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ACADEMY

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6200 Lou George Loop | Birmingham, AL 35022

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# Entering 1st Grade

## Summer Reading for Students Entering the 1st Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***Frog and Toad Are Friends*** by Arnold Lobel. Once you have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Why does Frog want Toad to get out of bed in chapter one ? How does Frog trick Toad into getting out of bed? What is inappropriate about Frog's actions? When have you been anxious for everyone to wake up so you could start a particular exciting day ?
- Why does Frog give Toad his bed in the second story ? When have you put your own needs aside to help comfort a friend ?
- What does Toad lose in chapter three? When have you lost something that was important to you ? What did you do without it, or how did you find it ?
- Why is Toad embarrassed when he and Frog go for a swim ? How do you feel about Frog and the others laughing at Toad ? When has someone laughed at you ? How did you feel, and what did you do? How should the animals have treated Toad ?
- Why is Toad sad in the final story ? What does Frog do to make him feel better? When have you received a note or letter that lifted your spirits? What did it say ? Who could you encourage with a letter today ?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.

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## **Biblical Tie In for *Frog and Toad Are Friends***

### 1. Friendship and Loyalty:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 17:17 - "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."
- Tie-In: Frog and Toad demonstrate unwavering support and care for each other, embodying the idea that true friends are constant and reliable, much like the Biblical portrayal of genuine friendship.

### 2. Helping and Caring for Others:

- Biblical Reference: Galatians 6:2 - "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."
- Tie-In: Throughout the stories, Frog and Toad are always ready to help each other. For example, when Toad is feeling down or when one of them needs encouragement, they are there to support each other, reflecting the Biblical call to bear one another's burdens.

### 3. Patience and Understanding:

- Biblical Reference: Ephesians 4:2 - "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."
- Tie-In: Frog and Toad show patience and understanding towards each other's quirks and faults. This patience is reminiscent of the Biblical encouragement to be gentle and patient with one another.

### 4. The Value of Simple Joys and Contentment:

- Biblical Reference: Philippians 4:11-13 - "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances... I can do all this through him who gives me strength."
- Tie-In: The stories often focus on simple pleasures and finding joy in everyday moments, much like the Biblical teaching to be content in all situations and to find strength and satisfaction in God's provision.

### 5. Honesty and Integrity:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 12:22 - "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy."
- Tie-In: Frog and Toad's friendship is built on honesty and trust. They are truthful with each other, even when it is difficult, highlighting the importance of integrity in relationships.



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## Entering 2nd Grade

### Summer Reading for Students Entering the 2nd Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***The Boxcar Children*** by Gertrude Chandler Warner. Once you have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- What are Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny running away from? Where do they end up? What have you run away from that was actually good for you? How did you find out that it was good for you?
- What are some ways that Henry and Jesse made do with what they had? What are some ways that you have learned to be content with what you have?
- How do the children's attitude make a difference in their adventure? What would have happened if they had grumbled and complained the whole time? If they had bad attitudes, how much would the children have loved the boxcar they were in?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.



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# Entering 2nd Grade

## Biblical Tie-In for *The Boxcar Children*

### 1. Orphan Care and Provision:

- Biblical Reference: James 1:27 - "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..."
- Tie-In: The Alden children, as orphans, care for each other and make a life for themselves. Their ability to find safety, shelter, and eventually a home with their grandfather reflects the Biblical emphasis on caring for those without parents.

### 2. Family Unity and Loyalty:

- Biblical Reference: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - "Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."
- Tie-In: The strong bond and mutual support among the Alden siblings exemplify the strength found in unity and working together, reminiscent of Biblical teachings on the importance of supporting one another.

### 3. Perseverance and Hope:

- Biblical Reference: Romans 5:3-4 - "...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."
- Tie-In: Despite their hardships, the Alden children remain hopeful and persevere through difficulties. Their journey from living in a boxcar to reuniting with their grandfather mirrors the Biblical truth of perseverance and trusting in God in all circumstances.

### 4. Hospitality and Community:

- Biblical Reference: Hebrews 13:2 - "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."
- Tie-In: The Alden children are often depicted welcoming others and forming connections within their community. Their hospitality and ability to create a welcoming environment reflect the Biblical encouragement to show kindness and hospitality to all.



