



RedRover Readers Program

**Discussion and Activity
Guide for**

Ginger Finds a Home

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Concepts:

- What role does time play in developing a relationship with a cat (or in any relationship)?
- How is patience important for a relationship with a cat (or in any relationship)?
- What is trust? What does trust look like in a relationship between a girl and a cat?
- What happens when a cat (or anyone) receives a name?

Before Reading

Write on the board: “How long does it take to make a friend?”

Ask students to recall walking into the classroom on the first day of school. Ask them to imagine looking around at the new room and maybe some unfamiliar faces. Ask them to remember the first time they met the teacher. Ask, “How did you feel?”

Look at the students. Pause and listen silently.

Share the cover of the book and the title with the students.

- Who could be Ginger?
- Where is Ginger?

Clarify Vocabulary

What is trust?

What is “patience?”

Ask:

- How could a person show patience toward a cat or another animal?
- How could patience lead to trust?
- How do animals “communicate” to people?

Ask students to think about the question you wrote on the board, “How long does it take to make a friend?” while they listen to the story.

During Reading

Read the story aloud. Ask some or all of these questions:

After reading the text: “She tried to stroke his fur, but he was frightened and ran to hide in the weeds, ask “Why do you think Ginger was frightened?”

After reading the text: "She came to visit him every day. She brought him nice things to eat." And "She called him Ginger," ask students why someone would name an animal. Ask students what happens when someone has a name, as opposed to just being called "kid" or "cat."

After reading the text: "...when she stroked him, he purred, ask "What does it mean when a cat purrs?"

After reading the text: "He had never been in a house before," ask, "How do you think he is going to feel?" and "Why?"

After reading the text: "She couldn't see him anywhere. "Ginger!" she called. But Ginger didn't come," ask, "How do you think the girl feels?"

After reading the text: "He is a very happy cat," ask, "Why do you think Ginger is happy now?"

After Reading

Use questions to guide students through the idea that patience and time help create a relationship between a girl and a cat.

- How does the cat react to the girl at first? Why?
- How does the girl respect the cat's feelings?
- Why does the cat learn to trust the girl?
- Why is the cat nervous in the house at first?
- Why is the girl disappointed when Ginger runs back out?
- How does the girl react when she sees Ginger return?
- What does the cat say? ("Meow.")

Activity: How does Ginger find a home?

On the whiteboard or chart paper, create a chart with six blocks. Have students tell you the story of *Ginger Finds a Home* in order. (Possible responses are in italics. Try to acknowledge and clarify each student's response. Place the appropriate responses in the spaces in the correct order. Emphasize the narrative time of the story, and that the relationship between the cat and the girl develops over time.)

1. <i>An orange cat lives in a patch of weeds.</i>	2. <i>He searches for food and water.</i>
3.	4.
5.	6.

Retell the story with the students. Point to the words as you read the story aloud. Make any edits as needed, as the students request.

Ask:

- What role does time play in developing a relationship with a cat (or in any relationship)?
- How is patience important for a relationship with a cat (or in any relationship)?
- How does trust develop between the girl and Ginger? (Review the illustrations in the middle of the story.)

Extensions

A. A Story

Provide students with strips of register tape. (Or you can just use 8-1/2 x 11 sheets of paper.) Have students fold the paper to create story blocks (six to eight blocks). Ask students to illustrate and write the story of Ginger or the story of another animal. This can be a story that actually occurred or one that they imagine.

B. Friendship

Ask students to share stories of animals they have been friends with. These stories may be real or imaginary. As you listen, focus on the qualities of the friendship.

Invite students to illustrate a friendship between themselves and a cat or another animal.

Take time to listen to the students describe their pictures. Ask students why a person could want to be friends with an animal. Ask students how time is necessary for developing a friendship.

C. Cat's needs

Bring supplies necessary to take care of a cat. Show a collar and tag, bowls, toys, pillow, etc. Guide the students through thinking about why these things are necessary for the cat's happiness and health.

Ask:

- What makes a cat feel safe and cared for?
- What does it mean to "take care" of an animal?
- Do you think the girl will "take care" of Ginger? What makes you think that?

D. Pretend to be a cat

Cats have distinct body language that can sometimes be difficult to understand. Help students to better understand what cats are trying to communicate by demonstrating a few cat postures and inviting the students to try them with you. Pretend to be cats together.

Frightened and/or Angry: Get on the floor and cup your hands to your ears backward for ears back and arch your back. Explain that a cat that has his ears back and his back arched and rounded may be frightened and/or angry. Make a "hissing" sound. Explain cats may hiss when they are angry as another signal to stay away.

Frightened/Nervous: (optional: show the illustrations of Ginger in *Ginger Finds a Home*, where she is nervous.) When cats are scared or nervous they slink lower to the ground and their eyes get big. Get on the floor on your hands and knees and then pretend to see something that makes you nervous or scared. Slink low to the ground and make your eyes wide.

Relaxed: Lie on your back and make a “purring” sound and explain that this is a relaxed posture. Ask students to “purr” along with you.

Happy/Content: Cats knead or make biscuits with their front paws when they are happy and content. Pretend to make biscuits and knead bread like a cat might.

Consider reading or using the illustrations from *How to Talk to Your Cat*: www.RedRover.org/books

At the End of the Lesson

Ask students to reflect on the questions, “What did you learn from today’s book and discussion that you didn’t know before?” You can do this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or related class meeting format, by having students fill out index cards, or other formats as you choose. We recommend that you have a variety of formats. After getting a sense of what the students learned, reinforce key themes that they mentioned and add perhaps one or two that you would like them to keep in mind. Also discuss any follow up assignments or take home materials. Remember the students’ responses to the question, “What did you learn?” to add to your report about this reading.