

Story Study Facilitator Resource Pack: Lara the Yellow Ladybird

Teachers Guide: Read the following paragraphs yourself prior to facilitating the discussion questions with children. This will enable you to ask the questions confidently and use them as tools to help children figure out what is going on in the story as well as what lessons can be learnt from it. By asking questions and having children come up with answers, their learning experience will be more fun and more effective than if you were to simply give them all of the answers. If they are struggling to find strong answers, use the following paragraphs to help steer children in a more focused direction.

Story Summary

Lara is born with yellow wings, but all of the other Ladybirds have red wings. Even though everyone else likes Lara's yellow wings, she just wants to fit in and be normal. When Lara's mother paints her wings red to cheer Lara up, nobody recognizes Lara and so they just ignore her. Join Lara as she learns a valuable lesson about being comfortable in your own skin and the importance of diversity.

Key Themes

- **Key Theme #1:** The story is speaking to children who might be feeling that they are different from their peers – or perhaps that they don't fit in with the rest of the crowd – by helping them to appreciate their uniqueness. However, it also teaches children that they shouldn't care if someone is different from them. In fact, it is our unique differences, and diversity in general, that make the world such an interesting and awesome place to live.
- **Key Theme #2:** Another powerful message of the story is that Lara learns the importance of loving herself the way she is -- nobody is perfect, and no one loves everything about their appearance. In order to be happy, we need to learn to love ourselves as we are. We should still try to grow, but we can't get bent out of shape about not being perfect or not being like everyone else. We are all excellent and beautiful just the way we are, we just need to do a better job seeing it.
- **Key Theme #3:** The story may also help us think about an important lesson as we deal with COVID-19. Just as Lara has to accept her appearance, we will all probably have to learn to do the same with "the new normal". We need to stay positive and appreciate the beautiful world that we live in. Although many things are likely to get worse for a while, we are fortunate to be weathering this storm in a rural area where there is lots of space to be outside and enjoy fresh air. For most of us, this is not the first time that we have faced adversity, so we know that we can handle it. We need to stay vigilant and protect ourselves from the disease (especially as cases continue to rise around the country at an alarming rate), but we also need to make sure that we all stay positive and appreciate simply being alive.

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Read the Story

Before reading the book, look at the cover and ask children what they think the story might be about. Here are some helpful tips to guide you before, during, and after reading the story:

- Give them enough time to state what they think and feel.
- Read through the words while showing children what's happening on each page.
- Spend time with each page and explain what is going on.
- Ask questions about what is going on in each picture.
- Once you have finished reading, ask children what they liked about the story.
- Ask some questions from the list below (choose questions that seem relevant for your child/group of children).
- Make sure that **everybody** gets a chance to ask and answer questions. Don't let the older, more confident, and/or louder children take over everything.

Discussion Questions and Topics

Comprehension Questions to ask children – These questions are designed to see how well children understood the story:

- Do Lara's friends like her yellow wings? How do we know? How, exactly, do they describe Lara's wings?
- Is Lara the only unique ladybird at her school? Who else does Miss Miya describe as unique? What is unique about each of these ladybirds?
- At the end of the story, what colours does Lara think about painting her wings?
- Who paints Lara's wings red?
- Who does Lara meet on her way to school?
- What colour are Lara's mother's wings?
- How does Lara get the red paint off of her wings?
- What does Lara paint on her wings at the end of the story?

Discussion Questions to ask children – These questions are designed to help children think critically about the story and formulate their own individual ideas and opinions:

- The book claims that everyone loved Lara's yellow wings and that, at school, she played with lots of friends. If this is the case, then why is Lara unhappy?
- Why is it hard for Lara to feel that she is different than the other ladybirds? It seems that she wants to sacrifice being special and unique, just so that she can be like everyone else; why is it so important to most of us to fit in?
- Everyone in the story seems to embrace Lara even though she is different, is this always the case in real life? Why are we sometimes mean to people who are different?
- Why does Lara's mom paint her wings red? What do you think Lara's mom thought was going to happen to Lara once she painted her wings? Do you think this was good parenting? Why or why not? What would you have done if Lara was your child?
- When Lara shows up with her wings painted red, why don't people greet her? Are they trying to snub her? Is it possible that they just don't recognize her?
- How might this story help us think about albinism? Are we always as embracing as Lara's community when it comes to being born a different colour?
- Most people see Lara's wings as beautiful and special but she doesn't see it that way (at least she doesn't see it that way at the beginning of the story). How can this story help us think about the proverb, "the grass is always greener on the other side"?

