

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Stories Have a Message.”

Unit 6 marks the beginning of the second half in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous unit, I am providing activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, we’ll be exploring and discovering the messages of different stories by reading a range of genres from fables and animal fantasy to poetry and realistic fiction. To determine a story’s message, we’ll consider what characters do and how they behave.

The suggested activities provide an opportunity for you and your child to have fun together while discovering the messages behind stories.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Stories Have a Message

As we read the selections in this unit, we'll determine and compare the messages of different stories and think about the question "How do we know what is right?" Here are some activities designed to encourage you and your child to explore the idea that stories have a message and to build on skills and concepts your child has learned in school.

Topic Connection

A Tale of Two Characters

In this Unit, we compare different characters' behaviors. Practice this skill at home with a game. Think about two favorite fairy tales. Write down the names of the main characters from both tales on slips of paper or index cards. Keep the piles for the two tales facedown and separate. Have your child turn over the top card of both piles. Discuss how the two characters are the same and different, including the consequences of their behaviors.

Vocabulary Connection

Act the Word

Explore some of the vocabulary your child is learning in school with this game that will get you moving. Write the following vocabulary words on slips of paper: **peek, cry, shout, grin, stare, talk, knock, tap, laugh, whisper, huff, and look**. Place the vocabulary words in a pile face down. Take turns selecting a card and acting it out for your child to guess. Next, read the word together and use it in a sentence.

Comprehension Connection

Story Clues

In this unit, we'll be discussing and identifying story elements. Extend this learning at home by playing Story Clues with your child. You can go first to model how to play. Select a story but don't tell your child what it is. The object is for your child to guess the story's identity from story element clues that you provide. For example, you might say that the story is set in the woods and the main character wears a red cape. If your child doesn't guess from those two clues, then you can add more. When she guesses, it's her turn to select a story for you to guess.

Phonics Connections

Sound Search

In our phonics instruction, your child is learning to recognize words with the *b*, *d*, and hard *g* (as in *get*) sounds. As you go about your day-to-day activities, both at home and around town, help your child take notice of words that begin and/or end with those sounds. For example, at the park, point out a boy, a girl, and a dog.