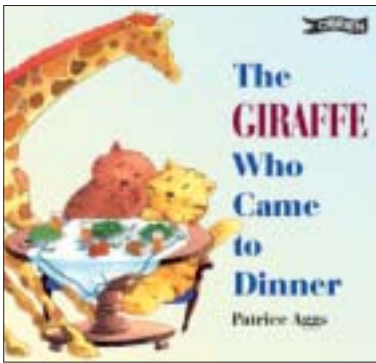


THE GIRAFFE WHO CAME TO DINNER



by Patrice Aggs

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Mrs Redcat tells kittens Cosy and Posy that Giraffe is coming to dinner, but they don't know what a giraffe looks like, and decide to question the neighbours. Mrs Tabby Next Door has never seen a giraffe, but knows that it's an animal. Mouse is an animal so they ask him, and he tells them that a giraffe has a very long neck, like Goose. Goose agrees that a giraffe has a very long neck, but adds that he has spots, like Ladybird. By the time Cosy and Posy head for home they still don't know what a giraffe really looks like, but they don't like the idea of a visitor with spots and a long, scary neck and they are very reluctant to go in for dinner. But Giraffe's long neck turns out to be fun – great for sliding down. And when it is time for Giraffe to leave, they are disappointed that their new friend can't stay longer.

LANGUAGE – ENGLISH

- ◆ Discussion: visitors. People who call to your house. Postman/woman, doctor, meter-reader, salesperson, representative of charitable organisation. Why might these people call? At what time of the day do they usually call? Difference between purposes of social and business calls. Children might act out a visit from a salesperson and then one from a known, invited visitor and discuss different forms of greeting, etc.
- ◆ Discussion: special occasions. The kittens asked if they had to dress up (p.6). What clothes do you wear for christenings, for weddings, on Christmas Day, at birthday parties? How do they differ from clothes you wear to school, at home?
- ◆ Discussion: illustrations. Is the style of the illustrator simple, complicated, realistic, cartoon-like? Look at the cover, is it unusual for a detail to run from back to front cover? Examine inside covers and note the giraffe's spots. Teacher points out small details in illustrations, e.g. envelope on Mrs Redcat's bed (p.7), to whom the letter is addressed; mice playing with clothes-pegs and balloons (p.9), chickens playing musical instruments (p.11).
- ◆ Descriptive language: spots, stripes, long, scary necks, etc. Describe other animals using well-chosen adjectives. What words might you use to describe an elephant, a leopard, a gorilla? Children might also use phrases from the book to describe eating habits of animals not mentioned in book e.g. He might eat X, but he's not like me. A gorilla eats X, like Elephant.'

- ◆ Colourful expressions: ask children if they have heard any expressions which mention cats, e.g. 'let the cat out of the bag', 'raining cats and dogs', 'a cat has nine lives', 'curiosity killed the cat', etc. Discuss what each of these expressions means.
- ◆ Language of cats: how do cats communicate or 'speak'? What does it mean when a cat holds its tail erect with fur raised on its back, when it purrs, or hisses with teeth bared? How do people show happiness, sadness, anger? Children might mime certain emotions for others in class to guess.
- ◆ Creative: invitations/menus. Who would you most like to invite to dinner? What food would you serve them? Design simple invitation, stating date and time of meal. Design simple menu showing foods to be served for each course.
- ◆ Drama: tea-party or dinner. Each child brings teddy or favourite doll and some extra lunch. Teacher brings rug for picnic lunch outdoors. 'Will we have to get dressed up?' (p.6) Children might wear clothes and hats from dressing-up box in classroom. Discuss the clothes each child chooses – what is X wearing, does he/she look like a cowboy, a nurse, a king or queen, etc.

LANGUAGE – GAEILGE

- ◆ Use illustrations to teach simple nouns: m.sh. luch, cat, sioráf, bóin Dé, gé.
- ◆ Cluiche: Cuairteoir ag an doras. Tar isteach. Fáilte romhat. Suigh síos. Ar mhaith leat cupán tae? Siúcra? Bainne? Brioscaí? Slán leat.

SPHE

- ◆ Myself: self-awareness. Discussing and appreciating all the features that make a person unique: name, hair colour, fingerprints, etc. List all the features that made Giraffe special, then list those that make you and/or your friend special and unique.
- ◆ Myself: food and nutrition. Exploring some qualities and categories of food: fruit, vegetables, foods that can be eaten at breakfast, at dinner. What food did Giraffe and the Redcat family eat at dinner? Discuss foods necessary for a balanced meal.
- ◆ Myself: feelings and emotions. Talking about situations where fear of the unknown causes reluctance to try new experiences. The kittens were curious about their visitor but didn't want to meet him: discuss reasons for this.
- ◆ Friends and other people: relating to others. Recognising and appreciating differences in people and treating others with dignity and respect. Using verbal and non-verbal behaviour to perform social functions: being hospitable, polite, offering visitors a drink/something to eat/a comfortable chair, etc.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- ◆ Movement: mime characteristic movements of the various animals mentioned in story. Waddle like goose/duck, scuttle like mouse, wiggle like caterpillar, etc. How do kittens move? Or ladybirds? How might a giraffe bend to drink water, or reach the highest leaves?
- ◆ Guess the animal: children sit in circle. Teacher chooses one child to come into centre and mime one of the animals. Whoever guesses correctly takes next turn.

VISUAL ARTS

- ◆ Ladybird on leaf. Cut green leaf shape and stick on sheet of black paper. Then stick red ladybird shape on leaf. Dip fingers in black paint to put on the spots.
- ◆ Clothes-peg giraffe. On stiff card, children cut out shape of giraffe. Colour, using the end-papers of the book as an example. For legs, paint wooden clothes-pegs light brown and pin to giraffe shape. Stand upright.
- ◆ Kitten with ball of wool. Children colour or paint kitten. Stick some wool in a spiral shape so that kitten has a ball of wool to play with. You could also use wool for kitten's tail.

