

Giraffes Can't Dance

by Giles Andreae

Being different and not following the crowd is a tough thing to be secure in. But with the rhythmic text, water-colored and ink illustrations and confidence building friendships, children learn that being different is a lot less scary than one thinks.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *What do you think it would be like to see animals dancing?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what the monkey thinks the giraffe is doing?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Giraffes Can't Dance*

- shoots: parts of a tree
- buckled: to bend at the knee
- jungle: tropical forest
- waltzing: a ballroom dance in triple time
- rock n' rolled: a genre of music
- tango: a Latin dance for couples
- Scottish reel: a dance relating to Scotland or its people or culture
- cha-cha: a rhythmic Latin American dance
- roar: growl loudly
- clumsy: moving awkwardly
- clot: sticky thickened lump
- violin: stringed instrument played with a bow
- somersault: acrobatic rolling over of body
- boogied: dance to rock music

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What kind of animal was Gerald?
- What happened when he ran around?
- What happens every year in Africa?
- What kind of animals danced?
- What happened when Gerald tried to dance?
- What did the cricket help Gerald do?
- What happened when Gerald started dancing to the violin music?
- How did every animal feel about Gerald after they saw him dancing?

Do

Let's Dance

Put on some music and let the children dance. Model some appropriate dance moves and allow the children a chance to model their own dances. Encourage healthy comments and reactions. For example: *I love how you move your arms; I have never seen that kind of dance before, can I try it? I really appreciate you joining us and dancing.*