Welcome to the
Candlewick Press
Read to Us!
STORY-HOUR KIT

A Shortcut to Your Story Hour

It is our pleasure to present our latest Candlewick Read to Us! Story-Hour Kit. This kit contains simple and entertaining activities to be used in conjunction with our books. Each activity is designed to foster the skills that lead to early reading success in children.

Our spring 2015 story-hour kit showcases four delightful books focusing on themes of family, friendship, emotions, and perseverance. For each title, we offer two activities aimed at boosting children's narrative skills, letter knowledge, print awareness, vocabulary, print motivation, or phonological awareness—but most of all, their enthusiasm for literature. Because the caregiver's role is essential in a child’s readiness to read, we have included a handout at the end of this kit that explains these six specific early literacy skills. Passing this out to caregivers will assist them in getting their child ready to read.

Have fun!

Books to be used with this Candlewick Read to Us! Story-Hour Kit

- **Bears and a Birthday** by Shirley Parenteau, illustrated by David Walker
  - 978-0-7636-7152-5
  - Ages 2–5

- **The New Small Person** by Lauren Child
  - 978-0-7636-7810-4
  - Ages 4–8

- **Nobody’s Perfect** by David Elliott, illustrated by Sam Zuppardi
  - 978-0-7636-6699-6
  - Ages 4–8

- **Just Itzy** by Lana Krumwiede, illustrated by Greg Pizzoli
  - 978-0-7636-5811-3
  - Ages 2–5
**Bears and a Birthday**

**What Begins with B?**

Read *Bears and a Birthday* aloud. Point out the rhyme and rhythm of the story. Ask the children what the words *bear, ball,* and *birthday* all have in common. Go through the pages of the book and challenge the children to identify the pictures of things beginning with the letter B. For example, *bowl, bow,* and *balloon* all can be found within the book. *Book* itself also begins with B! Using the attached reproducible, have the children identify and color (or circle) all items that begin with the letter B. Then have them write the letter B next to each picture. More advanced children can attempt to sound out the rest of each word and write all the letters they hear in it.

*This activity fosters phonological awareness and letter knowledge.*

**Bears and a Birthday Mini-Book**

After reading *Bears and a Birthday,* discuss the basic storyline with the children. Sequence the events of the story by asking various questions: What do the bears do to celebrate Big Brown Bear's birthday? Is Big Brown Bear surprised? Is he happy? How do you know? Using the attached reproducible, have the children create their own personal mini-book of *Bears and a Birthday.* They will need to color each picture, cut the page in half, put the pages in correct order, and have an adult staple them together. Children can practice reading with their very own mini-book.

*This activity promotes print motivation.*
The New Small Person

I Won’t Be Small Forever

Elmore Green is very content being the only child—until his baby brother (aka “the new small person”) enters his life. Now Elmore can’t watch TV, play, or protect his treasured jelly-bean collection without the small person wrecking everything, and Elmore becomes angry.

Ask the children if they think Elmore has a right to be angry. Elmore’s parents say the small person cannot help it because he is small. Ask the children: Do you agree? How did it make you feel? How do you think the small person feels? What happens at the end of the story? Ask the children if they identify more with the small person in the story or with Elmore. Discuss how being small has its advantages, and how being big has some too. Ask: Is there something you would like to do that your parents say you are too small to do right now?

Invite children to use the attached reproducible to illustrate their answers. Have them describe their illustrations and dictate to an adult who can write the words that correspond to each child’s picture.

This activity enhances narrative skills.

Elmore Green’s Jelly Beans

Prior to the arrival of the new small person, Elmore “could eat every single bean, all by himself—in whatever order he liked.” Ask the children which flavor is Elmore’s favorite. What does the small person do to Elmore’s jelly-bean collection? Ask the children which jelly bean is his or her favorite. It would be fun to draw tally marks on chart paper so they can see the group consensus.

Distribute a bag of jelly beans equally among the children, and using the attached reproducible, have the children sort their jelly beans by color into four categories: green, orange, yellow, and red. Any extra colors can go in a “community pile.” Once the jelly beans are sorted, ask the children who has more green, more red, and so on. Allow the children to eat the jelly beans. On the back of the sorting paper, the children can write which flavor or color is their favorite. Some children may need to dictate to an adult.

