Celebrate friendship, silliness, and all the things we hold dear with activities inspired by Mo Willems’ beloved Pigeon, Knuffle Bunny, and Elephant & Piggie books.

Setting the Scene

Don’t Let Our Teachers Drive the Bus! The start of a new school year is the perfect time to bring staff together to celebrate and connect with the school community. Create a school bus silhouette using yellow bulletin board paper, decorate the trim with a black permanent marker, and be sure to include lots of windows. Hang the school bus in a high-traffic area of the school. Cut out speech bubbles from white printer paper and provide markers for teachers to create their own quotes or use favorite lines from Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! Invite staff members to the library to have their photos taken and to share silly phrases to convince students to let them drive the bus. Print and cut out the staff photos and attach them with glue onto the bus, along with the speech bubbles. Add a banner that readers “Don’t Let Our Teachers Drive the Bus!”

The Knuffle to My Bunny. Trixie pitches a toddler fit when Daddy inadvertently tosses her precious Knuffle Bunny into the washing machine at the Laundromat.

Ask teachers to submit the names (or even better, pictures) of an object they were attached to as a child. Did they have a special blanket? A favorite stuffed animal? A toy that was part of every bedtime routine? Create a wall display of teacher names and pictures on the left side and comfort object names and pictures on the right side. Invite students and staff to guess teacher/object pairs, then reveal answers later by connecting the pairs with colored yarn.

You’re Invited to a Party. Will it be a fancy party? A fancy costume party? A fancy costume pool party? We must be ready! Take inspiration from Elephant & Piggie’s I Am Invited to a Party and gather various clothes and costumes for students to don. Display a banner or sign with the words, “Party with good books!” and invite students to have their pictures taken in costume holding their favorite books. Hang the photos around the display alongside a table of favorite book selections to keep the party going throughout the month!

books that are pink. Make Piggie decorations by having students draw Piggie’s face on pink paper and cut it out. Attach the Piggie faces to a long piece of string or twine that can hang from one side of the room to the other. Students can make their own pig noses by painting the lids of recycled materials such as yogurt cups and juice bottles. Use hot glue to attach a string to each lid to hold the nose in place. Have a dance party to celebrate all things Elephant & Piggie. (See “It’s a Dance Party!” on page 4 of this guide.) March 1st is National Pig Day, but of course, you could make any day a celebration. National Pigeon Appreciation Day is June 13. And the first Sunday in August is National Friendship Day, which really could be celebrated any day of the year.

I Will Surprise My Friend! Create a book display celebrating friendship and great friends in children’s literature. Feature Elephant & Piggie books and other friend favorites including the Frog and Toad books by Arnold Lobel, the Bink and Gollie books by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee, and the Fly Guy books by Tedd Arnold, which feature Fly Guy and Buzz. For extra fun, wrap each of the books in wrapping paper with a sign reading, “Unwrap & Enjoy with a Good Friend!” Invite students to check out a book to unwrap and read with a friend in your library or classroom.

Games/Contests

Name a Hot Dog. Hold a contest to see who can create an imaginative hot dog inspired by The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog! and the Hot Dog Dress Up Game (http://www.pigeonpresents.com/hotdog). No topping is too wild! Consider “The Construction Worker Dog,” a hot dog topped with a ham sandwich, a hardhat, and a cup of coffee. Or perhaps “The Recess Dog,” a hot dog with ketchup, sidewalk chalk, three deflated kickballs, and a neon blue jumprope. Have students create posters for their made-up hot dogs that include both an illustration and a description of the dog. Award prizes based on wildest idea, most edible, most expensive, and most likely to be eaten by the Pigeon.

Cookie Toss. In The Duckling Gets a Cookie?!, Pigeon can’t believe that the duckling gets a cookie just by asking politely. Create cookies by painting over old Frisbees® or by cutting circles out of cardboard and decorating with crayons and markers. Add details to show off your favorite cookie flavors. Lay a hula hoop on the ground to represent a cookie jar, then have students take turns tossing their cookies to see who can successfully throw the cookie into the jar. For an extra challenge, select one student to be the Pigeon, whose job it is to stop and “eat” any of the cookies before they make it into the cookie jar. The student with the most cookies in the jar wins! Serve cookies to make this activity extra sweet!

