

***Johnny's Beard* by Michelle Worthington and Katrin Dreiling — Teacher Notes**

Little Pink Dog Books, 2018

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Recommended for 3–6-year-olds/

Pre-school to lower primary

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About *Johnny's Beard*

Johnny's Beard is the story of a man with a beard as big as his heart, or vice versa. He opens his heart and his home to a medley of creatures who wish to escape winter's cold. He refuses no one and carries them home in his beard. However, at home, he realises he has a problem. Can he solve it? How will he solve it?

Themes

Kindness, generosity, friendship, problem solving, winter

About the author Michelle Worthington

Michelle Worthington is an international award-winning author and screen play writer. Two-time winner of the International Book Award and finalist in the USA Best Book Awards, Michelle also received a Gellett Burgess Award and a Silver Moonbeam Award for her contribution to celebrating diversity in literature. Michelle addresses mental health through literacy with her picture books.

Find out more about Michelle Worthington from her website: michelleworthington.com.

Links to the Australian Curriculum

Johnny's Beard is a useful resource for teaching in the three strands of the English Curriculum (language, literature and literacy) and can be used as a springboard for developing skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and creating as children listen to and engage with texts for enjoyment. Extension suggestions provides ways of linking the story with other curriculum areas including maths

Key Curriculum Areas

Learning Areas: English, Mathematics, HASS (families)

General Capabilities: Literacy, Number, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability

Activities

Before reading

The front cover

Show children the front cover of the book. Tell them the title and the names of the author and illustrator.

Ask, “What can you tell me about Johnny and Johnny’s beard?”

Encourage them to comment on physical traits as well as personality and feelings.

Depending on the age of your class, you may wish to note their thoughts, for example:

What does he look like? / Physical traits	What sort of person is he? / Personality	How is he feeling?

Ask, “Why do you think there would be a story about somebody’s beard? What do you think might happen in the story?” Accept all ideas.

The back cover

Show children the back cover. Read the blurb. Ask children if the blurb and the illustrations give any clues as to what might happen in the book.

The end pages

Show the children the end pages as you prepare to read the book. They may like to add to their predictions of what might happen in the story.

Sometimes, when introducing a new story to children, we might look through the book first to give children an idea of what to expect. However, as this story has a surprise ending, we’ll read through first to enable children to make predictions without any further hints.

Reading the story

Turn to the beginning of the story. You may pause at the half title and title pages if you wish as there are additional clues the children may want to discuss, but it is not necessary to do so.

When you turn to the first page of the story, children will be amazed at Johnny's beard and intrigued by what is happening to it. They will want to share their ideas. Encourage them.

Read the text. The layout and font helps you place emphasis in the correct places. Children will love the 'big' words 'glorious' and 'splendiferous' and may wish to repeat them after you.

The next page tells how Johnny looks after his beard. Children may like to join in with washing and combing actions as you read the text.

Continue reading.

On each page, when Johnny meets a new animal, ask children, "What do you think Johnny will say? What do you think Johnny will do?" Continue reading to find out.

On the hedgehog page, ask the same questions, but ask what they think might happen if Johnny lets the hedgehogs into his beard. Turn the page to find out. Oh dear, now there's trouble. What do the children think will happen now that they are all tangled in Johnny's beard?

Turn the page. Now they are in Johnny's home, but Johnny realises there is a problem. What is the problem? (His beard is a mess. His beard is not built for sheltering animals.) The question is asked, "What could he possibly do?" Ask the children to suggest possible solutions.

Ask if they remember any clues from the covers, title or half-title pages, or end papers but don't remind them if they don't remember any.

When the children have exhausted their suggestions, turn the page. Read. Ask the children what Johnny might be thinking as he looks at his reflection in the mirror.

Let's see. Turn the page. What was the solution? How do you know? Do the words tell you? (No, the illustration shows us.) Is it a good solution? Who for? Why? How will Johnny feel without his beard?

Turn the page. Read.

Ask children to tell what they think of the book and of Johnny's solution to the problem. What do Johnny's actions tell us about him? Would you like to have him as a friend? Why?

Returning to the text

You may not wish to re-read the text immediately, but you may return to it over successive days to explore different aspects of the written and visual texts as well as to re-read it.

At all times, when returning to the text, it is important to ensure that children are engaged and that their enjoyment of the story is not spoiled by studying it too closely. Remember, we are reading for enjoyment and entertainment.

Understand that the words of a written text remain the same

As you re-read the story, the repetition and predictability of the text encourages the children to join in. Although it is not in big book format, the text is quite large and children may be able to follow the text along with you, especially the words that have been emphasised. Their memories will do the rest.

Develop concepts of print and knowledge of text structure

As you read, you can assist children develop concepts about print. For example, you can sweep your fingers under the text to highlight directionality and point out the use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and quotation marks. You could invite the children to show you where to start reading and which way to go or to find certain letters, words or punctuation marks in the text.