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## Entering 3rd Grade

### Summer Reading for Students Entering the 3rd Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book **Toys Go Out** by Emily Jenkins. This book combines friendship, identity and courage. Here is a discussion guide to help you prepare for our class activities in August:

- 1. Character Analysis**– Discuss the main characters in the book. What makes each toy unique? How do they change and grow throughout the story? How do they work together? Have you ever felt like one of the toys? How do they show each other love and friendship?
- 2. Themes:**
  - **Friendship:** How do the characters help each other overcome fears in the story? How do they help each other feel more confident? Do you need to have the same strengths as your friends to love them?
  - **Courage:** Discuss the fears and worries each toy had. How did they face their fears and overcome challenges in the book?
  - **Identity:** Explore the uniqueness of each toy. Were their gifts appreciated by their friends? Were they able to see themselves the way that others saw them?
- 3. Setting**– The setting took place in a few different areas including a house, a washing machine and the little girl’s backpack. What is one place the toys go in the story that seems exciting or scary to them, and why do they feel that way? How does the Little Girl’s bedroom feel like a home to the toys? What makes it a special place for them?

#### **4. Plot and Conflict:**

- Identify the some sources of conflict in the book? What unique problems were each of the characters having?
- While trying to find the perfect gift for the little girl, what do the toys learn about friendship and thoughtfulness?
- How did the toys push through uncertainty to overcome conflicts in the book?

#### **5. Morals and Lessons:**

- Discuss the moral lessons that readers can take away from the book, such as the importance of friendship, uniqueness, and courage. How do these lessons resonate with the characters' experiences?
- Reflect on the journey of the toys in the book. What do they discover about themselves and how do they change throughout the book?

#### **6. Author's Craft:**

- Emily Jenkins uses a playful, imaginative style in Toys Go Out that brings toys to life in a way that feels real and relatable.
- What point of view is the story told from? How does the author use humor and warmth to tell the story? How do the toys seem like real people?

#### **7. Personal Reflection:**

- Encourage readers to share their own thoughts and feelings about the book. What aspects did they enjoy the most? Did they connect with any particular characters or themes? How has the book inspired them or changed their perspective?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.

## **Biblical Tie-In for Toys Go Out**

### **1. Friendship and Love**

- Biblical Reference: "A friend loves at all times..." — Proverbs 17:17
- Tie-In: The toys consistently show love, kindness, and loyalty to one another, even when they're scared or confused. They learn to have patience and support each other in all circumstances.

### **2. Identity and Purpose**

- Biblical Reference: "For we are God's handiwork, created... to do good works..." — Ephesians 2:10
- Tie-In: Plastic's search to understand what she is can be seen as a metaphor for discovering one's identity and purpose, which reflects the Christian belief that each person is created with meaning.

### **3. Courage and Overcoming Fear**

- Biblical Reference: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid..." — Joshua 1:9
- Tie-In: Lumphy's fear of the washing machine shows how we all face fears—and how bravery, even in small things, matters.

### **4. Helping and Serving Others**

- Biblical Reference: "Serve one another humbly in love." — Galatians 5:13
- Tie-In: The toys often help each other and try to do what's best for the Little Girl, putting others before themselves.

### **5. Growth and Transformation**

- Biblical Reference: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed..." — Romans 12:2
- Tie-In: Throughout the story, each toy grows in understanding, maturity, and self-confidence—mirroring spiritual growth.

### **6. Peace in Uncertainty**

- Biblical Reference: "And the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds..." — Philippians 4:7
- Tie-In: The toys sometimes feel unsure or scared (like StingRay at night or Lumphy in the laundry), but they find peace through friendship, understanding, and love. That echoes the biblical message of God giving peace in times of fear.

### **7. Belonging and Being Loved**

- Biblical Reference: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" — 1 John 3:1
- Tie-In: The toys sometimes worry about whether they are loved or needed, but they come to realize they are special and belong to the Little Girl. This mirrors the biblical idea that every person is loved and belongs to God.

### **8. Compassion and Forgiveness**

- Biblical Reference: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other..." — Ephesians 4:32
- Tie-In: Even when they get annoyed or confused, the toys forgive each other and show compassion—like when they comfort Plastic or encourage Lumphy.



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# Entering 4th Grade

## Summer Reading for Students Entering the 4th Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***Charlotte's Web*** by E.B. White. This classic captivates readers with its themes of friendship, kindness, and the cycle of life. Here is a discussion guide to help you prepare for our class activities in August:

### 1. **Character Analysis**:

- Charlotte: Discuss Charlotte's character traits, such as her wisdom, compassion, and resourcefulness. How does she demonstrate these qualities throughout the story? What motivates her to help Wilbur?
- Wilbur: Explore Wilbur's journey from a naive piglet to a courageous and caring friend. How does his friendship with Charlotte and the other animals on the farm shape his character?
- Fern: Analyze Fern's role in the story as a compassionate and empathetic young girl. How does her relationship with Wilbur and her actions at the beginning of the novel set the stage for the events that follow?

