

BY VERONICA GETSKOW
WITH JESSICA FISHER AND JANEL PIERSMA

FIFTY BOOKS

TO ENJOY WITH KIDS



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FOREWORD

We and our siblings lived a charmed life. Oh, it was far from perfect. The house was often messy; dinners were chaotic; we fought with each other as families are apt to do.

But, we had a mom who loved young children. She had made the nurture of young children her life's work – and we got to be her guinea pigs. From homemade play dough to mud pies in the backyard, our growing up years were full of enrichment activities, adventure stories, and forts made of pink blankets in the den.

Our mom loved great children's literature and imaginative play, and she encouraged us to read and imagine. This book is born out of that experience. Here she offers up 50 books as well as a selection of enrichment activities to enjoy with your peeps. The activities are here for the taking to make wonderful memories with your young children, aged two to ten.

May *your* children live the same kind of charmed life that our mom gave us.

Jessica Getskow Fisher and Janel Getskow Piersma

INTRODUCTION

“No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally – and often far more – worth reading at the age of fifty and beyond.” – CS Lewis

The world is full of many great books. As CS Lewis stated, a good book stands not only the test of time, but can be enjoyable to the young and old alike.

Sharing a story together is like experiencing life and adventure together. When I read with my children, we’re going on a journey together.

My six children range in age from three to fourteen. When my eldest was just a little guy, I begged my mother to write this book. Neither one of us knew it at the time, but that’s basically what I was asking for.

“I want a list of books that we can read and then some fun stuff to do afterward. You know, like in preschool. But not.”

Having spent years training early childhood educators, Mom was a little surprised by my simple request. I wanted to take that experience and apply it to the home environment. At the time, there were plenty of resources for the institutional setting, but very few for the family circle.

This is the book I wish I had had a dozen years ago, to which I say, “Better late than never.”

— Jessica Fisher

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

With the vast wealth of great books to enjoy with young children, it had to be narrowed down. In this volume, Veronica, aka Mom, aka Nanna, has culled fifty top books that every young child should experience. They are full of adventure, exploration, and a discussion of the world around us.

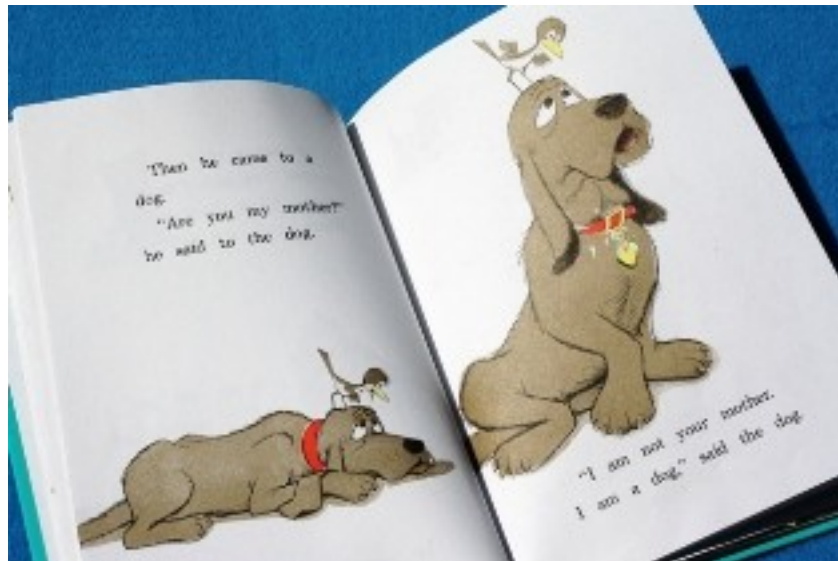
Accompanying each book's basic information are links to the [World Cat Library](#) so that you can easily find the book in your local library. An Amazon link is also provided if you wish to purchase the book to add to your personal collection. (Please be advised that this is an affiliate link, meaning we receive a small percentage of that Amazon purchase. If you prefer not to use this link, you can simply search for the book in Amazon's directory or find it at your favorite bookstore.)

With each title description in this book are activities that you can do with your children. Do one or do them all. It's completely up to you. Cuddling on the couch reading a stack of books is a fabulous experience to share in and of itself.

But, if you'd like to continue the book's experience, try one or more of these extension activities. Feel free to use these ideas as a springboard for exploring the story through ideas and activities of your own making. Apply the lessons or messages in each story to how it's lived out in your family and in your community.

Are You My Mother?

By P.D. Eastman



A little bird goes in search of his mother and asks each animal or object the same question, "Are You My Mother?"

