

Hello Ocean—by Pam Munoz Ryan

A young girl explores the beauty of the ocean with all her five senses. Beautiful language and pictures combine to bring a day at the beach to life.

All the Places to Love—by Patricia MacLachlan

A young boy discovers the values he can find close to his family farm and delights in welcoming his baby sister to a world he finds fascinating. Great illustrations by Mike Wimmer and flowing language make this a book adults won't mind reading over and over again. It's a great book about welcoming a new sibling, too.

Verdi—by Janell Cannon

A young yellow boa decides that he'll never become as green and boring as his lounging elders—and discovers that he can stay true to himself even as he grows up. Giving voice to the spirit of the young, this story manages to make a hero out of a snake.

Finklehopper Frog—by Irene Livingston, illustrated by Brian Lies

What if everybody else is jogging, and despite trying very hard to fit in to the running crowd, all you do is hop? In this rhyming story, an energetic frog discovers that “hopping is the way for me,” and learns a lesson about pursuing his values his own way.

Sunbread—by Elisa Kleven

A book that's perfect for gray, rainy days! In jaunty rhyme, this book tells the story of a baker who brings joy to her (animal) customer's lives by baking sun bread so yummy it wakes up the sleeping sun! Includes a sun bread recipe, so you can replicate the experience at home one rainy day!

The Philharmonic Gets Dressed—by Karla Kuskin

Young children are fascinated with everyday activities. This book takes that fascination and provides a glimpse into how musicians get ready for their Friday night performance. Silly and hilarious, this book also provides an opportunity to learn about obscure pieces of clothing (slips and tails, anyone?), to discuss the different work people do, and to introduce orchestral instruments.

The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Grey Bridge—by Hildegard Swift

A classic, in print since 1942, it tells the story of a still-standing real little lighthouse in New York City, and its discovery that while it may be smaller than the new grey bridge rising above it, it still has an important job to do.

Bats at the Beach—by Brian Lies

What happens when you imagine bats having a night at the beach? Beautifully illustrated, this rhyming book is an all-time favorite, and phrases such as “east sky purples, sun is coming” stick with children and enrich their language permanently.