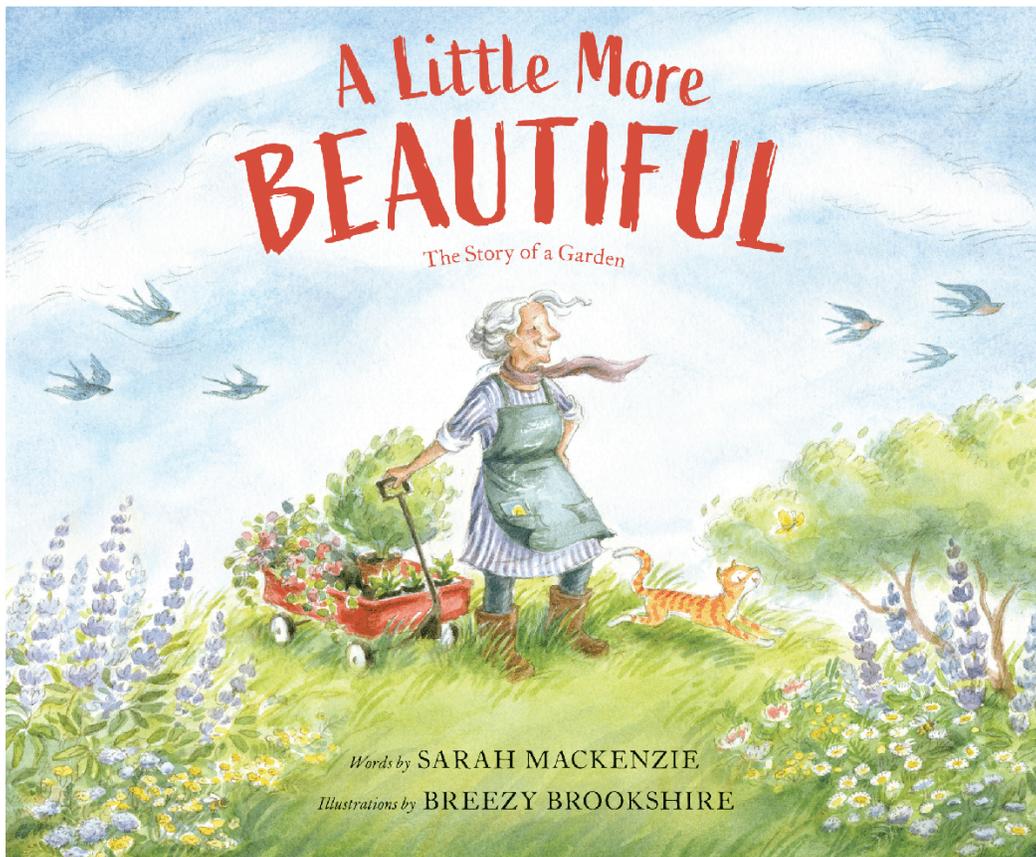


READ-ALOUD
Revival
PREMIUM



family book club guide

A LITTLE MORE BEAUTIFUL

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PRINT RELEASE: You may print/copy this Read-Aloud Revival® Family Book Club Guide as needed for single family use. You may not distribute this Family Book Club Guide outside of your family in print, electronically, or otherwise.



How to Use This Guide

At Read-Aloud Revival®, we use a simple recipe to create a meaningful and effective Family Book Club experience. It's not just another literature curriculum—it's richer.

We believe books are the most effective way for families to make rich, meaningful connections with ideas and with each other. This is the recipe we use for our Family Book Clubs:



We recommend printing this guide. Then scan the QR Code for easy access to all of the links.

How to use a QR Code:
Position your phone's camera as if to take a picture of the code. When a notification appears, tap it.

1 READ

We read together, and we read alone. We let our reading lead to more reading, both upstream and downstream, to help us make new connections and encounter new ideas.

2 RELATE

We relate to the ideas we find in the books as well as to each other—through conversations with one another and by saving passages in our reading journals.

3 REMEMBER

Finally, we create a shared experience around the book, so it serves as a warm and happy memory in our children's minds and they look back on reading it with fondness.



