

Teacher/Parent Notes

RECOMMENDED FOR:

Pre-primary to lower primary students 3-6 years old

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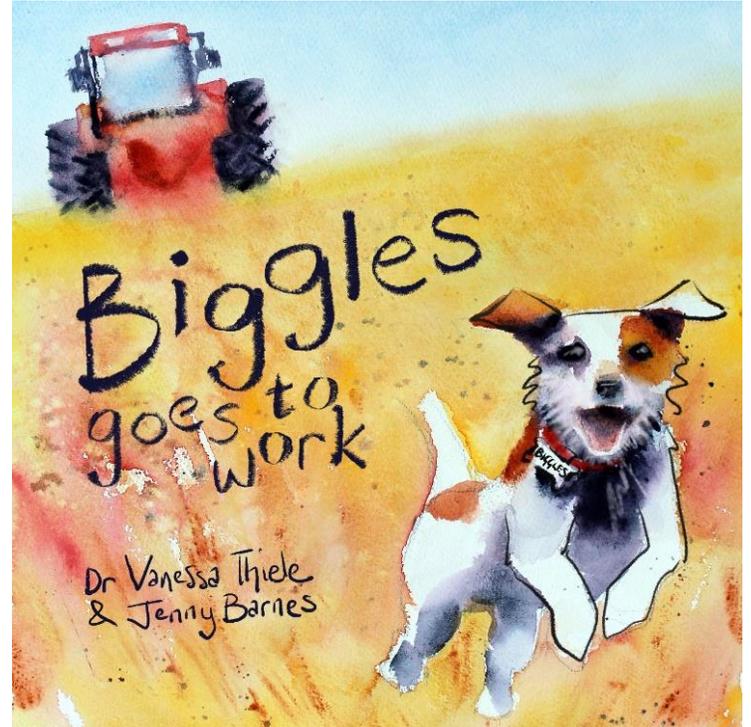
KEY CURRICULUM AREAS:

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK:

This book is a heartwarming tale about a little Jack Russel who works on the farm and learns the joy of helping others. The book aims to foster social and emotional intelligence, work ethic and grit.

THEMES:

- Work ethic
- Contribution and social intelligence
- Perseverance and resilience
- Farm life
- Dogs



Plot Summary

Biggles Goes to Work is the first Biggles book introducing the central protagonist, Biggles the Jack Russel, who is going off to work in the field with Farmer Joe. Biggles loves to help out with the land cultivation and hay bailing, and takes to his jobs with diligence and enthusiasm!

Working the farm can be hot, dusty and tiring work, but Biggles enjoys contributing and helping farmer Joe, unlike Cat, who prefers to be lazy and becomes bored and cranky in her idleness. At the end of the day, Biggles finds his effort is greatly appreciated. He reflects on how good it feels to help others, and snuggles up to the fire when work is done.

About the Author

Dr Vanessa Thiele is a Psychologist who dedicates herself to changing people's lives through positive psychology and resilience strategies. Finding herself with two young children of her own and constantly reading books to them, she decided to try her hand at writing some herself.

Vanessa aims to give her children the mindset skills to master the struggles of childhood with confidence and grace, and she hopes her dalliance into writing will do the same for your special little people too.

About the Illustrator

Jenny K Barnes is an artist living in Melbourne, Australia with her partner and two young children. From a young age Jenny loved drawing and painting and having left a corporate career behind has returned to the paintbrush to follow her creative passions.



About the Book

'Biggles Goes to Work' is an illustrated book for children aged 4-8. The central character is Biggles, a little Jack Russel who works on the farm. The book appeals to children through its delightful farm characters depicted in water colour and digital illustration, and its playful rhyming verse.

This book also captures the hearts of adults and teachers alike with the underlying theme of altruism and helping others. The Biggles Book series can be compared with Hairy McLary and other Lynley Dodd books.

Inspiration for the Character

The Biggles Book series is based on the real Biggles who spent his life working on farms in the Author's husband's contracting business on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. The Author was so captivated by all the adventures he had that she vowed to write a book in his honour.

What eventuated was a four-book series incorporating tales of altruism and work ethic, resilience, individual strengths, gratitude, emotional intelligence and friendship. The aim of the series is to delight young readers while instilling powerful life skills to enable them to flourish into their adult lives.

Partner Charity

Vanessa and Jenny made a conscious choice to self-publish so they could partner with Drought Angels and contribute one dollar from every book sale to the registered charity supporting farming families affected by drought and natural disasters. Biggles displayed the same resilience and work ethic that our farmers do, and this is their way of showing our gratitude to the people who enable us put food on our plates every day.



Themes of the Book

The four books in the Biggles series aim to foster key positive mindset and social skills that map to the Berry Street Education Model, such as:

- Identifying their individual character strengths
- Resilience and perseverance to work through challenges and setbacks
- Growth mindset and viewing failure as learning
- Work ethic and finding joy in contribution
- Social intelligence and friendship skills
- Empathy and compassion for others

All of the books can be used to start discussions with children that influence their attitudes and thinking.

Biggles Goes to Work can prompt a discussion about how contributing to a greater cause feels good and is a positive thing to do. It also increases recognition and appreciation of help given to them by others.

