

Great Reading Choices for K-3 (or so)

Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission



Barton, Bethany *I'M TRYING TO LOVE SPIDERS*

Unp. Viking (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-670-01693-8

The narrator is trying, but each time he or she mentions an aspect of a spider, like eight eyes or walking on walls he or she suddenly notices a spider in the area and yells "Squish it!!" Humorous, contains some good info, and the handprint outline where the reader is supposed to hit the spider makes it fun! (poor spiders). **Activity:** Provide the readers or listeners with some additional info on spiders, and talk about what they do for us.

Crowley, Ashley *OFFICER PANDA: Fingerprint Detective*

Unp. HarperCollins 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236626-9

Officer Panda sees the fingerprints on the page. Sometimes they are the leafy part of the trees; usually they are a full or partial fingerprint marking up the page. He follows the clues, eventually finding the culprit has been in his own house! And after looking closer, he discovers it is – the READER!

Activity: Perfect chance to have some fingerprint art activities after reading the story.

Daywalt, Drew *THE DAY THE CRAYONS CAME HOME*

Illus. by Oliver Jeffers unp. Philomel Books 2015 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-399-17275-5

Sequel to *The Day the Crayons Quit*, in this title several crayons sent postcards to Duncan telling him where they are and asking him to come and get them. Everything from being left by the pool while Duncan was on vacation to being eaten by the dog (and then regurgitated), the crayons want to return – except for Pea Green. No one has ever used him so he has changed his name to Esteban the Magnificent, and is going out to see the world. **Activity:** Discuss others things that could have happened to some of the crayons, then get out the crayons and paper for some drawing time.

de la Peña, Matt *LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET*

Illus. By Christian Robinson unp. G. P. Putnam's Sons 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25774-2

A boy and his grandmother ride the bus home after church. The boy wonders why they don't have a car, why they have to wait in the rain for the bus, why they go to the same place every week after church, he wished he had his own music (iPod) and more. Each time his nana answered with what they DO have. It turns out they are riding the bus to the shelter where they will help to serve the meal.

Activity: Great opportunity to look on the bright side of things, to see the positive, and the value of giving back to others.

Dotlich, Rebecca Kai *ONE DAY, THE END.: Short, Very Short, Sorter-Than-Ever Stories*

Illus. by Fred Koehler unp. Boyds Mills Press 2015 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-62091-451-9

May tells several stories – very short stories. At the end of the book is a bookshelf with each of the stories she just told resting on it. **Activity:** Great demo of telling stories in the manner younger children are likely to tell them, and to relate to as well. Of course, telling their own story will come next for the listeners.

Federle, Tim ***TOMMY CAN'T STOP***

Illus. by Mark Fearing unpag. Disney Hyperion 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-6917-8

Tommy is in constant motion. His parents and older sister take turns trying to wear him out, to no avail! His sister, who is taking ballet, recommends a tap class for him. He complains but soon finds tap class the place he can hop, kick, leap, and stomp – it is all dancing! Clever and fun. **Activity:** Guide the children in some movements you can all do together to get the wiggles out.

Henkes, Kevin ***WAITING***

Unpag. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236843-0

There is no impatience, just waiting. The toy dog, pig, owl, rabbit and bear are on the window sill, each waiting for something different. Sometimes one or another of them would be gone for a while but they would return. A quiet look at the interests of toys and the events during the time they wait on the window ledge. **Activity:** Have the listeners try to sit still quietly and wait (for 30 seconds) then ask them how it felt and how they think the toys feel. Why don't the toys mind waiting?

Koehler, Lora ***THE LITTLE SNOWPLOW***

Illus. by Jake Parker unpag. Candlewick Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7074-0

The Little Snowplow joins the BIG trucks for the town, and they all tell him to leave the big jobs to them. So he cleans up after parades, cleared streams and other small jobs, but as fall began to change to winter he began his training exercises. When the snow fell, it was soon overwhelming. He kept clearing and clearing, and soon went to work to help the dump truck who was caught in an avalanche. Power of the small. **Activity:** Snow related activities: Make snowflakes & put on windows. Draw a snowplow.

