

Sharing books...

We're Going on an Egg Hunt

by **Laura Hughes** (Bloomsbury 2016)



While adults often match books to seasons or specific times of the year, young children simply don't care provided that the story works for them. Indeed, it could be argued that by restricting the availability of books that children otherwise enjoy to just a few weeks of the year, we reduce opportunities for learning. *We're Going on an Egg Hunt* is a case in point. While the main themes of the book are Easter and hunting for eggs, it is a book that should not sit in a cupboard waiting for Easter.

Based on *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury, the story follows a family of rabbits looking for Easter eggs. Instead of going through grass or snow, the rabbits encounter lambs, chicks, bees and ducks. The refrain of 'Can't go over them, Can't go under them, Can't go around them' is repeated every time the rabbits encounter an obstacle.

Then the rabbits, laden with eggs, come across a wolf hiding behind an enormous egg. The rabbits scurry home retracing their steps but dropping a few eggs on their way back. Safely home, they slam the door to stop the wolf before eating their eggs. Right at the back of the book, we see the wolf eating his ill-gotten gains.

A GOOD CHOICE

While the reading charity BookTrust suggests that this book will suit children from three years old, this is a story that can be used with a wider range of children. Toddlers will enjoy looking under the flaps while three- and four-year-

olds are likely to notice some of the details within the illustrations and start to join in with the refrains. It is also a great book for Reception children. The well-known phrases along with the pictures will help them feel that they are reading independently, which is important in boosting children's interest and confidence.

SHARING THIS BOOK

You should plan to share this book several times with children. On first reading, you can simply follow the story. If children are already familiar with *Bear Hunt*, they may join in quickly with the refrains. Give younger children plenty of time to find the flaps in the book, some of which are disguised well. With older children, on the second or third reading, you might like to focus on counting and numbers.

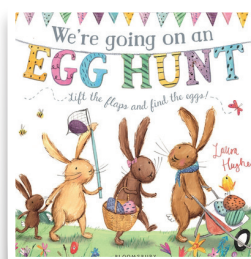
SUPPORTING LEARNING

Language development

This book can be used to develop vocabulary about the countryside. The illustrations include a farmyard, meadows, marshland and a thatched cottage, as well as smaller details such as reeds, a mallard duck and bee hives. Look out too for gardening tools, including a wheelbarrow, rake and spade.

Literacy

Revisit *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* and discuss the differences between it and *Egg Hunt*. Which one does the children prefer? You could also share stories that have a wolf as a central character. Try traditional tales such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and, as an alternative, *The Three Little Wolves*



ABOUT THIS SERIES

Over the course of this monthly series on sharing books with children, **Penny Tassoni** will look at a range of fiction and non-fiction titles, from rhyming books for babies to picture books that adults and children can explore together.



MORE INFORMATION

● A free Egg Hunt activity pack is at: http://lr-assets.storage.googleapis.com/main/uploads/egghunt_activitypack_updated.pdf

and *The Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury. As for picture books, look out too for *Wolves* and *Wolf Won't Bite* by award-winning author and illustrator Emily Gravett.

Mathematics

One of the joys of this book is that you can use it to draw children's attention to counting and numeral recognition. Under each flap with an egg, there is a numeral. You can also see on each page how many eggs the rabbits have collected. There are ten eggs in total, although the wolf is hiding behind egg number ten.

- As the rabbits are running away, you can draw children's attention to the number of eggs they have dropped.
- Count the final number of eggs that the rabbits have and compare this with the total that the wolf has picked up.
- With older children, trace the number of eggs that the rabbits lost – for example, they collected nine but lost one as they ran back through the ducks, leaving them with eight ($9-1=8$).
- With younger children, play treasure hunt games with them – for example, hide a series of balls outdoors for them to find. You could hide pairs in some instances or number them.
- Focus also on shape, size and measures – the size of containers that the rabbits used was one of the reasons why they dropped so many eggs. For example, put out a variety of buckets and balls so that children can decide which one would be best to transport the balls. They could try running to see which ones would fall out. ■