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- What lesson does Lara learn at the end of the story? How does she realize this? What advice does Miss Miya give Lara that changes her mind about her unique wings?
- Lara decides not to paint her wings again, except for fun. Why does she make an exception for “fun” in her ban on wing painting? What is the difference between trying a new colour wing just for fun, and trying it the way Lara did in the beginning of the story? Why does the story end with Lara painting her wings with stars and rainbows? How does this reinforce the message of the importance of uniqueness?

Activity 1: Making Cards for Someone Special

- **Resources:**
 - 2 pieces of paper
 - Crayons/paint
 - Natural things (soil, twigs, shells, etc.)
 - A pair of scissors
 - Pencil
 - Eraser

Activity: The child must put together what they have found and use it to make a card for a family member that they think is special to them.

Activity 2: Favourite Book Page Recreation

- **Resources:**
 - Few pieces of paper
 - Crayons and/or coloured pencils
 - Pencil
 - Marker

Activity: Give each child a piece of paper and crayons. Let them go outside and find different textures. Once they find them, they should put their paper on top of the surface with that texture and colour the paper. Encourage them to find as many different textures as possible. Once children have filled up a few pages with textures, bring everyone back together with their pages. Explain that the pictures in the book are made by paper strips with different textures. The pieces are then cut with scissors or torn into shapes and then assembled to make the pictures. Then, some details are painted on. Using the textured paper that you created, recreate your favorite page from the book, or a scene of your choice on an A4 paper.

Activity 3: Memory Card Game

- **Resources:**
 - Copies of ladybirds
 - Crayons
 - Piece of cardboard
 - Glue
 - Pair of scissors

Activity:

Make the Cards: Give each child two copies of a handout of the bugs card page. Let them color the two pages so that they are identical (if the two spotted ladybird is green on the one page, it should be green on the other as well). You may have to help children make sure that their pages match perfectly, or you can have them use just one colour on everything to make things easier. Once both pages have been

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coloured, paste each page onto a piece of cardboard. Once done, cut the cardboard in two so that each piece has one picture on it. Now, you have the cards you need to play the game.

Play the game: Have children shuffle all of the cards and place them individually facing down. Then, have them take turns picking up two cards at a time with the hope of finding two of the same cards (a pair). If a child picks up two cards that are the same, the child keeps that pair. If not, the child must put the cards back in the same place that he/she picked them up. Children must keep taking turns until every pair has been matched. Whoever has the most matched pairs at the end of the game is the winner.

Activity 4: Self-portrait (uniqueness)

➤ **Resources:**

- Piece of paper
- Crayons or coloured pencils
- Pencil (for older kids)
- Eraser (optional)
- Crayons

Activity: Children must draw a picture of themselves and decorate it in a way that portrays their uniqueness. Ask children to talk about the unique qualities they have and why those qualities are special.

Activity 5: Spinning Illusion

➤ **Resources:**

- Copy of spinning illusion
- Piece of cardboard
- Crayons or coloured pencils
- Coin (R5 or R2)
- Glue
- Pair of scissors

Activity:

Make your spinning top: Have children colour in the template, then glue it onto a hard piece of cardboard (an unbent piece of corrugated cardboard works best). Once it is dry, help children cut out the circle and make a slit in the middle that a R5 or R2 coin can fit in to (don't make the slit too big; you want it to fit snugly). Insert the coin in the middle (in such a way that it is visible on both sides of the cardboard).

Play with your spinning top: Instruct children to spin the toy by rotating the top between the pads of their thumbs and pointer fingers, which will make the top spin. Give children a chance to play around with spinning their top. Pause to talk about what's happening and then let them carry on spinning and having fun. If children are excited, you can also have them experiment with their own spinning top designs and let them see what they can come up with. You can even have a competition to see whose top spins the longest!