### 2. **Themes**:

- Friendship: Examine the theme of friendship as depicted through the bond between Charlotte and Wilbur. How do they support and care for each other? What does their friendship teach readers about loyalty, trust, and selflessness?
- Kindness: Discuss the acts of kindness and compassion shown by various characters in the book, such as Fern, Charlotte, and the other animals. How do these acts of kindness impact the lives of those around them?
- Mortality and the Cycle of Life: Explore the theme of mortality and the cycle of life as represented by Charlotte's web and the changing seasons on the farm. How do the characters confront the inevitability of death, and what lessons do they learn about acceptance and resilience?

### 3. **Setting**:

- Zuckerman's Farm: Describe the setting of the farm and its significance to the story. How does E.B. White bring the farm to life through vivid descriptions and colorful characters?
- The Barn: Analyze the role of the barn as a central location where the animals gather and form friendships. How does the barn serve as a sanctuary and a place of refuge for Wilbur and Charlotte?

4. **Plot and Conflict**:

- Identify the main conflict in the story, such as Wilbur's fear of being slaughtered and Charlotte's determination to save him. How do the characters work together to overcome obstacles and resolve conflicts?
- Discuss the structure of the plot, including the rising action, climax, and resolution. How does E.B. White build suspense and tension leading up to the climax of the story?

5. **Morals and Lessons**:

- Reflect on the moral lessons imparted by the book, such as the importance of friendship, empathy, and the interconnectedness of all living beings. How do these lessons resonate with readers of all ages?
- Discuss the themes of sacrifice and selflessness as demonstrated by Charlotte's ultimate sacrifice for Wilbur. What does her act of selflessness teach readers about love and compassion?

6. **Author's Craft**:

- Explore E.B. White's writing style and his ability to create memorable characters and vivid settings. How does he use language, dialogue, and imagery to evoke emotion and bring the story to life?
- Analyze the role of illustrations by Garth Williams in enhancing the storytelling. How do the illustrations complement the text and enrich the reader's experience?

7. **Personal Reflection**:

- Encourage readers to share their own thoughts and feelings about the book. What aspects of the story resonated with them the most? How has reading "Charlotte's Web" influenced their understanding of friendship, kindness, and the beauty of the natural world?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.

## **Biblical Tie-In for *Charlotte's Web***

### **1. Sacrifice and Love:**

- Biblical Reference: John 15:13 - "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."
- Tie-In: Charlotte's actions throughout the book are motivated by her love for Wilbur. She goes to great lengths, including sacrificing her own well-being, to save him, reflecting the Biblical principle of putting others first.

### **2. The Value of All Creatures:**

- Biblical Reference: Matthew 10:29-31 - "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care... So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."
- Tie-In: The book portrays the dignity and worth of all creatures, regardless of their size or perceived importance. This aligns with the Biblical message that all of God's creations are valuable and cared for.

### **3. Friendship and Loyalty:**

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 17:17 - "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."
- Tie-In: The steadfast friendship between Wilbur and Charlotte demonstrates loyalty and support in times of trouble, embodying the Biblical ideal of a friend who loves at all times.

### **4. The Power of Words:**

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 16:24 - "Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."
- Tie-In: Charlotte uses her words to change the fate of Wilbur by writing messages in her web. Her words bring hope and life, reflecting the Biblical idea that words can be powerful and life-giving.

### **5. Life and Death:**

- Biblical Reference: Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 - "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die..."
- Tie-In: The story deals sensitively with the natural cycle of life and death, especially through the passing of Charlotte and the birth of her offspring. This mirrors the Biblical understanding that life has its seasons, and each part of the cycle is significant.

### **6. Humility and Humbleness:**

- Biblical Reference: Philippians 2:3 - "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."
- Tie-In: Charlotte acts out of humility and never seeks glory for herself. Her actions are for the benefit of Wilbur, demonstrating the Biblical virtue of humility and valuing others.

### **7. Community and Mutual Support:**

- Biblical Reference: Galatians 6:2 - "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."
- Tie-In: The barnyard community comes together to support Wilbur, particularly through Charlotte's actions and the involvement of the other animals. This mutual support reflects the Biblical teaching of bearing one another's burdens.



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# Entering 5th Grade

## Summer Reading for Students Entering the 5th Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***Stuart Little*** by E.B. White. This book is a whimsical tale of adventure, friendship, and self-discovery. Here is a discussion guide to help you prepare for our class activities in August:

### 1. **Character Analysis**:

- **Stuart Little**: Discuss Stuart's unique character as a small but courageous mouse with a big heart. How does he navigate the challenges of being different from those around him? What qualities make him a memorable and endearing protagonist?
- **Margalo**: Analyze Margalo's character as a brave and resourceful bird who becomes Stuart's friend and companion. How does she influence Stuart's journey and help him discover his own strengths?
- **Snowbell**: Explore Snowbell's character as a mischievous and sometimes selfish family cat. How does his relationship with Stuart evolve throughout the story? What motivates him to protect Stuart despite their differences?