Phonics and word knowledge

You may wish to draw children's attention to language features used in the text, for example:

Alliteration — soapy suds; long, strong strokes

Onomatopoeia — howled, rattled

Action and describing words that are emphasised using font size and colour, for example:

verbs — rubbed, climbed, stabbed, pecked, poked, trudging

adjectives — twitchy, jittery, swaying, shivering,

and those that are used to **describe Johnny's beard** — magnificent (from blurb), glorious, splendiferous, pride and joy, wondrous, swaying, wavy, tremendous, mess, beautiful; and of course, his breath-takingly beautiful moustache.

(Note: You may wish to ask children to let you know; for example, by putting up their hands, when you say a word that describes Johnny's beard as you re-read the book. List the words on a chart. Encourage children to think of other words that could be used to describe Johnny's Beard. Children may like to choose their favourite word and explain what they like about it.)

Delicious words that children may like to **add to their vocabularies, personal dictionaries or word books** for use in their own writing, for example: glorious, dedication and splendiferous.

Words that children may need to have explained, for example: accommodate (blurb) and boars-hair brush.

Similes — 'on misty days, his beard hung like a fog'.

Words that tell or show us about cold — cold, freeze, twitchy (show), jittery (show), shivering (show). What other words can children add to the list?

Position words — halfway up, at the very top.

Express and develop ideas

Invite children to retell the story in sequence. Encourage them to use words to mark the order; for example, first, second, third, next, then, after, when; and to name the animals in order — mouse, rabbit, raven and hedgehogs.

Invite children to draw and write about their favourite part of the story or what they think of the story.

Invite children to contemplate alternative endings for the story. They will already have thought of some as they suggested possible solutions in the first reading of the story.

Ask children if the events in the story could have really happened and invite them to give reasons for their assessment. Refer to the author's inspiration for writing the book and have them consider if telling the true story would be as much fun as the fictionalised story.

You may wish to perform the story as a play with child actors or cardboard cut-out characters that the children draw or paint.

Extension

Who do you know has a beard?

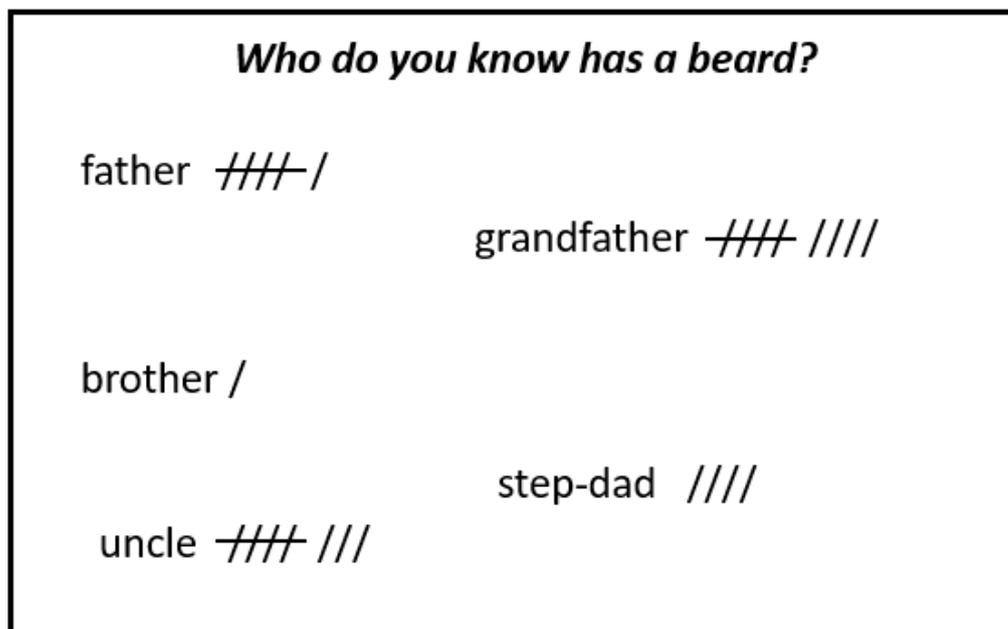
Ask the children, 'Who do you know has a beard?' List their responses on a chart e.g. father, grandfather, uncle, brother, step-dad. (Note: this question is more inclusive than asking *Whose father has a beard?*)

How many have beards?

Work through each relationship listed, one at a time, asking children to indicate if they have, for example, a father with a beard. Mark tallies on the chart to see how many children have a father with a beard. Continue for the other relationships.

Keep in mind that some children may have more than one person in their family circle with a beard.

