

# Sample Read-Aloud Strategy

## Stellaluna



**Say:** Today I'm going to read a story called Stellaluna by Janell Cannon. Let's look at the pictures and see if you can tell me what the story is going to be about.

**Do:** Encourage the children to respond as you turn the pages of the book from beginning to end. This activity is sometimes called a "picture walk." After the children have offered their ideas, say:

**Say:** This story is about a bat who, after falling into a birds' nest, is raised as a bird until her mother finds her and takes her back home. Bats and birds are different. Birds eat bugs and bats eat fruit. Birds sleep right-side up and bats sleep upside down. While I'm reading, think about how your own family and in what ways you are different from each other and in what ways you are like each other.

**Do:** Ask questions that build additional background knowledge and set a purpose for listening. Stellaluna promises Mama Bird that she won't sleep upside down. Who do you make promises to? What kind of promises do you make? Have you ever broken a promise? Once the children are familiar with this questioning technique, you can ask them to think of their own questions.

**Say:** Now that I've told you a little bit about the story, let's read it.

**Do:** Show the children the pictures as you read. Stop occasionally for reactions, comments, and questions. To engage the children, you can ask the following discussion questions: "Can Stellaluna feel like a bird even though she isn't a bird? How is Stellaluna different from Flap, Flitter and Pip? What other promises did Stellaluna make to Mama Bird?" If the children don't respond, you can model a response by saying, "Even though Stellaluna was a bat and Flap, Flitter and Pip were birds and they were different, they still ended up being friends."

**Say:** Now that we've read the story, how do you think Stellaluna felt when her Mother Bat found her? Do you think that Stellaluna will remain friends with Flap, Flitter and Pip?

**Do:** Let the children respond and ask them to retell the story using the pictures in the book to help them recall the story sequence. Finally focus on the second goal, making inferences and ask:

**Say:** Do you think that Stellaluna would have been happier being in a bat family or in a bird family? Is it OK to be different? Do your friends' families do things differently than yours? What lesson can we learn from this story?

Adapted from Mandel Morrow, Lesley & Gambrell, Linda B. (2004). Using Children's Literature in Preschool. Supporting Reading Comprehension: Responding to Books, 3, 37-47.

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