Scheduling Your Family Book Club

LESS IS MORE



Some RAR families choose to do Family Book Club in a single day. Others like to s-t-r-e-t-c-h out the experience, reading the book more than once and exploring rabbit trails along the way.

Pick and choose from the feast of ideas in this guide based on what appeals to your family's interests, keeping in mind that often, less is more. Be sure to take into account your own energy level as well.

SUPPLY LISTS & SCHEDULES



We've provided supply lists and some possible schedules on the final pages of this guide.

However you choose to schedule your Family Book Club, remember that the key ingredients of a solid literature education are reading, relating, and remembering. Everything else is just a rabbit trail.

TIP

Most Family Book Club activities can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age or grade level.

When activities lend themselves better to a particular age group, you'll see the following icons:

- ♡ YOUNGER KIDS
- ☆ OLDER KIDS



Step 1
READ



About the Book



TITLE	<i>A Little More Beautiful</i>
AUTHOR	Sarah Mackenzie
ILLUSTRATOR	Breezy Brookshire
RECOMMENDED FOR	all ages

Sly as a fox and swift as a bird, Lou Alice is determined to leave each day a little more beautiful than she found it. But when she moves away from her little house, no one in town notices she's gone. No one, that is, except a little girl, who sets out to carry on Lou Alice's work. But it's not enough. Can the girl find a way of her own to make the world a little more beautiful?



SARAH MACKENZIE

You know Sarah Mackenzie best as the host here at Read-Aloud Revival, but she also happens to be the author of this book! She lives in eastern Washington with her husband and six kids, where she homeschools, reads aloud, and tries to leave each day a little more beautiful than she found it.

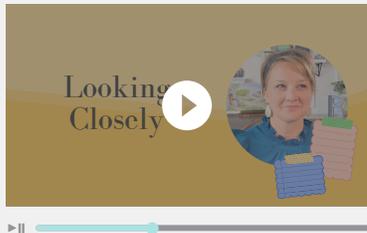


BREEZY BROOKSHIRE

Breezy Brookshire grew up and continues to live in Indiana where she enjoys, among many things, nature walks, reading, and drawing characters from her imagination. Being home educated allowed her lots of time to cultivate her interest in illustration.



Looking Closely with Sarah Mackenzie



[WATCH SARAH INTRODUCE THIS BOOK](#)

8-minute watch

VISUAL COMPOSITION

"Composition" is a word to describe where an artist places elements in their artwork to help them depict something they're trying to show.

The illustrator of *A Little More Beautiful* uses birds to create motion and lead you through the pages. Flip through the book, tracing your fingers along the birds' path anywhere you find them. Do you see how the swooping of the birds leads you through the story?

You might notice a similar left-to-right motion in the swirling of the leaves and in the shoes of the townspeople (who are happier, but just don't know why . . . although we do, don't we?)

It's interesting to know that none of these are an accident. The illustrator purposefully guides you through the story, helping you either move through pages at a clip, or slow down and sit with the story for a moment before moving on.



JUST FOR FUN

In how many illustrations can you find the orange tabby cat? Look carefully; she's a sneaky one!



INTERPLAY OF WORDS + PICTURES

A really good picture book needs both the words and the pictures to make sense. If you were to take away the words and just look at the pictures, you'd miss something of the story. If you were to take away the pictures and just read the words, the story wouldn't make sense!

Does this book pass that test? Try reading just the words and ignoring the pictures. Does the story make sense?

Now try just looking at the illustrations and ignoring the text. Is something missing?

This is a fun way to appreciate the interplay between text and illustrations in picture books! Try it with another book from your shelf. Often, the best picture books follow this rule: *the words need the pictures, and the pictures need the words!*



SIMILE

On the opening page, Lou Alice is described as “sly as a fox and swift as a bird.”

These are *similes* (pronounced SIM-ih-LEEZ). Similes compare two things using the word “like” or “as.”



Which similes might best describe the girl in this story?

Here are a few words to get you started:

as smart as a _____

as thoughtful as a _____

as beautiful as _____

as kind as a _____



Poetry

"HOPE" IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS BY EMILY DICKINSON

Who do you think is most hopeful in this story?

Emily Dickinson says "Hope is the thing with feathers." This is the opening line of one of her most famous poems. It's also one of Sarah Mackenzie's favorite poems, and she knows it by heart!

