readers in a timeless tale.

Tips for Using with Children

Wordless books provide a terrific chance for children to tell a tale in their own words. Ask children to "read" *The Lion and the Mouse* to you, offering their version of what is happening in the book. Sometimes adults need to ask questions to help draw children to the details of the story. If children need help, plan a question to ask on each page. At the heart of this story is the idea that somebody little can help somebody big. After children have read the story, talk about kindness and how it can come back to you. Ask the children if they ever did something nice for somebody who did something nice back.

Tips for Using with Families

Talk with families about the importance of visual literacy. Model reading the pictures in *The Lion and the Mouse* aloud. Share other wordless books with families that they can practice reading together.

CC.1.2.PK.G: With prompting and support, answer questions to connect illustrations to the written word.

CC.1.5.PK.A: Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.