Guess the Ingredients. Piggie’s making slop. I wonder what special ingredients she’ll include. Using the items mentioned in I Really Like Slop or some creative choices of your own, make your own “slop.” Add the ingredients to a large pot or a clean trash can. Stir with a giant spoon and have students take turns trying to guess what ingredients went into this special pot of slop. Have each student put on a blindfold before he or she reaches into the slop. Once the student has an item, see if he or she can guess what it is without looking. What will they find in today’s slop? Some tennis balls? A set of dining utensils? A tennis racket? The zanier, the better!

Arts/Crafts

Don’t Forget Your Toothbrush. Have your students imagine they are planning a trip to a location somewhere in the world. What sorts of things will they need to pack? Read Elephant & Piggie’s Let’s Go For a Drive. Have students decorate file folders to look like suitcases and then browse newspaper advertisements and magazines for objects they might need for their trip. Have students cut out the images and glue them inside the file folder. Students can then take turns telling the items they packed for their trip. What common items did students pack? Were there any unusual objects included? Whose suitcase had the most items? And which suitcase would be the heaviest?

Things That Go. Challenge students to create things that go out of collected recycled materials including boxes, plastic bottles, cups, straws and containers. Provide tape
or glue to adhere the pieces together (help students as needed). Have students paint their creations, then put the vehicles on display with an image of the Pigeon dreaming of driving.

**Pigeon Puppets.** Set the scene with Upstart’s “The Pigeon Reads a Book” poster ([http://www.demco.com/goto?mo_willems](http://www.demco.com/goto?mo_willems)), then read aloud one or two of the Pigeon books. Invite students to create a puppet of the Pigeon that can be used to act out scenes from the story. Show students how to draw the Pigeon on cardstock using the steps shared by creator Mo Willems: [http://www.pigeonpresents.com/activities/pigeon_draw01.pdf](http://www.pigeonpresents.com/activities/pigeon_draw01.pdf). Have students color their pigeons as desired. After cutting out the pigeons, attach craft-stick handles using tape or glue. Create videos of students doing their best Pigeon impression to advertise the Pigeon books or to try to convince their teachers to let them have a special privilege. Because who could turn down a Pigeon asking for extra recess, right?

**Writing Activities**

**We Need To Talk.** The books in the Elephant & Piggie series are perfect for readers to practice reading with expression, but the illustrations of Willems’ emotive characters also lend themselves to great opportunities for text prediction. Select a favorite Elephant & Piggie story and find a spread where the characters are showing strong expression on their faces and have obvious body language. Cover the text and invite students to predict what Gerald and Piggie might be saying. Encourage students to read aloud their text predictions in their best Gerald and Piggie voices.

**Trixie’s School Tour Guidebook.** The Knuffle Bunny books feature colorful illustrations of the characters against real-life black and white photos. Have students take photos of important locations throughout the school building (or take the pictures yourself ahead of time). Upload the images and print them out in black and white on printer paper so that they are stretched to fill the paper (8½” x 11”). Give each student a photo. On separate sheets of paper, have students draw cartoons of themselves as tour guides for the school and cut out the cartoons. Then, have students glue the cartoon over the top of the photo. For each photo, on a separate sheet of paper, write information about the location, the names of staff members who can be found there, and why the location is important for new students to know about it. Staple all of the photos and information pages together, or place them in a binder, to create a guidebook of the school.

**Pigeon’s Wish List.** Pigeon wants a lot of things—a hot dog, cookies, a puppy, the chance to drive a bus. Better write them all down before we forget! Challenge your students to create a new list of items Pigeon might demand. Provide a sheet of categories and space for students to write what item Pigeon would like. Or have students dictate their ideas as you write them down. Categories might include a dessert, a field trip location, tickets to a certain concert, or even a new hairstyle. The sky’s the limit!

**Social Studies Activities**

**Map Skills.** One of the items Gerald and Piggie are sure not to forget in *Let’s Go for a Drive* is a map. And when Trixie loses her Knuffle Bunny at the Laundromat in *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, she has to walk past lots of neighborhood milestones in order to retrace her steps. Have students draw a map of their neighborhood and show the path they take to get to school. How might a commute by foot differ from a commute by car or bus? Ask, “How many stops does the bus make before picking you up, and how many stops does it have to make before dropping you off at school? Are there any spots along the way that you always remember, such as a playground, a memorable tree, or a friend’s house?” These are questions that can help students get started as they map their neighborhood. Have students share their maps with the class to see how they compare and if their paths to school overlap.