In the poem, Dickinson says that hope is strongest in the midst of a storm or conflict. What was the stormiest conflict Lou Alice faced in *A Little More Beautiful*? Do you think she had hope? How can you tell?

Try memorizing "Hope is the thing with feathers" or use it for copywork. You'll find the poem on the following page.

(Pssst . . . Speaking of feathers, how many birds can you count throughout this book?)

Songbirds are Sarah Mackenzie's favorite animal. The illustrator, Breezy Brookshire, surprised Sarah by including Sarah's favorite bird on the book cover. Can you find it? Sarah named the publishing company after this kind of bird, so you can find its name on the title page.



Printer-friendly

Find the poem on the next page, where we've formatted it to easily print at home.



“Hope” is the thing with feathers

EMILY DICKINSON | 1830-1886

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.



Reading in Stream

All books talk to other books—the books that came before them (upstream), after them (downstream), or are just similar in tone, topic, or theme (in stream).

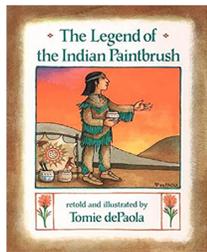
We recommend these books that are in the stream of *A Little More Beautiful*. After all, reading begets reading. The more you do it, the more you want to do it! These books can satisfy your voracious readers.



MISS RUMPHIUS

by Barbara Cooney

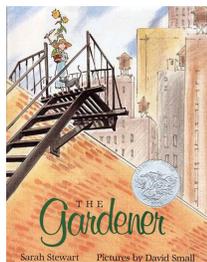
Miss Rumphius is the book that most inspired *A Little More Beautiful*. You can learn more about the author/illustrator of *Miss Rumphius*, Barbara Cooney in this special episode of the podcast: readaloudrevival.com/barbara/



THE LEGEND OF THE INDIAN PAINTBRUSH

by Tomie dePaola

Peek at the dedication in *A Little More Beautiful*, and you'll see that Sarah Mackenzie dedicated it to Tomie dePaola. Tomie's book, *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush*, tells the dramatic legend of how the Indian Paintbrush flower got its name.

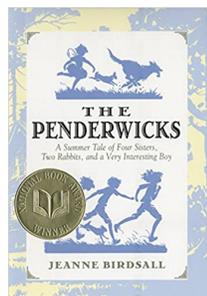


THE GARDENER

by Sarah Stewart, illustrated by David Small

HISTORY

A book you'll most likely enjoy if you enjoyed *A Little More Beautiful*. This one is epistolary (told in letters) and set during The Great Depression. There's an RAR Family Book Club for Premium members: readaloudrevival.com/author-events/stewart-small/