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others" -Mahatma Gandhi



Teacher/parent guidelines for Grit and Growth

1. Set goals focused on behaviour rather than outcome

If a child defines success as achieving an outcome goal, such as getting an A in math, then they will feel that they are a failure if/when they do not meet their goal. By contrast, when the goal is focused on their behaviour, (i.e., I'm going to practice my math problems, keep trying when it's hard, and try my best on the test day), they feel more in control, and they are able to focus on and celebrate what they did well, even if they didn't get the result they wanted.

2. Praise effort, be mindful of your language

Praising efforts fosters resilience and reminds people of their role in a successful outcome. Often young children are praised for 'being smart' rather than having a good plan. When a child is praised for an ability (e.g., "You are really smart. You are so clever."), it teaches a fixed mindset. If they have heard many times how smart they are, failure feels like they aren't smart anymore. Use language that encourages perseverance and praises effort. E.g., "You're such a hard worker!", and "Well done on some great effort!". This helps to foster a growth mindset.

3. Use failure as an opportunity to role model a growth mindset

When children do experience failure, it is very important that adults help them frame those experiences in a constructive light. Failures are a wonderful opportunity to influence the thinking of these young minds. Try these"

- That's ok. I bet if you keep trying you'll get there!
- You didn't quite get it this time. What have you learned from all the work you did?
- Every time you try you get stronger and build your skills.
- You didn't fail. You're just not there yet.
- See how much better you are at this now than at the start! I know you can try again.
- You're not there quite yet. Keep at it. I believe in you.

Using Attributions to foster Grit and a Growth Mindset

Attribution theory holds that the beliefs people have about themselves, and the reasons they attribute for their successes and failures, has a significant impact on their future performance.

Put simply, if a child believes they are "just no good at math", the effort and perseverance they put into their math learning will result in an outcome that confirms they are no good at math.

Alternatively, if a child believes "I'm a hard worker, I can figure it out", then they will engage in behaviours that enable them to achieve a better result.

This is the theory that inspired research greats to investigate how we can leverage our knowledge of attribution theory to enable children to reach their potential.

According to Angela Duckworth, researcher, MacArthur Fellowship winner and TED talk speaker with over eight million views, grit is "perseverance and passion for long term goals".

Duckworth's research has evolved around discovering why some individuals accomplish more than other individuals despite having the same talent, intelligence, and resources. She has discovered that grit can be related to how much you can inspire yourself, access your passion, and sustain your motivation.

Carol Dweck's work focuses on Growth Mindset, and she has shown that people can learn to adopt a growth mindset. Her research found that when students had a growth mindset; a mindset which perceives a challenge as an opportunity to learn rather than an obstacle to overcome, they responded with constructive thoughts and their behaviour showed persistence rather than defeat.

This Biggles book can be used to start a conversation about working hard even when there isn't an immediate reward. These conversations are an opportunity to positively influence the child's beliefs about their ability.



CLASSROOM / HOME ACTIVITIES

Before reading the book:

What do you think this book is about? (a dog, farms, working on the farm)

What do farmers do on the farm? (grow vegetables, keep animals etc)

Discussion Points

After reading the story, ask a few of these open questions to help the child make connections between themes in the story and their own life.

- What kind of feelings did you have reading this book? Happy, sad?
- What words (adjectives) would you use to describe Biggles? (playful, happy, funny, helper)
- Why do you think Biggles made felt good at the end of the story?
- What sort of things do you help with at home?
- What do you sometimes help your friends with?
- How do you feel when your friends or your family help you with things?
- Biggles worked so hard that day! When do you work hard like Biggles?
- How do you feel when someone says thank you for helping and working hard?

This discussion influences and attitude that putting in effort, helping others, and contributing to a greater cause feels good and is a positive thing to do. It also increases recognition and appreciation of help given to them by others.

Follow up action

Give the children opportunity to be responsible for some age-appropriate tasks. These might be putting their toys away, packing up their work area, tidying the class room, or setting the table. When the children have completed tasks, use positive attributions to recognize their effort. E.g., "Wow, this room looks tidy! You must be really neat and tidy kids!". Note how well things work when everyone helps together to complete tasks.

WORKSHEET: Circle the Rhyming Words

See if you can connect the rhyming words!

The following words are scattered on the page:

- Wait
- Belly
- Lot
- Fun
- Pass
- One
- Gate
- Go
- Done
- Shed
- Smile
- Mate
- Beat
- Spot
- Grass
- While
- Sun
- Smelly
- Joe
- Sweet
- Instead

The words "Smile" and "While" are circled in yellow, and a yellow line connects them, indicating they are a rhyming pair.

WORKSHEET: Find the Verbs

Verbs are doing words. Circle the verbs that appear in Biggles Goes to Work

A word search grid containing the following words:

- Hiss
- Belly
- Rest
- Chase
- Work
- Cat
- Gate
- Biggles
- Hop
- shed
- Smile
- Help
- Peek
- Grass
- Farm
- sun
- Bounce
- Jump
- Pull
- Hay
- Joe

The word "Hop" is circled in yellow.

WORKSHEET: Name the Puppies

See if you can name these puppies after a letter in the alphabet. How many puppy names can you come up with for each letter? For example, Biggles starts with a B, and other doggie names could be Billy, Bozo, Bounce or Bernard.

Letter	Names
B	Biggles,
C	
D	
H	
J	
K	
M	
P	
R	
S	
T	
W	