LeBox, Annette ***PEACE IS AN OFFERING***

Illus. by Stephanie Graegin unpag. Dial (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-4091-4

A quiet, positive rhyme reminding us what peace can be: "A kiss on the cheek, raindrops and dew. A walk in the park, a bowl of hot stew." Combine with next book. **Activity:** Have each of the listeners talk about what is peaceful to them, if they wish to share.

Manushkin, Fran ***HAPPY IN OUR SKIN***

Illus. by Lauren Tobia unpag. Candlewick Press 2015 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7002-3

A wishful look at harmony, and how we all can be happy in our skin. Rhyming text and colorful illustrations take place in a park, a swimming pool, a block party and at home. Read this one with *Peace is an Offering* for some wonderful inclusions of humanity.

Marino, Gianna ***NIGHT ANIMALS***

Unpag. Viking (Penguin Random House) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-451-46954-0

Starting with an opossum and skunk, one by one animals gather together in their fear of ...Night Animals! Each is larger than the last, until a huge shadow is revealed to be from a small bat, who points out that all the animals gathered are: Night Animals! **Activity:** Opportunity for the listeners to talk about what scares them, with no finger pointing!

McMullan, Kate & Jim *I'M COOL!*

Unp. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-230629-6

The Zamboni machine shows how it is done. Brief text & large colorful pictures. Includes some diagrams that show what happens inside the machine; and the pattern used to clear the ice. Some good STEM information here. **Activity:** Try to devise a different pattern the machine could use. Or talk about the game & strategies of hockey.

Nelson, Kadir *IF YOU PLANT A SEED*

Unp. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2015 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-06-229889-8

Bunny and mouse wait for their garden to produce some delectable vegetables, but then a few birds want some too. Nelson starts with the seeds in the garden but soon switches to “if you plant a seed of selfishness...” is the bunny – and oh does he have troubles – after which the mouse “plant[s] a seed of kindness” which also grows and grows; but it grows into good things for everyone to share. Beautiful art and limited text makes this a winner!

Shannon, George *ONE FAMILY*

Illus. by Blanca Gómez unp. Farrar Straus & Giroux 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-374-30003-6

A fascinating look at counting, and what families can be. For example:

“One is two. One pair of shoes. One team of horses. One family.” with an illustration including the items and a mother and child. **Activity:** Think of other combinations that would work in the sets presented in the book: “One pair of gloves” will work with “One is two>”

Van Wright, Cornelius *BUCKY AND STU VS. THE MIKANIKAL MAN*

Unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Group) 2015 \$ 16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16427-9

Best friends, Bucky and Stu have the moves and are ready to defend the earth against Baddie Boxman, Hose-Nose and other bad guys (designed by them)! But what happens when lightning strikes the robot, Mikanikal Man, that Bucky and his Uncle Ernie have been building? Do they have the chops to face him down? **Activity:** Building things from leftover junk, of course!

Virján, Emma J. *WHAT THIS STORY NEEDS IS A PIG IN A WIG*

Unp. HarperCollins 2015 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-232724-6

Silly antics involve adding rhyming words to tell a story, -- “the pig in a wig is on a boat in a moat with a frog...” and so on. Then the pig thinks the boat is too crowded so the other animals have to leave one by one. The pig does get lonely and they all end up on a bigger boat! Great rhyming practice and you can have the listeners create their own, similar rhyming story after hearing this one.

Another book comes out 1/26/16: *What This Story Needs Is a Hush and a Shush*; and 5/10/16 *What This Story Needs Is a Munch and a Crunch*. **Activity:** You and the children together could write your own rhyming story. (oh, but be careful!)

