

THE PARENT-CHILD BOOK CLUB

CONNECTING WITH YOUR KIDS THROUGH READING

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO ORGANIZING AND
CONDUCTING YOUR FAMILY BOOK CLUB

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The Quilt Maker's Gift

Story by Jeff Brumbeau, pictures by Gail de Marcken, Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic Books, 2000. Recommended ages: 4-9. (Book Sense Children's Book of the Year; Logos Book Award, Best Children's Picture Book; Publishers Weekly "Cuffy" Award, Favorite Picture Book of the Year; Parents' Choice Silver Honor Winner.)

Book Description:

The Quilt Maker's Gift is a many-layered and inspiring story about an old Quilt Maker with magic in her fingers, who sews the most beautiful quilts. However, she does not sell the quilts, but instead, gives them away to people in need. When a greedy King demands one of her quilts, she responds that only when he learns to give away his possessions will she give him a quilt. As the King learns to share, he discovers true happiness. The beautiful watercolor illustrations are filled with exquisite details reminiscent of quilts.

Following in the spirit of generosity evidenced in the story, the author and publisher are donating a portion of the revenue of the book to several charities. For further reading, try *The Quilt Maker's Journey*, a prequel to the story by the same author describing how a wealthy young girl became the Quilt Maker.

Recommended Websites:

Visit www.QuiltmakersGift.com for book-related puzzles and games, information about quilt blocks and quilting, stories of generosity from around the world,

contests and prizes, and interviews with the author and artist. Also visit www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jp/quilt, the Library of Congress' site about quilting.

You also can visit websites to learn about patterns in quilting and patterns in other places, such as numbers (2,4,6,8,10); letters (a/b/a/b); shapes (circle/square/circle/square), and nature (a leaf, a zebra, a snail, a butterfly). See www.learner.org/teacherslab/math/patterns/ for further information about patterns.

Recommended Enrichment Activity:

➤ ***Do a service project***

Investigate opportunities in your neighborhood for a community service project. Contact your local Salvation Army, hospital, religious organization, or preschool. Perhaps one of these organizations will have an ongoing service project in which you can participate.

Ask each child to bring from home one gently used toy that he is willing to donate. Remind the children that they will be donating one of their own possessions, just as the King in the story donated his own possessions. You can have fun cleaning the items at the book club before donating them. Give each child a small bucket or wash space filled with warm water, bubbly soap, and sponges. Children love playing with water and will enjoy this part of the project.

You also can buy new items to donate such as: toys, books, school supplies, or toiletry items. Ask each child to create a card that she can attach to the item to be donated, wishing the recipient well. If possible, take the items to the organization, or place them in a bag for an adult to donate at a later time.

Suggested Snack:

When the Quilt Maker was in the bear's cave, she and the bear shared a breakfast of tea, berries, and honey. Prepare a similar snack for your book club.

Suggested Word Game:

The word “quilt” starts with the letters “qu.” How many other words can you think of that also start with “qu”?

Suggested Word Game Answers:

Queen, question, quarry, query, quarantine, quince, quack, quell, quail, quit

Special Activity/Game:

The author and illustrator provide clues to the story by including quilt blocks on pages that relate to the story. For example, on the page where a gust of wind carries away the quilt, the illustrator includes the “windblown square” quilt block. Ask the children to interpret a few of the squares in the book. In addition, on the inside of the book jacket, the author and illustrator have created a puzzle poster that includes 250 quilt patterns hidden in the picture. As a group, try to find some of the hidden patterns.

Suggested Project:

Make a quilt square

➤ *Materials:*

- Several large pieces of fabric in several different styles, some could be solid colors, others could be patterned
- Cardboard or poster paper in a 6”x6” square

Scissors and pieces of fabric, or pre-cut fabric swatches

Glue

➤ **Instructions:**

Each child can sketch a quilt block on the cardboard or poster board, either following one of the blocks in the book, or creating his own patterns

Cut the fabric into different shapes and sizes (for the younger children, you may want to pre-cut the fabric into smaller shapes)

Glue the pieces of fabric to the cardboard to create the quilt block

See the websites above to foster a discussion about patterns

Note about book club discussion:

This book can be read on many different levels. For groups of children in the four- to six-year-old range, pick a few questions from the list below and combine them with the suggested activity and projects above. Older children can handle all the questions in the discussion booklet combined with the activity and project.

Discussion Questions for Four- to Six-Year-Olds:

1. When you do something nice for someone how does that make you feel? Give an example of something nice that you have done to help someone else.
2. Think about what the King chose to give away. Is there something you would give away to others? Is there something you would never give away?

3. Describe what is happening in the last double-spread illustration (where the King gives away his throne). Do you think the King will continue to do good deeds?

*The Quilt Maker's Gift****Discussion Questions Booklet for Six- to Nine-Year-Olds***

Name: _____

1. The greedy King “wanted” the quilt, but the people who were cold “needed” the quilt. What is the difference between a need and a want? Discuss with the group one thing you want and one thing you need.
2. Why do you think the Quilt Maker said, “I give my quilts to those who are poor or homeless.... They are not for the rich.”
3. If you had to give away one of your possessions what would it be? (Name something other than what you might have brought to the book club if you are doing the service project). What is something that you would never give away?
4. When the King didn't get what he wanted, he was mean to the Quilt Maker. For example, the King left her chained up in a bear's den. What do you do to try to get what you want?
5. Why did the King feel so happy when he started to give away his possessions? Was the King surprised that even the tiniest marble made a little boy happy? Share with the group a kindness you have bestowed on another person (adults can share too!).

Notes to Discussion Questions for Four- to Six-Year-Olds:

Question 1 begins a discussion about the benefits of philanthropy. The group can also discuss the notion of happiness and whether possessions and/or doing good deeds can make someone happy. It is helpful if adults share answers, too, so they can model good behavior for the group.

Question 2 elicits answers about what the children value most among their possessions, and what they would be willing to share.

Question 3 encourages the children to make predictions about what will happen next in the story. They can look at the last double-spread illustration and see that the King is giving away his throne, heavy blankets, and some stuffed toys. They can discuss how the King feels and how he will feel in the future if he continues to share his possessions and do good deeds.

Notes to Discussion Questions Booklet for Six- to Nine-Year-Olds:

Question 1 introduces the difference between **needs** such as food, water, shelter, heat, and medicine; and **wants** such as toys, computers, telephones, and jewelry. Discuss where things such as school, friends, and love would fit in.

Question 2 starts a discussion about the motivations of the Quilt Maker character, and how she wants to use her magic fingers to benefit society and not herself.

Question 3 elicits answers about what the children value most among their possessions, and what they would be willing to share.

Question 4 begins a discussion about conflict resolution and what are appropriate reactions to situations where you don't get your way.

Question 5 opens a discussion about the benefits of philanthropy. The group can also discuss the notion of happiness and whether possessions and/or doing good deeds can make someone happy. It is helpful if adults share answers, too, so they can model good behavior for the group.