

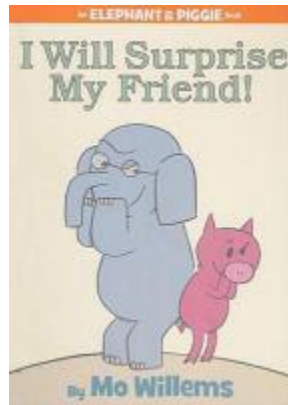
Books to Treasure

I Will Surprise My Friend!

By Mo Willems

2008

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Lesson Plan by Marianne Stambaugh
Central Library, Children's Area Supervisor

Summary: Best friends Elephant and Piggie decide that they will try to surprise each other, with unexpected results.

Common Core standards:

- For Literature Grade 2: 1-3, 6,7
- Foundational Skills 4
- Listening Standards 4-6, with emphasis on 6: Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

Do you like surprises? Some people do and some people don't. It's an obvious statement, but one that summarizes two main ideas in this book. The first approach is to lead a discussion and do activities about surprises, while the second goes a little deeper into understanding that each of us sees things differently. Considering this second point may lead students to consider how other people think about things.

Introduction:

Lead a discussion about surprises. Keep it on good surprises, so that you don't have unpleasant surprises crop up in the discussion.

Ask students to:

- Tell about a good surprise they have had.
- Tell how they've been part of a good surprise for someone else.
- Can you really surprise yourself?

Questions to ponder and discuss:

- If you couldn't find your friend during a game like this, would you be more like Elephant or Piggie?
- Why do you think Elephant and Piggie react so differently?
- Ask students if they can tell about a time when two people reacted very differently to the same thing? (Suggestions: seeing a movie, having a snake as a pet, going to an event, etc.). Talk about how we all see things just a little bit differently and we do not know what other people might be experiencing.
- Why do people see things differently? Does this mean one way is right and the other way wrong?

Other books that tie in to this idea of seeing things differently are *Duck! Rabbit!* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (2009) and *Imogene's Antlers* by David Small (1985). *Hello My Name Is Bob* by Linas Alsenas (2009) is about two bears who are opposites but still good friends. All three are good read-alouds.

Simple activity:

Lead the children to think about a surprise they could make for someone, such as a parent or grandparent. Lead them to make cards to give to someone as a nice surprise. Suggest they make a Thanksgiving card or a "just because" card.. To add complexity, make pop-up cards.

Interactive activity:

Put the students in small groups to read the story as a skit. Since so many of the Elephant and Piggie lend themselves to acting out (or simply reading the parts with expression and simple props), consider letting each group take a different book and then present it in an Elephant and Piggie program to parents or another class.

Websites relating to this book and other Elephant and Piggie books:

For storytime and party activities see

http://www.pigeonpresents.com/teachersguides/EandP_eventkit11.pdf

For Mo Willems stuff: <http://mowillemsstuff.blogspot.com/2008/04/i-will-surprise-my-friend.html>