This activity promotes vocabulary and print motivation.
Nobody’s Perfect

Close to Perfect

This is a story about a boy who realizes the limitations of those around him and concludes that no one is perfect, especially when his sister is loud or when his mother gives him a time-out. He also confesses that it can be fun not being perfect, and that coming close to being perfect is good enough for him.

Ask the children how they feel about the boy’s stance on perfection. Do they agree that nobody’s perfect? Why or why not? Use the attached reproducible and have the children write about and illustrate a time in their life when they were proud of how they acted—in other words, an example of being perfect. Then have them do the same for a time when they could have shown better behavior. Children may need to dictate their narrative to an adult, who will write it for them. Allow the children to share their experiences to show that nobody is perfect!

This activity builds narrative skills and print motivation.

Perfectly Loud!

When the boy in the story is supposed to clean his room, it becomes more of a mess. He admits that he’s not always perfect, but sometimes he has to be messy. Show the example from the book of him being messy when he paints a picture. Then brainstorm together other times it’s okay to be messy. Sometimes the boy is upset when his sister, Gigi, is loud, but sometimes it makes him happy. Ask the children to recall the moments in the book when Gigi being loud made him happy. Then use the attached reproducible and have the children write other times it’s fun to be loud. They may need to dictate their sentences to an adult.

This activity promotes print awareness and narrative skills.

Just Itzy

Keep-Your-Eye-on-the-Fly

Connect-the-Dots

Mr. Webster, Itzy’s teacher, encourages Itzy through many failed attempts at spinning a web. He tells Itzy to keep his eye on the fly. Ask the children if they know what Itzy’s teacher means by that. Then ask if the children recognize the nursery rhymes referenced in the story. Note that Itzy turns out to be none other than the Itzy Bitzy Spider who climbed up the waterspout, but that now we have learned why he climbed up.

After leading a sing-along of “The Itzy Bitzy Spider” and the alphabet song, ask the children to help Itzy get to the fly by connecting the letters of the alphabet on the corresponding reproducible.

This activity builds letter knowledge.

What Is Itzy?

Itzy loves everything about being a spider, except his nickname: Itzy Bitzy. He is about to start “spindergarten,” which makes him feel more grown up, and he wants his name to reflect that—to be called just Itzy. His spinning lesson leads Itzy on quite a few adventures and some failures, but he never gives up and eventually spins a web ladder to help his brother. Ask the children how they would describe Itzy. Ask them to reflect on his actions throughout the story. Is Itzy brave? Is Itzy determined? Is Itzy itsy bitsy? Brainstorm other words that could be used to describe Itzy. Then use the attached reproducible and have the children write four things that describe Itzy. They may need to dictate the words to an adult.

This activity promotes vocabulary and print awareness.
Bears and a Birthday

What Begins with $B$?

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Bears and a Birthday

Bears and a Birthday Mini-Book

Bake a cake.

Happy Birthday!

Wrap a ball.

Play games.

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The New Small Person

I Won’t Be Small Forever

I may be small now,
but you will see.
When I grow up
I will be ____________________________.
### The New Small Person

**Elmore Green’s Jelly Beans**

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<th>Green</th>
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Nobody’s Perfect

Close to Perfect

Sometimes I am perfect.

But nobody’s perfect all the time.
The boy is happy that Gigi is loud when they are banging on pots and pans.

It is also fun to be loud when you are ____________________________

_________________________________________________________________

or ____________________________________________________________
Just Itzy

Keep-Your-Eye-on-the-Fly Connect-the-Dots

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Help Your Child Get Ready to Read

**Narrative Skills**
Tell stories together, encourage pretend play, and let your child be a storyteller.

**Letter Knowledge**
Help your child identify the first letter in his or her name and find it in books, on street signs, and on package labels.

**Print Awareness**
Help your child discover how to hold a book and turn the pages.

**Vocabulary**
Teach your child the specific names for things, such as vegetables in the grocery store.

**Print Motivation**
Find books that speak to your child’s interests, and share them often.

**Phonological Awareness**
Sing songs, play games, and share rhymes to help your child play with the smaller sounds in words.