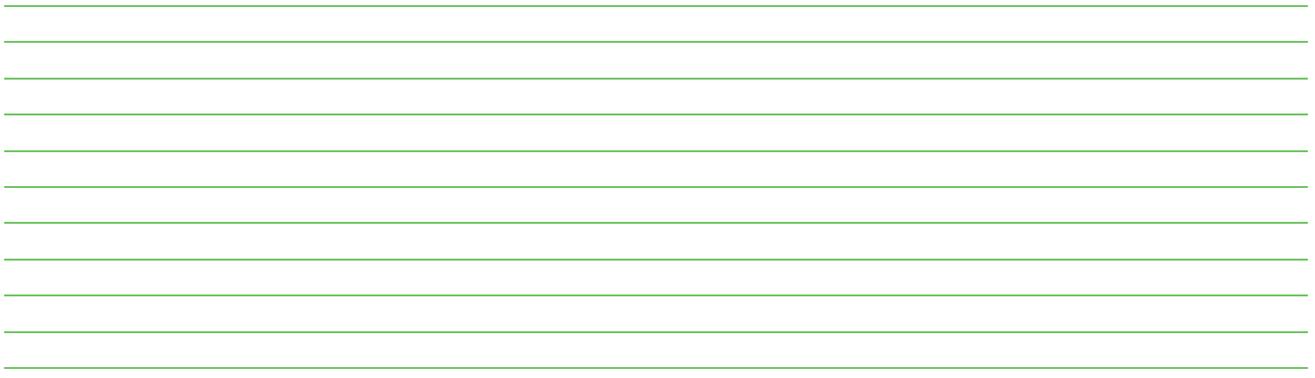


THE PENDERWICKS

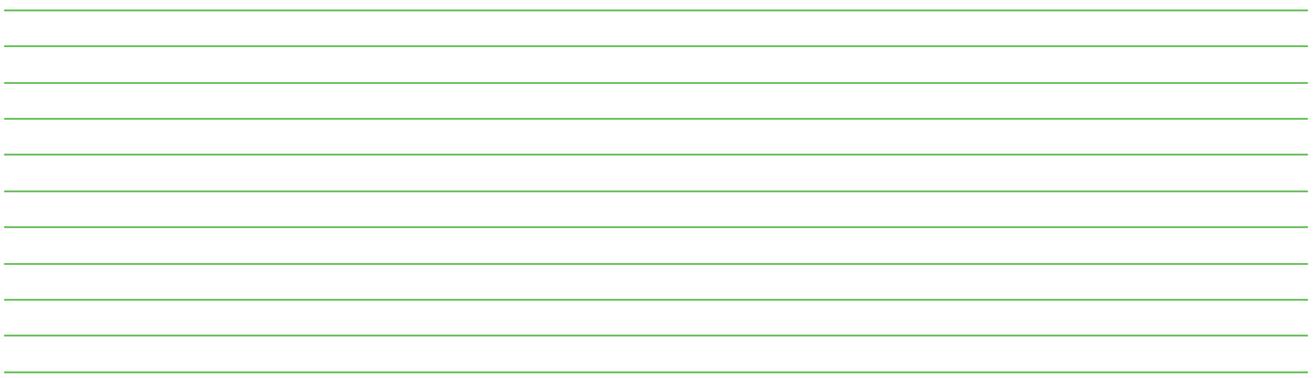
by Jeanne Birdsall

This delightful novel is a great read-aloud written by the woman who inspired the character of Lou Alice. You can hear more about how Jeanne Birdsall inspired Lou Alice's character on Read-Aloud Revival podcast: readaloudrevival.com/210/





Step 2
RELATE



Dinnertime Conversation



Adult readers don't answer comprehension questions to prove they've read a book. Rather, they exchange ideas in true conversation, which helps them think about the ideas in their reading more deeply.

To help your kids develop the skill of becoming thoughtful, discerning readers, use the following open-ended discussion prompts to spark a conversation.

Dinner is an especially good time for this because it's easier to shed the trappings of "school" and "reading comprehension" when we're sharing a meal around the table.

Want to make these conversations extra sweet? **Make curiosity your true goal.** If your child can discuss a book in natural conversation, they comprehend it—we promise.

Prompts

- How are Lou Alice and the girl alike? How are they different?
- What does Lou Alice want most? Does the little girl want the same thing or something different?
- Look at the spread that says, "But it was not enough, and the little girl knew it." Why do you think the girl doesn't believe what she's done is enough?
- Do any of the characters in this book remind you of characters from other books?
- If you have a copy of *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney, open it side-by-side with *A Little More Beautiful*. What's similar? What's different?
- What do you want to remember about this book?

TIP

**It's not a quiz;
it's a conversation!**

Rather than peppering your kids with questions, we recommend simply having a casual conversation by using any of these prompts, and opening the conversation by answering the question yourself.



