

# KNUFFLE BUNNY

## KNUFFLE BUNNY

By Mo Willems

Ages: 2-6

Themes: Family, Neighborhoods, Growing up, First words

Running Time: 9 minutes

### SUMMARY

Trixie, her Daddy, and her favorite stuffed animal, Knuffle Bunny, take a trip to the laundromat. Trixie helps her Daddy sort and start the laundry, and then they begin to walk home through the streets of Brooklyn. Suddenly, Trixie realizes that Knuffle Bunny is missing! She tries with all her might to communicate this to her Daddy, but unfortunately, he doesn't understand her wordless pleas. Mommy, however, understands right away and the whole family rushes back to the laundromat to look for Knuffle Bunny. In the midst of the chaos, Trixie spots her beloved friend and utters her very first words! This movie beautifully juxtaposes crisp black-and-white photographs of Brooklyn with lively animation. Children will relate to Trixie's plight, while adults will fondly remember the first words of their own children.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will work on oral language development.
- Students will compare the events in the movie to their own lives.
- Students will create art of their own neighborhoods.

### BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Invite students to bring in their most favorite toy or stuffed animal for show-and-tell. Tell them that this could be something that they have had since they were a baby or something that they care about very much. For some students, this may be a blanket or book, for others, a toy. During the show-and-tell, allow the student to speak about why the object is so important to him/her and then allow three students to ask questions. Encourage students to speak in complete sentences. The objective of this activity is to give students practice at oral language development.

Make a class book of first words. Tell students to go home to ask their parents what their first word was. Have the parents

write the word on a piece of paper for the students to bring back to school. Then, once at school, have students draw a picture of what they looked like as a baby or toddler. (Parents can also be encouraged to send a photograph of their child as a baby or toddler for the student to use when drawing the picture). Underneath the self-portrait, have students write the first word that they said. Bind all of the students' pages together into a book entitled, "Our First Words." Display the book in the classroom for students, visitors, and parents to enjoy.

### AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast photographs and drawings. Draw the Venn Diagram on chart paper. On one side, glue a photograph. On the other side, glue a drawing. Tell students that you will be comparing drawings and photographs. As students share the differences and similarities, write them into the Venn Diagram. Encourage students to use complete sentences as they are speaking. After the Venn Diagram is complete, give students the opportunity to try to draw a scene from a photograph. As many students' fine motor skills are not yet completely developed, choose a photograph that has simple lines and few details, such as a city building or skyline. Display the students' drawings and the photographs side-by-side so that the beauty of each can be compared and admired.

Take a walking field trip around the neighborhood. Equip students with disposable cameras or Polaroid cameras (group students into groups of 3-4 depending on class size so that this doesn't get too expensive!). Point out landmarks as you walk, such as parks, stores, libraries, schools, and restaurants. If you live in a rural area, consider going to the center of the nearest town. Invite students to take pictures of landmarks they recognize which are a part of their daily landscape. Contrast this with taking pictures of common sites, such as trees or roads – unless of course the tree or road has personal meaning to them! After the photographs are printed, have students draw the background scenery (here is where the trees and roads come in).

Then, students can cut images from the photographs and

paste them onto their illustrated backgrounds. Display these pieces of artwork around the classroom and school with the title, "Do You Know Where This Is?"

Play a memory game with the students. Connect this activity to the movie by reminding students how Trixie and her mommy and daddy had to retrace their steps to the laundromat to find Knuffle Bunny. Have students sit in a circle. Select one student to be the Finder. S/he must close her/his eyes while you (or another student) hide the Knuffle Bunny (i.e. a stuffed animal of your choice). Do not go directly to the hiding place, but take Knuffle Bunny on a silent journey around the room, stopping at 3-4 different locations, before finally hiding it. All of the students except for the Finder should witness Knuffle Bunny's journey. Once Knuffle Bunny is hidden, the Finder may open his/her eyes. Select another student to be the Guide. The Guide must remember step-by-step where Knuffle Bunny went and instruct the Finder where to go. For example, the Guide might say, "First, Knuffle Bunny read a book at the book shelf." (The Finder goes to the bookshelf). "Then, Knuffle Bunny fed the fish." (The Finder then goes to the fish tank, etc.). The other students may help the Guide by snapping their fingers to indicate when the guide is correct, and becoming silent when the Guide makes a mistake. If the Guide becomes stuck, s/he may ask one student for help. Start the game over once Knuffle Bunny is found.

### OTHER WESTON WOODS PRODUCTIONS ABOUT GROWING UP INCLUDE:

**Bark, George**, by Jules Feiffer

**I Lost My Bear**, by Jules Feiffer

**Joey Runs Away**, by Jack Kent

**Leo the Late Bloomer**, by Robert Kraus, ill. by Jose Aruego

**Max's First Christmas**, by Rosemary Wells

**Noisy Nora**, by Rosemary Wells

**Owen**, by Kevin Henkes

**That New Animal**, by Emily Jenkins, ill. by Pierre Pratt

**The Ugly Duckling**, by Jerry Pinkney

**To order other Weston Woods productions call 1-800-243-5020**

This guide may be photocopied for free distribution without restriction