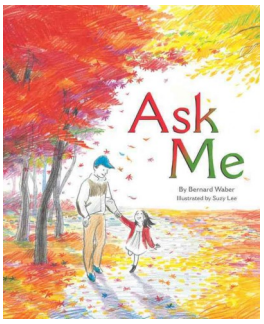
Storytelling

Ask Me: Bonding with Books and Stories



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"*Truly listening to someone reminds them that their lives matter; and reminds us all of what matters most*."

The statement above is included in a short video produced by StoryCorps and Google encouraging people to take part in StoryCorps' "Great Thanksgiving Listen." The StoryCorps organization aims "to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share and preserve the stories of our lives." This Thanksgiving, Storycorps encourages high school students, especially, to interview grandparents, or another older friend or relative, and use the StoryCorps app to record and share the interview. But you don't have to be in high school to take part. And taking time to talk with and truly listen to the stories our friends and relatives have to tell is a gift we can give each other at any time.

The picturebook *Ask Me* by Bernard Waber, echoes the message promoted by the StoryCorps initiative. Illustrated by Suzy Lee in rich red, yellow and orange colors, it shows a father and daughter enjoying the outdoors together on a lovely Autumn day. "Ask me what I like," the girl says to her father. And he does. And after she answers, he asks: "What else do you like?"encouraging continued conversation as they examine bugs and flowers, kick through fallen leaves and enjoy made up words like sploshing and splooshing.

Throughout the peaceful story, the father gives his daughter his full and undivided attention. He's not trying to shop for groceries, clean his home, or check his phone for messages. He's listening and responding and encouraging his daughter's curiosity and letting her know that her words and stories matter to him; that what she thinks and says is important; that *she* is important to him.

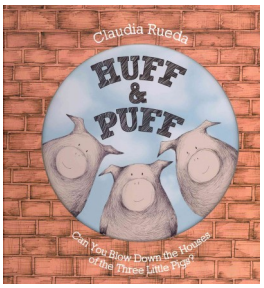
Reading to children also provides an opportunity to pause our busy lives and spend time together. Picturebooks, notable for their informative and appealing illustrations, often include a greater variety of words than we normally use as part of our everyday conversation. Reading and listening to picturebooks and other stories can help children increase their word knowledge - and world knowledge - as the subjects represented in picturebook format range from friends and family to rabbits and robotics.

And after you've finished the story, you can ask your listener: What do *you* think? What did *you* like best? What would *you* like to read about next?

Oh, the Thinks You Can Think Ask Me Picture Book Storytelling

Posted by Lisa C. on Nov 25, 2015 Lisa C.'s blog Add new comment

Huff & Puff



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We receive wonderful questions from kids at our "Ask Questions Here" desk, and in our programs. But we also get a lot of terrific statements. One of my favorites is: "I know that book!" or "I know that story!" This statement is typically shared as an excited, gleeful shout. It feels good to know something. It's empowering.

Children's librarians have a long history of sharing classic nursery rhymes, folk and fairy tales with children: *Three Little Kittens*, *Three Little Pigs*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Besides being part of our cultural literacy, these stories lay a foundation for an understanding of character, sequence, and plot. Familiarity with folk and fairytales -- and the ability to retell familiar stories - also is an expectation of our state's curriculum standards.

And how do these stories become familiar to our children? By hearing them, reading them -- even seeing them performed -- repeatedly, of course. Read a picture book version of the story together, listen to it on audiobook, tell it in your own words; invite your child to tell the story to you. One of the extra fun things about folk tales is comparing the different versions of the same story. How does James Marshall's version of The Three Little Pigs compare to Paul Galdone's version? And once a child is familiar with the classic tale, they may have greater appreciation for the spin-offs and variants, such as The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka.

Huff & Puff is a new picture book variation of The Three Little Pigs folktale. It's funny and clever enough to be enjoyed in its own right, but children who know the classic tale will have a jump start on predicting what's going to happen in this story -- and being pleasantly surprised by the different conclusion. This version also presents a unique way to invite participation in the story. There are small holes cut out in the pages through which the reader is invited to HUFF & PUFF. If you play the part of the wolf and huff and puff hard enough, the consequence is apparent when you turn the page! Give it a try. Invite your child to take a first step to becoming a storyteller. Provide an opportunity for them to tell you what they know.

Oh, the Thinks You Can Think Folklore Huff & puff Picture Book Storytelling

Posted by Lisa C. on Jun 12, 2012 Lisa C.'s blog Add new comment