

MILLIE LOVES ANTS

by Jackie French and Sue deGennaro

Actively engaging children and families in shared reading experiences is an essential part of story time in libraries. Using specimens from Queensland Museum kits will enable early learners to develop STEM skills and science literacy. Here are some ideas to get you started

Before reading

- **Display** the ant specimens from the QM Loans *Insects* kit to introduce the story time session. You could ask children which animals they know of that like to eat ants?
- **Read** the title, pointing to the words as you go. Ask “*who do you think Millie is?*” Is it the little girl or is it the echidna? You could look through the book looking for the word ‘*Millie*’. An important skill in the early years is understanding what words are, that they are made up of letters and those letters make different sounds. The same word can also be spelt in different ways. Can you find the other Millie in this book? Are Millie and Milly different?

During reading

Choose 1 or 2 of these ideas

- **Look** for the word ‘*ants*’ and have the children help you identify each time they see it as this word is repeated over and over throughout the story. **Point** to the word and then ask the children to find all the ants on that page. **Talk** about what the ants are doing. You could print out a picture of ants and show the children each time you see the word (again highlighting the difference between words and pictures)



- **Explain** unusual words like “*debris*” and use the pictures to help the children understand what it means. **Look** at all the rubbish the ants have taken underground. Apple cores, egg shells and banana peels.

That’s a lot of *debris*. What’s another word we could use instead? It’s important to not skip over these unusual words but use them as opportunities to help children learn something new

- **Point** out rhyming words. Can you hear that “*trees*” and “*leaves*” sound the same at the end? What other words rhyme with trees? Please? Fleas? Have fun making up your own silly rhyming words with the children. It’s good to show families that books don’t have to be read from beginning to end, it’s OK to stop, talk about it an even sing a song if the children are interested.

After reading

- **Revisit** who Millie was in the story. It was the echidna not the little girl.
- **Talk** with the children about all the new things they learned about ants. What are some of the different places ants make nests. What do they make the nests out of? Ask children what they learned about echidnas.
- **Explore** the QM Loans *Insects* kit. Invite children and families to find the ants and then explore what other insects are represented in the kit.

Key message ideas for home

Encourage families to provide drawing materials at home so children can discover and draw the ants they see and make up their own story. Families could write some words to create a new story.

Gather non-fiction books and have them available for borrowing

Link the story to the collection and ask families to



ISBN: 9781460751787



Story response activities following library storytime encourages families and children to interact, talk, play and create together. Below are some ideas for *Millie Loves Ants*. Choose any of the activities or add your own.

This is a great opportunity to also talk with families about what STEM learning looks like in the early years. During the story response activities children and families will be engaging with STEM when they:

- Explore and describe objects by attributes
- Record observations and share ideas
- Observe and describe scientific phenomena meaningful to children
- Observe, describe and represent seasonal changes for plants animals etc
- Investigate, describe/demonstrate various ways objects can move
- Explore and use simple tools and materials
- Build and create with loose parts and recycled materials

Idea	Stimulus
Shared ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore what the children learnt about ants. Use butchers paper to collect ideas from the children. Where do they live? What do they like to eat? What are some of the things they do? Invite children to draw their ideas on the butcher's paper • Materials: Butchers paper, felt tips, JNF selection about ants and their habitats
Collage/construction ants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the characteristics of ants and other insects – look at body parts, number of legs, different habitats etc. • Invite children to create their own ant or other insects and where they live. Alternatively they may choose to make an echidna • Materials: Recycled boxes, cardboard tubes, egg cartons, collage materials, JNF books on ants, insects and ant habitats
Ant hunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go outside of the library and encourage families to go on an ant hunt. Talk about where the ants might be, what they might look like. • Remind children of the importance of looking at the ants and not touching as some will bite or sting. • Look for where the ants go down to their underground nests? Invite children to imagine what the nests and tunnels look like. • Draw what you see and where you found them. • Materials: Paper, pencils/clip boards

To find out more visit



This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial 4.0 Australia license. You are free to copy and communicate this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. However, you may not use this work for commercial purposes. © State Library of Queensland 2017

An initiative of



<p>Explore the ant specimens in QM Loans <i>Insects</i> kit</p> <p>Use the museum notes provided with the kit to guide your exploration. You could invite children to look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many legs ants have? Do they have wings? • All insects have 3 body parts – head, thorax and abdomen – can you see the 3 parts? • Compare the ants and look at colour and size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss why the Museum collects and displays specimens – good opportunity to talk about why we don't catch and keep, just observe and record • Explore the different specimens included in the kit – some show different types of insects (beetle and butterfly trays), some show the life cycle of a specific insect (bee) and some show the different types of a specific insect and their differing roles (bee – honey, drone, Queen, worker). Each of these specimens are giving us different types of information. • Talk about what ants eat and how they are strong enough to carry things much heavier than they are?
--	---

Songs and rhymes to share during your story session:

Ants Rhyme

Ants, ants everywhere
Ants on my apple,
Ants on my pear.
Ants at a picnic
Are not so great.
I see five crawling
On my plate!

Sourced 24/09/18 from <https://www.kidsparkz.com/preschool-sings-insects.html>

Five Hungry Ants Rhyme

Five hungry ants marching in a line,
Came upon a picnic where they could dine.
They marched into the salad,
They marched into the cake,
They marched into the pepper...
Uh oh! That was a mistake!
A..a..a..choo!
Four hungry ants marching in a line... (etc)

Finger Tales (2002) Phelps, Joan Hilyer Upstart Books

The Ants Go Marching

The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching one by one,
The little one stops to suck his thumb
And they all go marching down to the ground

Two by two – tie his shoe
Three by three – climb a tree
Four by four – shut the door
Five by five – take a dive

To find out more visit



This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial 4.0 Australia license. You are free to copy and communicate this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. However, you may not use this work for commercial purposes. © State Library of Queensland 2017

An initiative of