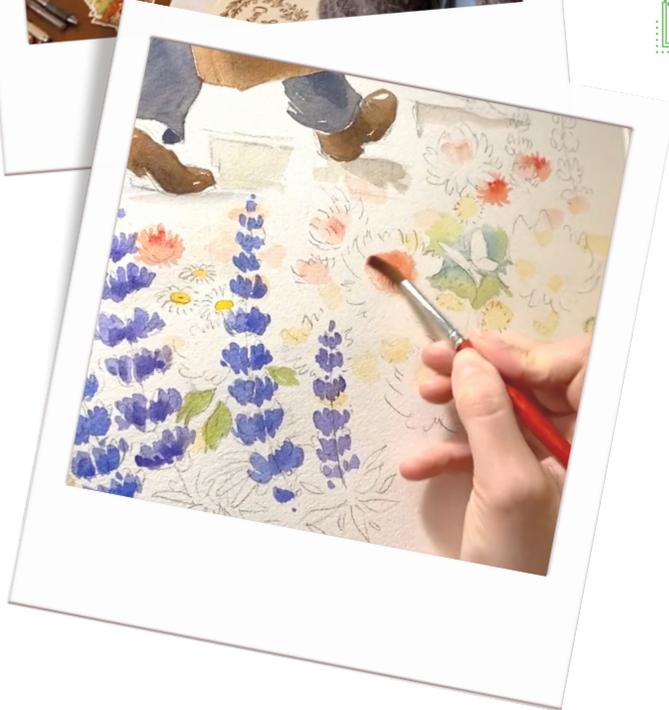
Step 3

REMEMBER



Family Book Club LIVE!

Use shared experiences—both sensory and social—to create happy memories around this book. How? By gathering for a Family Book Club LIVE! event and by sharing sensory and social experiences.



PAINT WITH BREEZY BROOKSHIRE

Join us on June 23, 2023, to paint on Zoom with illustrator Breezy Brookshire.



Breezy will give a brief watercolor tutorial. Then she'll answer kids' questions while you paint!



Friday, 6/23/23

11am PT, 12pm MT, 1pm CT, 2pm ET



[Click here for the Zoom link](#)

A replay will be available [here](#) afterward



Submit your questions for Breezy Brookshire [HERE](#) by June 17, 2023.



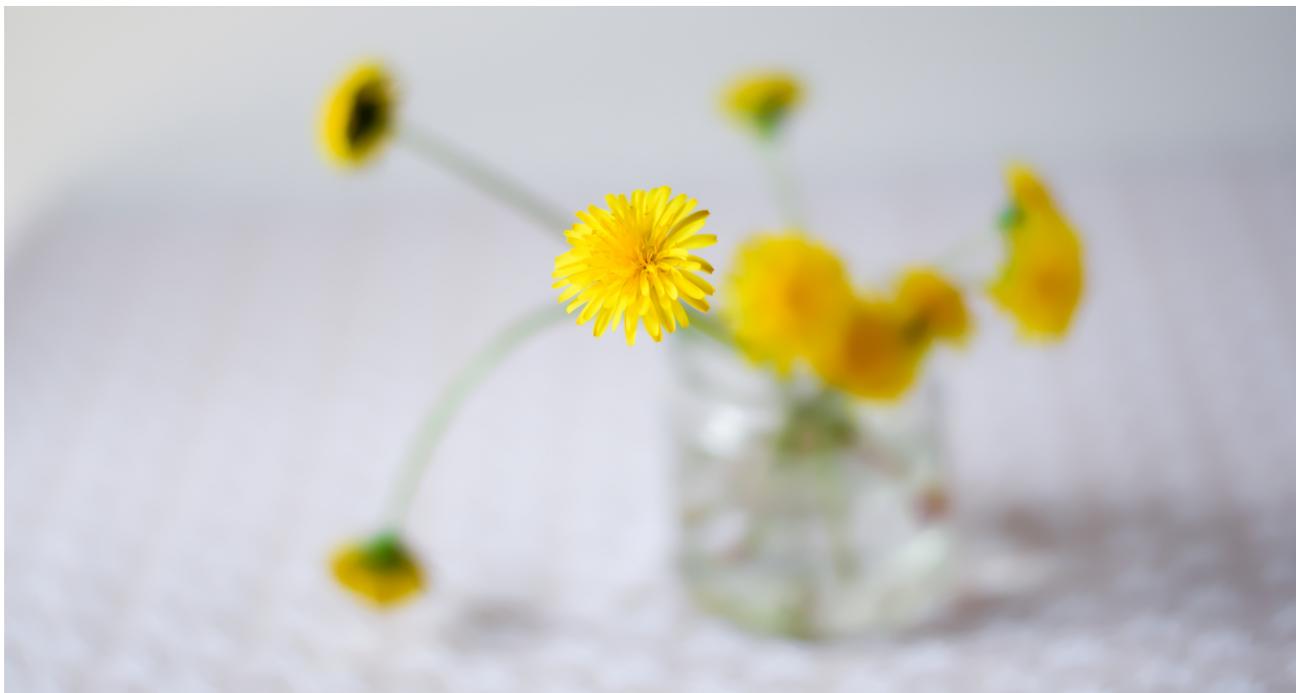
WHAT TO BRING:

