



# Let's READ FOR FUN



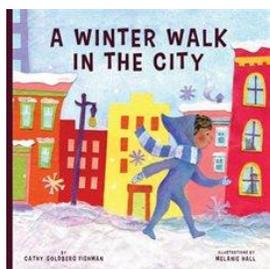
Already December! Where did the fall go? The holidays are drawing near... and you're probably wondering how this is going to go, with all the restrictions, guidelines, recommendations and so on. The festivities will obviously be of a smaller scale this year, but that doesn't mean we can't find a way to make them special. No matter what you're celebrating, whether Christmas, Hanukkah, or just the joy of a few days off, we're sure to remember this year for a long time to come. So all the more reason to make sure our memories are happy ones, and to marvel at what we're able to do despite the context. Your children will be delighted to have some one-on-one time with you. No need to put more weight on your shoulders however! It's often the simplest activities that children enjoy the most, as long as they have your attention. So you don't have to search out every light show within a 100-km radius! Your home and your neighbourhood offer ample opportunity for fun.

And at the risk of repeating ourselves, 😊, shared reading with your children is an activity that is perfectly adapted to small-scale family celebrations - especially since you won't have to cook for a crowd this year! Just make sure you have a good store of reading material on hand to captivate the whole family. We've put together a list of books and activities below to help you fill the holidays with joy and laughter, however you may celebrate them. Hopefully enough to keep you busy 'til January!

Happy holidays to all!

## Our tips for good reads and activities

A sure-fire way to get the holidays off to a great start – head outside!



**A Winter Walk in the City**, by Cathy Goldberg Fishman, Familius, 2020 (ages 2+)

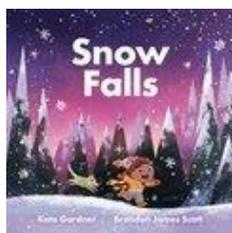
Join your children as they explore the city streets counting all the treasures they come upon – everything from menorahs to Christmas trees to tasty treats in shop windows! Let your children see just how diverse a city can be and discover that there are more holidays than just the one they celebrate at home.

Read the book first and then go out and see how many of the same things you can find. If the weather is too nasty for an outdoor excursion, turn the book into a search-and-find: Can you see a moon, a snowman, a green wheel, a red candle, and a purple door? Use the pictures to talk about colours: *I spy with my little eye... something that is orange*. Let your child ask you to find things too, in the book or in the room – it's a great way to practice question formation.

- ★ On another day, ask your child to help you make a list of other things you can look for and count on your daily walk. Why not dogs, blue cars, or fire hydrants? Take pictures and make a little scrapbook to document your stroll around the neighbourhood. (Don't put the bar too high - it doesn't have to be a professional, publishable piece of art!)

- ★ Talk about the traditions and decorations that characterize the holiday you celebrate in your home. Ask your children what they like best and why. Don't forget to share your childhood holiday memories as well!
- ★ If you're putting up decorations, make a point of describing them (colour, shape, size, material), comparing them, talking about where they came from, how long you've had them, why they're important to you, or who gave them to you.
- ★ Another great idea you can adapt for children of all ages: an [indoor treasure hunt](#) with clues or tasks will keep your children amused – you can make it as short or long as you like ! Use pictures and words on the clues to help children recognize words.

Sure hope we have snow for the holidays, but if we don't, you can certainly get your kids ready for it with this book!



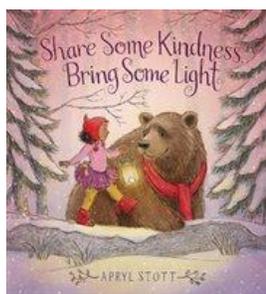
**Snow Falls**, Kate Gardner and Brandon James Scott, Tundra Books, 2020 (ages 2-7)

With minimal text and captivating illustrations, this book offers ample opportunity for discussion and discovery with your children. Each double page presents a verb linked to snow. Also an excellent book to promote word recognition for those on the verge of reading.

Play with the words – what other things could these action words apply to? Think of other action verbs that apply to snow (e.g., *melt, float, shine, glisten, stick, roll...*)

- ★ You have budding builders at home? Head outside and [build a snow castle](#) – though you may not be able to do it as fast as the woman in this video!
- ★ How about baking some [Trail Mix Cookies](#) so you'll have a snack to eat in your castle (yum 😊!)

Kindness is also what the holidays are about:



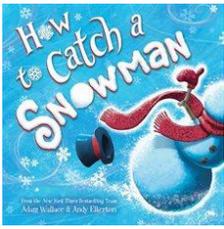
**Share Some Kindness, Bring Some Light**, by Apryl Stott, Simon & Schuster, 2020 (ages 4-6)

"When life gets dark as winter's night, share some kindness, bring some light." It certainly seems a fitting adage for this year! A story about friendship, how appearances can be deceiving, and the importance of taking care of those around us. A tale full of adjectives that your children can use to express their feelings: *shy, brave, mean, cozy, scared, grumpy, fearful, wary, afraid, worried, friendly*. Talk about situations or people you could describe using some of these words, or others!

- ★ Follow Bear and Coco's example and make some [Super Easy Kid-Friendly Lanterns](#) for you balcony or front steps. Or walk around the neighbourhood with them, get the whole family to sing in the streets. Maybe the neighbours will join in too!
- ★ Brainstorm with your children: what little kindnesses could you spread around during the holidays to bring a glimmer of light to someone else's life? Let Bear and Coco be your inspiration.