Activity 6: Bug Hunt

Activity: Go outside with your child/group of children and look for places where you think a ladybug family might live (a garden is a good place to check). If you can't find ladybugs, are there other insect habitats that you can find? Help children think about where they might find bugs (other than the rubbish!). Let them have fun being explorers while learning about and experiencing nature. Once you have explored

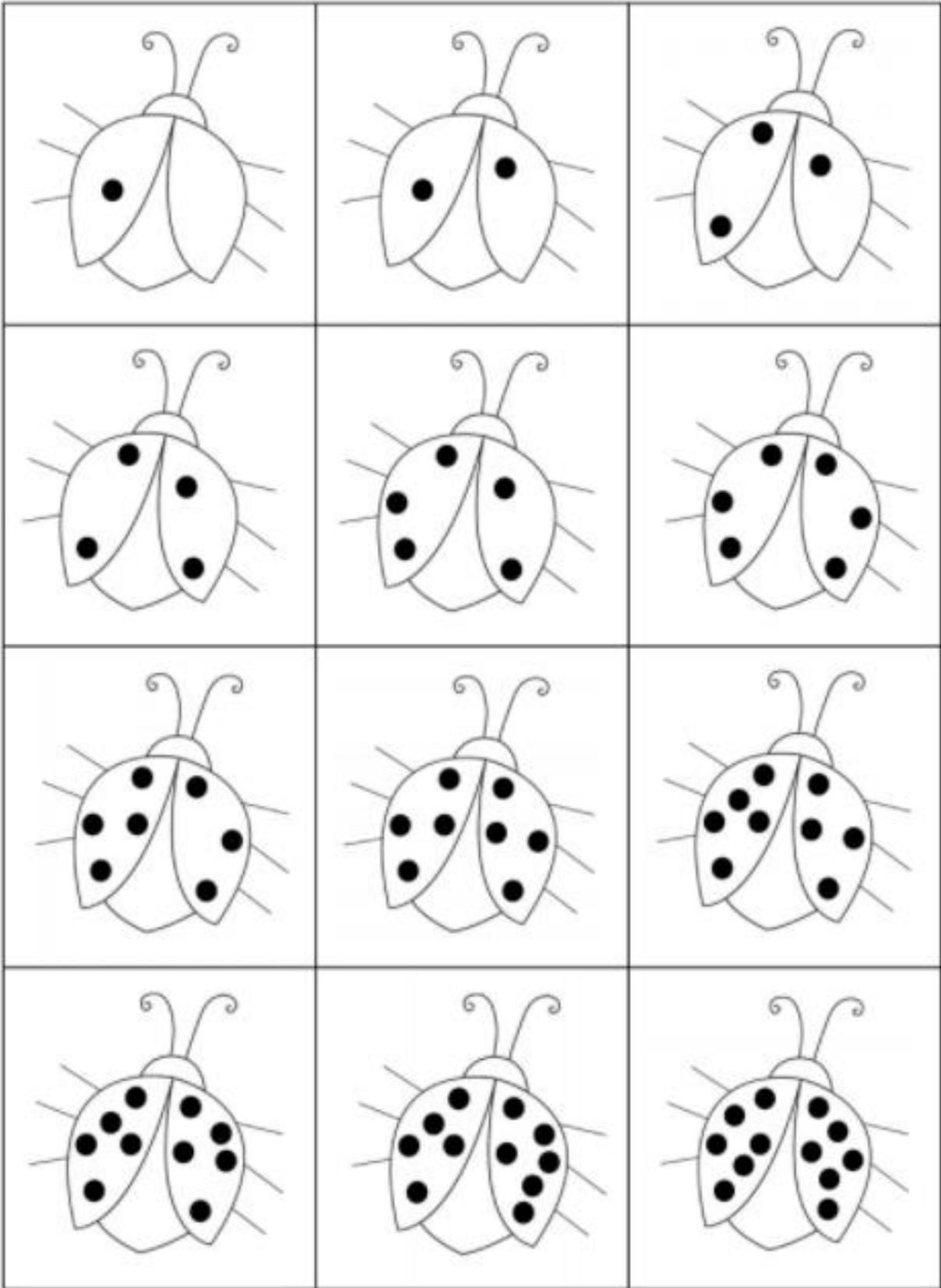
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your area and hopefully found some bugs, ask children some questions about what they found. Here are some examples of questions you can ask:

- Did they find any habitats? Was it hard or easy to find bugs in your area?
- What kinds of bugs did they find?
- Where were they?
- Why do you think that the bugs choose that place?
- Were the bugs they found dangerous? Why or why not?
- What did they like/dislike about the bugs that they found?

Thanda is a non-profit organisation based in rural Mtwalume, KwaZulu Natal South Africa. Our curriculum is made up of activities that we have developed over 12 years. The ideas and inspiration for our activities come from is a wonderful combination of educators, books, websites, YouTubers, and other places and people on the internet. We are very grateful for all of them. Where we use ideas or activities directly from a source, we always endeavour to give credit to the creator. We do not endeavour to profit from these story studies, we only wish to add value to the lives of people we may have the opportunity of crossing paths with.

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Spinning Top Illusion