- Watercolor paints
- Watercolor paper
- Paintbrush
- Small jar of water
- Pencil



Around the Table

We like to create family memories that tie to our Family Book Club around the table. After all, we're always preparing meals for our family, anyway! Rather than adding to our to-do list, we're simply transforming something we're already doing (eating together) into something memorable (a Family Book Club memory).



FRESH FLOWERS

Add some fresh flowers to your breakfast, lunch, or dinner table to make your meal a little more beautiful.

You can do this for any meal you're already serving. Even better if you can send the kids outside to collect the flowers (hey, dandelions are flowers, too!) while you get a moment to catch your breath.

Use the conversation prompts from the "Dinnertime Conversation" page to get a discussion going about the book.

TIP

Watch the [Circle with Sarah: Opening & Closing Ceremonies](#) in RAR Premium to learn why making an experience social and sensory helps seal it in our children's bank of happy memories.



RABBIT TRAILS



Civics

GROW SOME FLOWERS

Make your world more beautiful by growing flowers. This is one of the primary ways Lou Alice leaves each day a little more beautiful.

The easiest flowers to grow in pots indoors include pansies, petunias, geraniums, and zinnias. See what your local garden store has in stock. You can usually find growing directions right on the back of the seed packet.

(Before growing any plant indoors, double check that the flower is safe for little ones and any pets.)



SEND A NOTE

Make the world more beautiful by sending a word of encouragement. Print note cards from the following pages. Then pop them in an envelope and send them in the mail to make someone's day a little more beautiful.

Tip: Printing on card stock will give you the best results. Cut the notecards where indicated and fold in half.

We suggest using 4x6 envelopes.





Art by Breezy Brookshire ©2023, all rights reserved





Art by Breezy Brookshire ©2023, all rights reserved



Nature Study

FEED THE BIRDS

Make your world more beautiful by hanging a bird feeder. In the book, the girl hangs a suet feeder, which is especially good for the winter months.

Clear window feeders are also a lot of fun because you can watch the birds up close!

If you'd like to try your hand at making a feeder, follow these instructions to make one with a pinecone, twine, peanut butter (or sunflower seed butter), and birdseed:

1 - Wrap twine around the pine cone, leaving an extra bit at the top for hanging.

2 - Using a craft/popsicle stick or spatula, coat the pinecone with peanut butter or sun butter.

3 - Roll the pinecone in wild bird seed (tip: you'll have better luck attracting birds if you choose black oil sunflower seed, rather than a seed mix).

4 - Hang it outside!

You might like to keep track of which birds come to visit. You'll probably need a good local bird guide. You can record visitors in your nature journal or in a simple spiral notebook.



POLLINATORS

Learn all about the ways bees and other pollinators make the world a little more beautiful on this free episode of *The No Sweat Nature Study Podcast* with Cindy West.

➔ ourjourneywestward.com/pollinator-nature-study



MOON PHASES

Gardening by the moon phase is a traditional way to ensure the best conditions for your plants. Learn more at *The Old Farmer's Almanac*.

Lou Alice planted by the light of the moon. You can look up the moon phase for every date!

➔ www.almanac.com/content/planting-by-the-moon

➔ www.moonpage.com



CHIMNEY SWIFTS

Lou Alice is described as “swift as a bird.”

Chimney swifts live in the Eastern United States, and Vaux's swifts live in the West. Both are migratory species, which means they fly south to Mexico or South America when the weather turns cold. They often roost in the same places on their way south.

Here's a picture of Vaux's Swifts flying into a chimney in Kortney Garrison's neighborhood. (Kortney is the RAR Community Director.)



Your Commonplace Book

Writers, poets, and artists often save favorite words and passages from their reading in a journal, sometimes called a "commonplace book."

Encourage your kids to copy a favorite word or passage from *A Little More Beautiful* into their own commonplace book (this can be as simple as a spiral notebook). If you model this practice yourself, your kids may be even more interested.

