

StoryBook Yoga

An integrated literacy, movement, and music program

Teacher's Guide

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Add a Delightful “Twist” to Traditional Story Time With STORYBOOK YOGA!

Neither teachers nor children need to be familiar with yoga to participate in this imaginative, whole child development program.

BENEFITS OF STORYBOOK YOGA

StoryBook Yoga is beneficial for children with and without disabilities alike. By choosing a book related to your curricular theme, *StoryBook Yoga* provides the perfect context for facilitating development of the following skills:

language and literacy - listening, following directions, story comprehension

social/emotional - attention, concentration, self-regulation, body awareness, self-esteem, and stress reduction

cognitive - pretend play

physical - strength, flexibility, balance, and motor planning

aesthetic - music and creative movement

Most of all, *StoryBook Yoga* has been kid-tested and is sure to be fun for everyone!!!

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HOW IT WORKS

Select a book to share that mentions or pictures at least three of the animals or natural wonders on the CD*. These are your “yoga opportunities.” As you read the book, when one of these animals or natural wonders appears, pause, turn on the CD, and everyone performs the yoga routine. Add the “book” song at the beginning and the “relaxation” song at the end and you’ve successfully conducted a **StoryBook Yoga** lesson!

*The animals/natural wonders are in this order on the CD: swim (fish, duck, etc.), cat, dog, lion, sun, chicken, bird and tree, snake and pig. See **StoryBook Yoga** Tracks at the end of this guide for specific tracks.

WHAT IS YOGA?

Before beginning your **StoryBook Yoga** program, ask children if they know anything about yoga or anyone who practices yoga. You may be surprised to learn that they are more familiar with it than you think! For those unfamiliar with yoga, here is a brief description that you can share with the children.

Yoga is an ancient system of exercise and breathing that originated in India thousands of years ago. “Yoga” literally means “union” of body, mind, and spirit. For the body, yoga uses poses that develop muscle strength, flexibility of the spine and joints, and balance. Yoga poses pay respect to the nature by representing animals (e.g., cat, dog, snake) and other natural wonders (e.g., tree, sun).

To do the yoga poses, it is necessary to focus and concentrate. If your mind starts to wander, you are likely to fall from a balance pose or lose your place in the sequence of poses. To keep your mind from wandering, yoga teaches us to focus on our breathing.

Since yoga is non-competitive, every day you practice provides an opportunity to experience a personal success; to try a challenging pose, even if in a modified form. This is one way yoga nurtures the spirit.

GETTING STARTED

To give children the best experience possible, become familiar with the poses used in this program either through photographs, or by viewing a yoga DVD/video such as *YogaKids* by Marcia Wenig. Yoga books such as *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Yoga with Kids* (Komitor and Adamson, 2000) and the picture book *My Daddy is a Pretzel* by Baron Baptiste (2004) are also excellent resources.

Kids are great followers. If you practice the yoga routines provided on the CD before presenting them to your class, you are sure to run a successful lesson!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- **YOGA MATS OR TOWELS**, arranged in a circle. The mats/towels create a yogic space that is different from other activities.
- **MUSIC CD** (included in this program). Each of the 11 tracks includes breathing and practice instructions, the yoga routine set to thematic music (e.g., The snake charmer song used for the snake pose), and cool down instructions.
- **STORYBOOKS** (see below for selection advice).

SELECTING THE BOOKS

At the end of this guide is a list of children’s books that I have used to create **StoryBook Yoga** lessons. In general, look for short books, one to two lines per page. Books with predictable and repetitive refrains such as *Dear Zoo*, illustrated songs such as *Old MacDonald*, and books with universal themes such as peace and kindness (Todd Parr’s *The Peace Book*) work well. Select books that contain at least three yoga opportunities; that is, books that mention or have pictures of three of the nine animals/natural wonders for which music has been provided.

DEMONSTRATION LESSON

1. Select your book (*Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell) and the postures you will target (lion, snake, dog).
2. Arrange the room with towels or mats in a circle and dim the lights. Have all children take off their shoes and socks (optional) and sit comfortably with “pretzel legs.”
3. The first yoga routine is the book song, *It’s Time to Read*. Begin with the first track, “Welcome to **StoryBook Yoga**.” Then, continue to “Book Yoga – Instructions” (track 2); lead the children through the preparatory breathing and pose practice. Finally do “Book Yoga” to the song *It’s Time to Read* (track 3), and cool down.
4. When the “Book Yoga” song and cool down are done, introduce the book’s title, author, and illustrator and begin to read.

“I wrote to the zoo to send me a pet. They sent me an elephant,
but he was too big. I sent him back.”¹

Continue reading. When you finish reading the lion page, put the book down, turn on “Lion Yoga – Instructions” (track 10), lead the children through the practice and continue to the *Lion Leap* song and routine (track 11). The track will end with instructions to return to a sitting position and the message that we’re ready to continue reading today’s story.

5. Resume reading the book until you come to the next yoga opportunity, the snake, and proceed as above.

¹Campbell, R. (1999). *Dear Zoo*. New York, NY: Little Simon.

6. Continue reading until you come to the dog. Once again, finish the page, put down the book, turn on the “Dog Yoga - Instructions,” and lead the children through the routine.
7. Finish reading the book. Explain that the exercise portion of *StoryBook Yoga* is now finished and it’s time for relaxation. Play the “Relaxation – Instructions,” and continue to *Smoke Drifts Up to the Sky*, which guides the children through a short relaxation. *StoryBook Yoga* closing ceremony includes an inspirational rhyme, chanting “OM” (the universal sound of peace) and the “namaste” greeting (“We are all special”) after the relaxation song.