Now get your hearts racing with a good game of tag!



**How to Catch a Snowman**, by Adam Wallace and Andy Elkerton, Sourcebooks, 2020  
(ages 3-10)

A wild ride as a group of children try to capture a very agile and mobile snowman! Rhymes, creative fonts, colours, humour – all the ingredients to ensure a captive audience! Ask your children to come up with their own ideas - how would they attempt to stop the snowman?

- ★ Make a snowman out of materials you have on hand and take turns hiding him (or her!) around your home.... Use location words (e.g., *above, under, behind, close to...*) to give hints and have your children do the same when it's their turn.
- ★ Here's a "recipe" for a [No-Sew Sock Snowman](#) – make a crowd and dress them up – at least *they* can gather for the holidays! 😊

Here are a few additional reading suggestions to keep you company through the holidays:

- ★ **Simon and the Bear: A Hanukkah Tale**, E. A. Kimmel & Matthew Trueman, Little Brown Books, 2020  
- *A maritime adventure where miracles abound (4-7)*
- ★ **Bear Stays Up for Christmas**, Karma Wilson & Jane Chapman, Scholastic, 2004  
- *Can Bear stay awake long enough to celebrate with his friends? (3-5)*
- ★ **Little Blue Truck's Christmas**, Alice Schertle & Jill McElmurry, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014  
- *The surprise of flashing lights after all the trees are counted and delivered! (2-4)*
- ★ **There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow!** Lucille Colandro & Jared Lee, Scholastic, 2003  
- *A polar version of the classic rhyming tale (3-7)*
- ★ **Snow**, Rui Shulevitz, Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012 – *Perfect timing as we wait for real snow! (2-7)*
- ★ **Snowmen at Night**, Caralyn & Mark Buehner, Penguin, 2004 – *Oh, the night life of a snowman! (4+)*
- ★ **All You Need for a Snowman**, Alice Schertle & Barbara Lavalley, Scholastic, 2002  
- *Follow this how-to to build a gi-normous one! (3+)*

## Where to find these books and so many more?

Let us know and we'll send you a box full! Or reserve your books at the library using the lists below and above as inspiration – a parent in the Read for Fun program gave us the idea! If you're looking to buy books, visit a bookstore in your area – whether new or used, your children will be delighted to embark on fresh adventures.

And remember that the **Fondation des Sourds** is offering financial assistance to help families purchase books for their children (see our November newsletter).

And what is the *Read for Fun* team reading this time of year?

- ★ *Fifteen Dogs*, André Alexis, Coach House Books, 2015
- ★ *Forest Green*, Kate Pullinger, Doubleday Canada, 2020
- ★ *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*, Alicia Elliott, Anchor Canada, 2019



## Suggestions for the family

- ★ Need inspiration for that daily hour of exercise recommended for your children? Check out these [Creative Games to Play Outdoors!](#)
- ★ Have you tried playing tic-tac-toe in the snow?
- ★ In April, UNICEF, the International Publishers Association, and the World Health Organization launched a collaborative initiative called #ReadtheWorld, in which children’s authors read extracts from their books. Visit [Read the World](#) to hear the stories.
- ★ [Story Time Online](#) from Decoda Literacy Solutions in BC – join in the storytelling, with dogs, music and more!

## More info for parents

- ★ For those of you with school-ages children, some straightforward [guidelines for parents](#) to maintain their children’s learning during the pandemic. (UNESCO Chair in Curriculum Development, in combination with the Québec Education Program).
- ★ Storytelling as an act of resistance – an idea from Mexico: [Storyteller entertains kids](#) (Toronto Star article). You may be inspired to try this in your neighbourhood!

## Did you know that...

**Playing outside without toys promotes conversation and communication among children.** As one preschool staff member explains: “It is the environment that inspires language.” So head outdoors to take advantage of all the wonderful language-learning opportunities awaiting you.

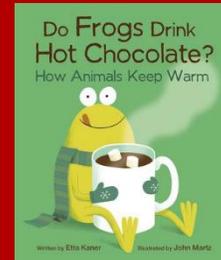
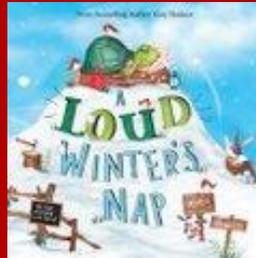
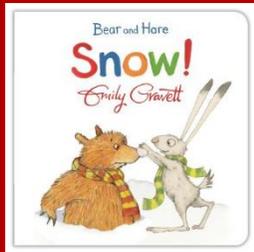
Source: [Language Learning in Outdoor Environments](#) (Nordic Early Childhood Education Research Journal)



## What about you... ?

Tell us something you've learned about reading, whether it's a tip that could help other parents get their children hooked on reading, a book that your child is particularly fond of, or an experience you've had that is related to reading.

Email your answers to Nicole or Louise and we'll send you one of these books as a gift!\*



*\*only available to families taking part in the Read for Fun programme*

- ★ If you would rather, send us a photo of your child with his or her face hidden behind a favourite book. (And let us know if we have your permission to include it in our next newsletter.)

To reach us and share your comments:

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