Waber, Bernard *ASK ME*

Illus. by Suzy Lee unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-73394-4

A walk around the park and neighborhood, full of beautiful fall colors, a father and daughter ask and answer all kinds of questions. Prompted by the daughter at the beginning (her text is in black, her father’s text is in light blue or lavender), who says, “Ask me what I like.” **Activity:** This is a wonderful opening for discussion between parents and children, or in story time.

~~~Early chapter books / Beyond picture books / Nonfiction: ~~~

Ancona, George *CAN WE HELP?: Kids Volunteering to Help Their Communities*

48p. Candlewick Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7367-3

Several different programs for kids to help others are highlighted in this photo essay. Photos dominate the pages with enough text to convey the activity, from knitting hats and scarfs, clearing litter from a stretch of road, to helping train service dogs. **Activity:** Maybe someone will have a great idea for an activity the kids in your community can do for others.

English, Karen *SKATEBOARD PARTY*

Illus. by Laura Freeman 115p. Clarion Books 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-544-28306-0

Second book in "The Carver Chronicles" series, Book 1 is *Dog Days* (which I have not read). In this title Richard tends to let school work wait while he is working on his skateboard skills. He is eager to demonstrate his newly mastered move at his friend Greg's birthday party, if he can just duck his parents and his teacher for a little longer. Facts about howler monkeys was Richard's part of the team presentation, and he still hasn't written it. It is a bit didactic, but readers will enjoy Richard's dilemma and pick up on the message.

Heppermann, Christine & Ron Koertge *SADIE'S STORY* (Backyard Witch series, #1)

Illus. by Deborah Marcero 170p. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-233838-9 ([www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org) & <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search/> mentioned in the book)

Sadie's two best friends are gone for several days on a vacation trip, and Sadie is sad and lonely. But when she finds a witch in her playhouse they have fun adventures together. The witch, Ms. M is looking for her black cat, Onyx, and her best friend Ethel who turned herself into a yellow warbler. They do a lot of bird-watching and have fun. **Activity:** Visit the all about birds web site to help you identify local birds and view some of their live cameras.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett ed. *JUMPING OFF LIBRARY SHELVES: A Book of Poems*

Illus. by Jane Manning 32p. WordSong Pub. (Highlights) 2015 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-59078-924-7

A collection of 15 poems by well-known poets for children about the joys to be found in the library. Includes Nikki Grimes, J. Patrick Lewis, Jane Yolen, & the editor to name a few. **Activity:** You could display this book open to a different page each: day or week. And, of course, have the children write a poem about the library, either on their own or in a group.

Rosen, Michael *THE TALE OF RESCUE*

Illus. by Stan Fellows 103p. Candlewick Press 2015 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7167-9

This short fictional story tells of a family lost in a blizzard, and the determined cattle dog who found them. Will engage children in a discussion – while this is fiction, could a dog really figure it all out? great story.

Rosenthal, Betsy R. *AN AMBUSH OF TIGERS: A Wild Gathering of Collective Nouns*  
Illus. by Jago unp. Millbrook Press 2015 \$19.99 ISBN 978-1-4677-1464-8

Rhyming text demonstrates a number of collective nouns, while asking questions. "Does a team of oxen, lose every race? A bouquet of pheasants, fit in a vase?" **Activities:** Make up your own collective nouns, while recognizing that this is categorized as "English language –Collective nouns – Juvenile literature." Questions included in the Glossary: "What else do these names for animal groups mean? You probably already know most of them. Can you guess why each word is used for certain animals?"

Vernon, Ursula *HAMSTER PRINCESS: HARRIET THE INVINCIBLE*  
247p. Dial (Penguin Group) 2015 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3983-3

When Harriet is ten her parents tell her about the Sleeping Beauty type curse put on her by Ratshade, the wicked fairy. Harriet is thrilled, she can do all kinds of things because the curse will keep her alive until her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday in order for it to come true. Off she goes to slay ogres, joust, and jump from cliffs. When the day arrives, Harriet cleverly throws Ratshade into the hamster wheel and the wicked fairy receives the curse. But now Harriet must find a prince to kiss all 117 people and animals in the castle in order to wake everyone up again. Clever, funny, a couple unexpected turns, and fractions show up occasionally as Harriet is fond of them. Great fun!

This list was developed as one presentation at the Read Aloud Nebraska event titled: **2015 Fall RAN Workshop** held on November 6, 2015.



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