CHILDREN’S BOOKS

Baptiste, B. (2004). *My Daddy is a Pretzel: Yoga for Parents and Kids*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books.

Brett, J. (2003). *On Noah’s Ark*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons.

Cabrera, J. (2000). *Over in the Meadow*. New York, NY: Holiday House.

Campbell, R. (1999). *Dear Zoo*. New York, NY: Little Simon.

Carle, E. (1992). *Draw Me a Star*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Carle, E. (2000). *Dream Snow*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Carle, E. (1984). *The Very Busy Spider*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Carle, E. (1993). *Today is Monday*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Feiffer, J. (1999). *Bark, George*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Fleming, D. (1994). *Barnyard Banter*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company, Inc.

Fleming, D. (1999). *In the Small, Small, Pond*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company, Inc.

Fox, M. (1997). *Time for Bed*. New York, NY: Gulliver Books.

- Gomi, T. (1990). *My Friends*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.
- Gray, L. M. (1997). *Is There Room on the Feather Bed*. New York, NY: Orchard Books.
- Gunson, C. (1995). *Over on the Farm: A Counting Picture Book Rhyme*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.
- Hill, E. (1987). *Spot Goes to the Farm*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Hill, E. (1980). *Where's Spot?* New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Lederer, Suzy (2008). *I Can Do That*. Georgetown, Texas: Children's Publishing.
- Lederer, Suzy (2006). *I Can Say That*. Georgetown, Texas: Children's Publishing.
- MacLeod, E. (1998). *I Heard a Little Baa*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, Limited.
- Martin, B. (1992). *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company.
- Parr, T. (2002). *The Feel Good Book*. Italy: Megan Tingley Books.
- Parr, T. (2004). *The Peace Book*. New York, NY: Little, Brown & Company.
- Parr, T. (2005). *Reading Makes You Feel Good*. New York, NY: Little, Brown & Company.
- Pearson, T. C. (1984). *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.
- Sendack, M. (1962). *Chicken Soup with Rice: A Book of Months*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Seuss, Dr. (1970). *Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?* New York, NY: Random House.
- Shaw, C. G. (1947). *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Children's Books.
- Westcott, N. B. (2003). *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown Children's Books.
- Williams, S. (1990). *I Went Walking*. San Diego, CA: Gulliver Books.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Budilovsky, J. & Adamson, E. (1998). *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga*. NY: Alpha Books.

Komitor, J.B., & Adamson, E. (2000). *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga with Kids*. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books.

YogaKids with Marsha Wenig (1996). Venice, CA: Living Arts (video)

Yoga for Beginners (2000). Venice, CA: Living Arts (video)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Hendler Lederer, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at Adelphi University, Garden City, Long Island, NY. She is a certified children's yoga instructor, providing yoga instruction to the children at the Adelphi University Early Learning Center. She has maintained a personal yoga practice for over 20 years.

Dr. Lederer is a state licensed and nationally certified Speech-Language Pathologist with over 25 years of professional experience in the areas of speech, language, and emergent literacy development and disorders.

“Dr. Suzy” is the author of two children's books, *I Can Say That* and *I Can Do That*, both designed to help all children learn to talk and get ready to read. She also has published and presented regionally and nationally on early language, literacy, and yoga for children.

Dr. Lederer lives in Syosset, NY with her husband and 17-year-old son, Spencer. She is currently at work on *I Can Play That*, the third book in the *I Can* series, designed to encourage language, literacy, and pretend play development.

STORYBOOK YOGA TRACKS

1. Welcome to *StoryBook Yoga*
2. Book Yoga - Instructions
3. *It's Time to Read* (Book Yoga)
From Music Makes It Memorable
by Maryann Harman ©2005
4. Swim Yoga - Instructions
5. *Doing the Swim* (Swim Yoga)
From Steel Band Jamboree by
Frank Leto ©2001
6. Cat Yoga - Instructions
7. *My Kitty Cat* (Cat Yoga)
From Animal Antics by Hap Palmer
©1999
8. Dog Yoga - Instructions
9. *Floppy Doggy* (Dog Yoga)
From Animal Antics by Hap Palmer
©1999
10. Lion Yoga - Instructions
11. *Lion Leap* (Lion Yoga)
From Silly Willy Moves Through
the ABCs by Brenda Colgate
©2003
12. Sun Yoga - Instructions
13. *Zuni Sunrise* (Sun Yoga)
From Patriotic and Morning Time
Songs by Hap Palmer ©2006
14. Chicken Yoga - Instructions
15. *Chicken Dance* (Chicken Yoga)
From Hear Me Sing, Watch Me
Dance by Maryann Harman ©2004
16. Bird and Tree Yoga - Instructions
17. *Hummingbird* (Bird and Tree Yoga)
From Animal Antics by Hap Palmer
©1999
18. Snake Yoga - Instructions
19. *Cobra* (Snake Yoga)
From Animal Antics by Hap Palmer
©1999
20. Pig Yoga - Instructions
21. *Three Pigs Rap* (Pig Yoga)
From The Wide-mouthed Bullfrog
by Maryann Harman ©2002
22. Relaxation - Instructions
23. *Smoke Drifts to the Sky* (Relaxation)
From Easy Does It by Hap Palmer
©1996
24. Closing Ceremony