**The Pigeon Wants a Job.** In *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, the bus driver entrusts the reader to keep an eye on things until he gets back. While he’s gone, Pigeon makes several attempts to convince the reader to let him drive the bus, including playing a game of charades.
in which he, to no surprise, pretends to drive the bus. Play a game of charades with the students where one student is assigned the role of Pigeon acting out driving a vehicle. The audience has to guess the job and what vehicle Pigeon wants to drive. Jobs may include taxi driver, garbage truck driver, forklift operator, rescue helicopter pilot, and astronaut. Though charades is typically played without making any sounds, adding sound effects will only make this game better!

**On This City Block.** Paint a mural of stores Trixie might pass if she ran through your neighborhood. Would she pass a grocery store? A bank? A karate dojo? A hardware supply store? A popular fast food chain? Students can create their murals on individual sheets of paper or as a group on bulletin board paper. For extra fun, invite students to hide an image of Knuffle Bunny inside one of the store windows in their paintings and see if classmates can spot the missing bunnies.

**Math/Science Activities**

**Favorite Ice Cream.** Elephant and Piggie's *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* may elicit a few stomach rumbles after reading. Why not use the opportunity to talk about favorite ice creams? Have 4–5 students volunteer their favorite flavors of ice cream. Survey the class to determine students’ favorite among the choices given. Create a pictograph from the responses and talk about the data by asking students to identify the most popular flavor, the popularity of flavors from greatest to least, and any other observations they make. As an extension, have students think of other survey topics, such as favorite pets, favorite school subjects, or favorite outside games. Give each student a clipboard and allow them time to survey one another to learn more about their classmates’ preferences. Have each student create a graph of the responses they collected and share with the class.

**The Pigeon Wants a Walrus.** Pigeon lists all the reasons he thinks a puppy would be the perfect pet for him in *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!* What other ill-fitted animals might Pigeon request next? Invite students to play a game with you in which they name an animal and describe a certain number of animal features based on the roll of a die. Write the names of several different animal classes (mammals, fish, reptiles, birds, amphibians, insects, arachnids) on separate index cards. Fold each of the index cards and place them in a basket. Draw an animal class from the basket and select a student to name an animal that fits the given class. Then have the student roll the die to determine the number of features he or she has to name about the animal. Chart the animals named in the public space so that students can keep track not only of what animals have been shared, but also what animals fit into each class.

**Knuffle Bunny’s Shapes.** Knuffle Bunny has seen a lot since being left in the Laundromat, at school, and on an airplane. Go on a shape hunt with Knuffle Bunny to locate objects that match given shapes. Have students work in pairs throughout the classroom to locate and identify shapes represented by classroom objects. Give each pair a copy of the table on page 6. Have students roll a die to determine how many of each shape they need to find. They can write the name of the object that corresponds to the shape in their table or draw a picture of the object in the appropriate column.

**Online Activities**

**It’s a Dance Party!** Having a dance party is an easy way for students to feel connected and gain a sense of community. Introduce the Elephant and Piggie dance game ([http://www.pigeonpresents.com/DanceGame/](http://www.pigeonpresents.com/DanceGame/)) by projecting the website for all to see using an LCD projector. Have students select three songs each for Gerald and Piggie, then ask the class to choose which character they will follow along with during the dance party. Ask, “Who is going to dance like Piggie this round? And who will dance like Gerald?” The number of students doing each is inconsequential but allows students to watch for friends doing the same moves. Encourage students to change roles for each round of the game, and challenge students to find what dance pairings unlock special combo animations.
Knuffle Bunny's Baggage Claim Game. Help Trixie collect her family's bags from the baggage claim. Click on three correct items to win. Go to: http://www.gomo.net/page.php?name=BaggageClaim.

Hot Dog Dress-Up. Pigeon wants a hot dog! Choose up to three toppings to go on the dog, including ketchup, mustard, relish, marshmallows, a bowling ball, and underwear. Go to: http://www.pigeonpresents.com/hotdog/.

Explore More with Mo's Characters. Find games, coloring sheets, videos, and teacher kits for Willems' books on these two robust kids' pages.


Visit Go Mo! (http://www.gomo.net) for activities featuring characters from Willems' books with HarperCollins Publishers, including Knuffle Bunny, Cat the Cat, and Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs.

Bibliography

Bink and Gollie series by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee. Candlewick.


Fly Guy series by Tedd Arnold. Cartwheel.


Elephant & Piggie Books


Pigeon Books

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! by Mo Willems. Hyperion, 2003.


Knuffle Bunny Books


## Knuffle Bunny’s Shapes

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>