Activity Ideas

- Discuss other things that hatch from eggs.
- [Make hard cooked eggs](#) as a snack. Decorate them if you wish.
- Go [bird watching](#) in your neighborhood or backyard. Count the number of different birds that you see.
- Talk about the relationship between a baby bird and its mother. Now discuss the many ways in which you care for your child's physical needs: feeding, diapering, etc. Indicate that when your child has children, she will provide for their needs as well.
- Give your child a long sheet of white shelf paper or a continuous sheet of computer paper. Using crayons or marker, help your child recreate

the story – beginning, middle and end. Have your child retell the story using the mural and a small cut-out replica of a baby bird to move along to each object found within the story.

- Ask your child to draw a picture of the two of you together. Take a photo of the two of you with the child holding the picture.
- Every child enjoys hearing about her arrival into the world. Recount to your child the story of that special day and show pictures or any artifacts that you have saved.

Find this book [at Amazon](#) or [at your local library](#).

Blueberries for Sal

by Robert McCloskey
Caldecott Honor Award, 1949



This delightful book shows two moms and their children picking blueberries on Blueberry Hill. Sally and her mom are picking berries on one side of the hill while a mother bear and her cub roam the other side, eating berries.

Activity Ideas

- Locate three things in each room that are blue. Then find something that is light blue and another item, dark blue. Talk about the shades of blue.
- Blueberries are usually in season from late May through August. If possible, go blueberry picking.
- Eat fresh blueberries for a healthy snack. Try dropping them into a metal pail or bowl to hear the “kerplinks.”
- Have your child help you make blueberry muffins or pancakes. Try

these recipes --[Blueberry Nutmeg Muffins](#) and [Multi-Grain Blueberry Pancakes](#).

- Cut 25 small blue dots out of cardboard. Hide the “berries” around the room. Give your child a tin pail to go berry picking. Count the berries as they are dropped into the pail.
- Create a new song – *Here We Go Round the Blueberry Bush* – from the tune to *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*.

Find this book [at Amazon](#) or [at your local library](#).

Bread and Jam for Frances

by Russell Hoban



Frances is picky about what she eats, but she loves bread and jam. After Frances repeatedly refuses to eat the meals that Mother makes for her, Mother comes up with a plan to encourage Frances to try other foods.

Activity Ideas

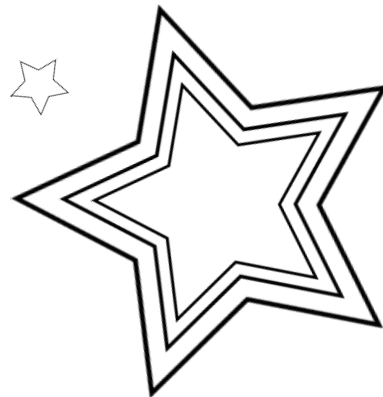
- Make a list of your child's favorite foods as well as lists of foods that he wants to try and foods that he is hesitant to try. Discuss what you like, dislike, or fear about the foods on the lists. Make a plan to include one from each list in your meals in the upcoming week.
- Serve a breakfast of bread and jam.
- Create a paper place setting from construction paper. Include placemat, plate, napkin, fork, knife, and spoon cut-outs as well as cutouts of different foods. You can cut the food pictures out of magazines or draw your own. Take turns creating a dinner menu and

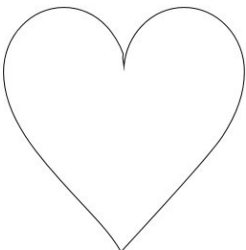
talk about what you both like or dislike about the menu.

- Frances loves to sing songs. Create a song together about your child's favorite foods. If you've got a jump rope, you can jump and chant at the same time.
- Spend some time playing in your child's play kitchen. Allow him to cook for you and ask questions about the different dishes he has prepared. Model good eating habits and table manners.

