



RedRover Readers and Early Ages Gathering to Learn Empathy Through Stories (EAGLES) Program

GRADE(S): 3-5 **SEL ALIGNMENT:** Self-awareness; Social Awareness;
Responsible decision-making

WINTER'S GIFTS

Written by Kaitlin B. Curtice | Illustrated by Gloria Félix

TIME: 35 minutes (reading and discussion - 20; activity - 15)

MATERIALS: Winter's Gifts book, crayons, paper, construction paper

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Seasons, observing nature, being grateful for nature

Land acknowledgment: You may want to do a land acknowledgment before this reading and lesson to determine what land you are on. [Native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca) is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.

BEFORE READING: As a group, discuss the following topics.

- What does it mean to wait for something? (Patience, anticipation)
- What does "gift" mean?
- What do you think "gratitude" means? (Being grateful, saying thank you)
- What is culture? What does culture mean to you? (Possible answers: culture is the ways and beliefs you are accustomed to, like the food you eat, stories you tell, what you celebrate, clothes you wear)
- Ask the students to predict what they think will happen in the story. Show the cover and ask: What do you think this book will be about?

DURING READING:

- On the first page with Dani reaching for the tree branch, ask: What do you notice about this picture? (It is snowing, there is a dog and a child, it is winter, etc.)
- On the page with the bears huddling together next to the people and the dog huddling together ask: Let's compare these two families. What is similar about these two pages? What is the family of bears doing? What is the family of people and their dog Sam doing? Why? (They are cold, they love each other, to keep warm, etc.)
- On the page where Dani and her family are seated at the table, say: "There is the dog again with the family seated around the table. What are Dani and her family celebrating? How are they celebrating?" (Eating a meal with candles to honor the beginning of winter, the sun's birthday, their love for Mother Earth, ancestors, and seasons.)
- On the page that says, "Dani walks away confused," ask: How do you think Dani feels in this picture? Why does she feel that way? Wait for answers then ask: Have you ever felt as if your friends didn't understand your ways and beliefs like Dani? If so, when?
- On the page with Dani sitting in her fort, ask: How do you think Dani is feeling in the picture? What about her body language tells you that? How does it look like the dog Sam might be feeling in this picture? What about his body tells you that?



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DURING READING CONTINUED:

- On the page showing the friends inside after sledding it says, “Dani is proud to be friends with Mother Earth.” Ask: What do you think Dani will decide to do to show she is proud to be friends with Mother Earth? (Show her friends her tree.)

AFTER READING:

- Ask the children what this book was about. Ask them to summarize the story: What happened in this book? What is it about?
- Ask: What were a few of Winter’s Gifts you remember from the story? (Grass, flowers, leaves on the trees, sun, moon, etc.) Ask: How are Winter’s Gifts different from the ones we might receive from our family and friends?
- Revisit the page where Dani is sitting in her fort. Reread, “She talks to the trees and touches the snow. She thanks them for their gifts.” Ask: Have you ever talked with nature or animals in nature? Have you ever felt glad for nature or animals around you? How did you show you were grateful?

AFTER READING ACTIVITY:

- Dani’s dog Sam is with her on every page of this book. Think of an animal who you like to have close to you. Write a story or draw a picture of this animal. What do they look like? What do they like to do? How does it make you feel to have them close to you?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- Phases of the moon. Reread the page where Dani’s teacher is showing the phases of the moon on a chalkboard. Ask what gifts Dani is grateful for (darkness and light). Ask students to draw a picture of the Earth and the smaller moon. Ask them to choose one of the phases of the moon to represent in their drawing. To extend this activity use the Internet to look up phases of the moon. Talk about each phase: waxing crescent, first quarter, waxing gibbous, full moon, waning gibbous, last quarter and waning crescent, new moon. Ask the students which phase of the moon they like the most. Which would give us the most light at night? (Add name of moon and sun from the story: sun = gises and moon = dbekgises.)



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES CONTINUED:

- Nature journal – create and observe. Tell the students you are going to create a journal or list of things that we see in nature. Ask: What can we learn from paying attention to nature? Go outside (or think back to the last time you were outside in nature). What did you see? Write down the name or draw the natural things you saw. Then share with the group.
- Gratitude activity. The story says, “Your thankfulness is your gift to Mother Earth Dani.” Ask: How can we show gratitude to Mother Earth? How can we keep Mother Earth clean and cared for? Draw a large tree for the whole group and ask the students to add things they are grateful for to each leaf or branch of the tree. The more we are grateful for, the larger our tree gets. Talk about reciprocity, working together, friendship, and saying thank you to Mother Earth.

AT THE END OF THE LESSON: Ask students to reflect on these questions. Try this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or ask students to fill out index cards.

- How did you feel about today’s book and discussion?
- Did today’s book and discussion change how you think about anything in your life?
- What is one lesson from this book that you are taking home today?
- What is one thing from our time together that you can apply to your own life?
- What did you learn from today’s book and discussion that you didn’t know before?

DON'T FORGET TO REPORT YOUR READING:

RedRover.org/reportreadings