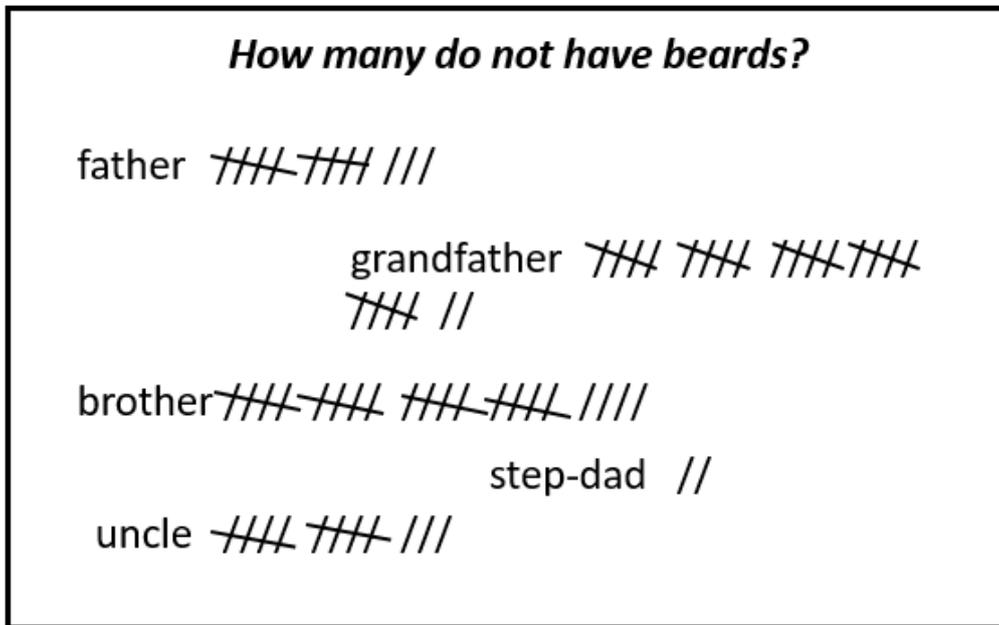
You should end up with tallies to show the number of fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles and step-dads of the children in the class who have beards.



This information can be presented on a graph and comparisons made.

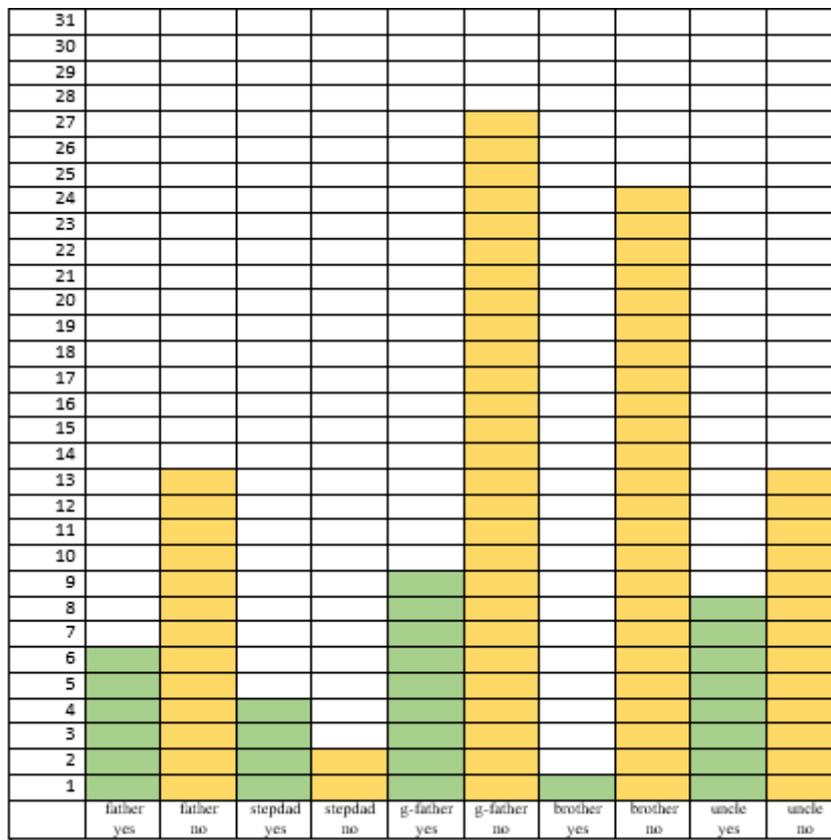
How many don't have beards?

Repeat the process for the same relationships to find out how many do not have beards.



This information can also be presented on a graph and comparisons made.

Alternatively, the information can be merged onto one graph and then interpreted.



How can we describe beards?

Ask children to describe the beards worn by their relatives.

Long, short, bushy, curly, no beard (clean shaven).

Art

Provide children with tools and materials for drawing, painting or collage to create their own picture of Johnny or of one of their family members with a beard.