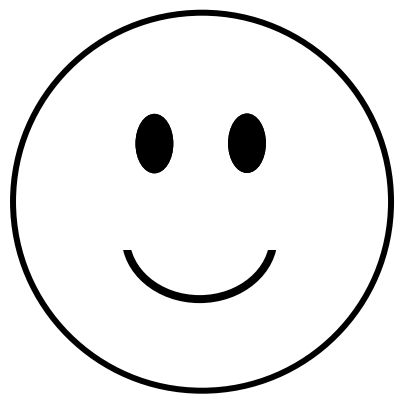
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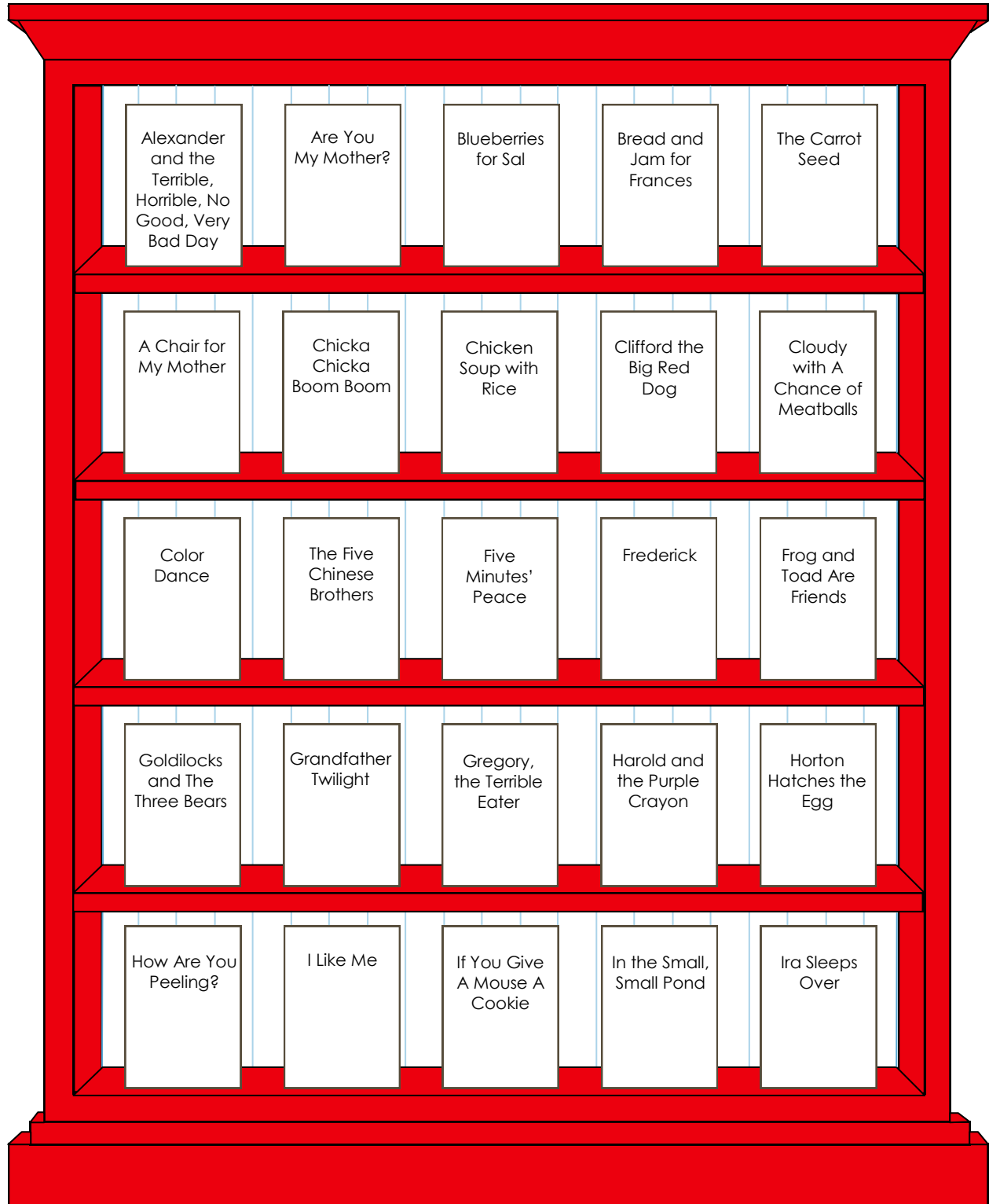
READ!



Happy
Reading!

My Reading Log Bookcases

When you finish reading a book, color that book on your bookshelf.
Try to read all 50 books on both bookcases!



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Veronica Getskow, PhD.

Born and raised in the Mid-West, Veronica has been an educator in Southern California for over 40 years. With practical hands on experience, she has taught students of all ages from preschool to university level and has raised five children. Veronica has written two books: *Kids with Special Needs* and *Incredible, Edible Geography*. Both serve as handbooks to parents and teachers. She can be found online at drgetskow.com.



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Jessica, aka Fishmama, is a wife, mom, teacher, homemaker, cook, and writer. She writes about real life — for parenting publications, SimpleHomeschool and Life as MOM. She writes about good food at Food Your Way and Good Cheap Eats. She is also the author of Organizing Life as Mom, The Summer Survival Guide and Not Your Mother's Make-Ahead and Freeze Cookbook (Harvard Common Press, November 2012).



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