### 2. **Themes**:

- **Identity**: Examine the theme of identity as explored through Stuart's journey of self-discovery. How does he grapple with questions of belonging and acceptance in a world where he is different from everyone else?
- **Friendship**: Discuss the importance of friendship in the story, particularly Stuart's relationships with Margalo, Snowbell, and other characters he encounters on his adventures. How do these friendships shape his experiences and worldview?
- **Courage**: Explore the theme of courage as depicted through Stuart's willingness to embark on daring adventures and face formidable challenges. What fears does he overcome, and how does he demonstrate bravery in the face of adversity?

### 3. **Setting**:

- **New York City**: Describe the setting of New York City and its significance to the story. How does E.B. White bring the bustling city to life through vivid descriptions and memorable landmarks?
- **Stuart's Home**: Analyze Stuart's home and family environment, including his relationships with his human parents and brother. How does Stuart navigate the complexities of family life as a small mouse in a human-sized world?

#### 4. **Plot and Conflict**:

- Identify the main conflict in the story, such as Stuart's quest to find Margalo after she disappears. How do the challenges and obstacles he faces propel the plot forward and drive his character development?

- Discuss the structure of the plot, including the rising action, climax, and resolution. How does E.B. White build tension and suspense leading up to the climax of the story?

#### 5. **Morals and Lessons**:

- Reflect on the moral lessons imparted by the book, such as the importance of courage, kindness, and perseverance. How do these lessons resonate with readers of all ages?

- Discuss Stuart's journey of self-discovery and the message it conveys about embracing one's uniqueness and finding strength in adversity. What does Stuart's story teach us about resilience and the power of the human (or mouse) spirit?

#### 6. **Author's Craft**:

- Explore E.B. White's writing style and his ability to blend whimsy, humor, and heartfelt emotion in his storytelling. How does he create a sense of wonder and enchantment that captivates readers from start to finish?

- Analyze the role of illustrations by Garth Williams in enhancing the storytelling. How do the illustrations complement the text and bring Stuart's adventures to life in the imagination of the reader?

#### 7. **Personal Reflection**:

- Encourage readers to share their own thoughts and feelings about the book. What aspects of Stuart's journey resonated with them the most? How has reading "Stuart Little" influenced their understanding of friendship, courage, and the power of imagination?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.

## **Biblical Tie-In for *Stuart Little***

### 1. Courage and Overcoming Obstacles:

- Biblical Reference: Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."
- Tie-In: Stuart faces numerous challenges despite his small size, demonstrating courage and determination. His perseverance and ability to overcome obstacles reflect the Biblical teaching that strength comes from Christ.

### 2. Value of the Individual:

- Biblical Reference: Psalm 139:14 - "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
- Tie-In: Stuart's uniqueness and the acceptance he receives from his family highlight the Biblical idea that every individual is wonderfully made and valued, regardless of their appearance or size.

### 3. Friendship and Loyalty:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 18:24 - "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
- Tie-In: Stuart's loyalty to his friends, such as Margalo the bird, and his willingness to embark on a journey to find her, demonstrate the importance of steadfast friendship, echoing the Biblical call to be a loyal and supportive friend.

### 4. Stewardship and Responsibility:

- Biblical Reference: Genesis 2:15 - "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."
- Tie-In: Stuart takes on various responsibilities and tasks, such as piloting a boat and caring for his friends. His actions reflect the Biblical principle of stewardship and taking responsibility for one's environment and duties.

### 5. Search for Purpose:

- Biblical Reference: Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
- Tie-In: Stuart's journey to find Margalo and his ongoing search for a place where he truly belongs can be seen as a quest for purpose and meaning, akin to the biblical message that God has a plan for each individual's life.

### 6. Hospitality and Kindness:

- Biblical Reference: Hebrews 13:2 - "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."
- Tie-In: The Little family's acceptance of Stuart into their home and the kindness they show him demonstrate the Biblical virtue of hospitality. Additionally, Stuart's interactions with other characters throughout his adventures often involve mutual kindness and hospitality.

### 7. Family and Support:

- Biblical Reference: Ephesians 6:1-3 - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—'so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'"
- Tie-In: Stuart's relationship with his family, especially their support and care for him, illustrates the Biblical principle of family support and the importance of honoring and valuing familial bonds.