Younger kids can draw pictures or dictate what they want their journal to include while you scribe for them.



TIP

Keeping a list of "favorite words from my reading" is a useful (and enjoyable) page to add to any commonplace book.

Copywork

Copywork is excellent practice for young writers to learn foundational language arts skills. We recommend copywork for students ages 6+.

By copying well-written sentences, your child will practice handwriting while also learning proper sentence structure and usage mechanics.

BE A GRAMMAR DETECTIVE

Copywork allows your kids to be grammar detectives, noticing grammar rules within the context of books they're already reading.

Mastering good language is best done incrementally over time. Good grammar appears again and again as your student reads and copies well-written language.

The passages we've chosen from this book lend themselves to learning the following language rules:

♡ Capitalize proper nouns

☆ Use a comma after an introductory clause

TIP

Choose just one language/grammar rule to discuss. Your student doesn't need to master them all now.

Over time, you will see progress.



Printer-friendly

You'll find copywork pages in both print and cursive type on the following pages. We've formatted them to easily print at home.



A Little More Beautiful
by Sarah Mackenzie

One afternoon, rather
than passing the town
hall, she went inside.

Blank handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) for tracing and independent writing.

One afternoon,

rather than

passing the town

hall, she went

inside.

SUPPLIES & SCHEDULES



Supply List

BOOK(S)

- A Little More Beautiful*
- Optional: any other books you've chosen from this guide

PRINTOUTS

- Any copywork pages you'd like to use (pages 25-26)
- Poetry pages for each student (page 10)
- As many notecards as your children would like to send (pages 19-20), printed on cardstock

FAMILY BOOK CLUB LIVE

- Pan of watercolor paints
- Watercolor paper
- Paintbrush
- Small jar of water
- Pencil

AROUND THE TABLE

- Fresh flowers (dandelions count!)

MAKE YOUR WORLD...

- Seed packets
- Potting soil
- A small pot for planting
- 4x6 envelopes
- Stamps

NATURE STUDY/SCIENCE

- Pinecones
- Twine
- Craft/popsicle stick or spatula
- Peanut butter or sunflower seed butter
- Bird seed (black oil sunflower is best)
- Nature journal
- Pencil + colored pencils



POSSIBLE SCHEDULES

FAMILY BOOK CLUB IN A DAY	
READ	Read <i>A Little More Beautiful</i> and watch " <u>Looking Closely.</u> "
RELATE	Set the table with flowers and choose a dinnertime conversation prompt.
REMEMBER	Attend Family Book Club LIVE! and paint with Breezy Brookshire.



FAMILY BOOK CLUB IN A WEEK

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
READ	Read <i>A Little More Beautiful</i>	Watch <u>"Looking Closely"</u>	Reread <i>A Little More Beautiful</i> or read another book from page 11	
	Poem: "Hope" is the thing with feathers by Emily Dickinson			
RELATE	Choose a dinnertime conversation prompt to discuss			
REMEMBER		AROUND THE TABLE Set the table with fresh flowers before the family meal		FAMILY BOOK CLUB LIVE! Paint with Breezy Brookshire
RABBIT TRAILS	COPYWORK Use the print and/or cursive copywork pages provided	CIVICS Write and send a notecard	COMMONPLACE Select a passage to copy into your commonplace book	NATURE STUDY Choose any nature study activity from pages 21-22



FAMILY BOOK CLUB IN A MONTH

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
READ	Read <i>A Little More Beautiful</i>	Watch <u>"Looking Closely"</u>	Reread <i>A Little More Beautiful</i> or read another book from page 11	
	Poem: "Hope" is the thing with feathers by Emily Dickinson			
RELATE	Choose a dinnertime conversation prompt to discuss			
REMEMBER		AROUND THE TABLE Set the table with fresh flowers before the family meal		FAMILY BOOK CLUB LIVE! Paint with Breezy Brookshire
RABBIT TRAILS	COPYWORK Use the print and/or cursive copywork pages provided	CIVICS Write and send a notecard	COMMONPLACE Select a passage to copy into your commonplace book	NATURE STUDY Choose any nature study activity from pages 21-22





READ-ALoud
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