

Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUtCr5YPgK4>

## The Grouchy Ladybug

By Eric Carle

This Eric Carle story is about one grouchy ladybug that spends an entire day looking to fight other creatures. The grouchy ladybug has horrible manners, is very rude, and bullies others. This book is a great opportunity to teach children about empathy, appropriate social skills, and treating others with respect. The book also offers an opportunity to teach children about time and the concept of size. (Ages 2-5)



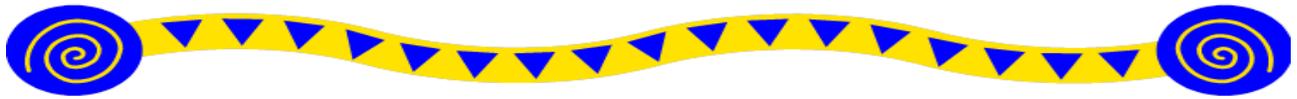
### Parent Activities

#### Reading the Story

#### Important talking points to cover before reading the book:

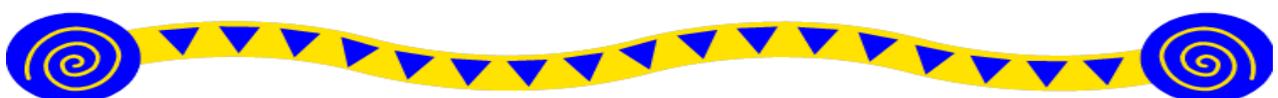
- This will help to enhance your child's knowledge of the book, increase their comprehension skills, and tie school activities to home activities.
- As you introduce the book and title, ask your child if they have ever felt grouchy. You may have to explain what grouchy means.
- Explain to your child that everyone gets grouchy. Tell your child what you do when you are feeling grouchy.
- Ask your child to identify a time when they were grouchy and how they treated others.
- Ask your child what types of things make them grouchy.
- Explain that the ladybug in the story is grouchy and does not treat others very well. Ask your child if anyone has ever treated them badly. This type of conversation starter will assist you in opening up the lines of communication with your child on concepts of friendships (good and bad) and feelings. The younger you start this type of parent-child communication the more likely the communication will continue into young adulthood.
- Discuss ways to prevent bullying and how to solve a bullying problem. Go through the steps to resolving a conflict (see below).
- Ask your child if it is okay to be mean to others.
- Always remember to recap the book in different situations. Ask your comprehension questions as well as questions about feelings and friendships. If your child wakes up grouchy you can say "You are acting like the grouchy ladybug....is that a nice way to act?"





**Story Time:** Having an afternoon and night time routine is so important to children...especially preschoolers. Start your evening routine by reinforcing what was learned in school that day. Read *The Grouchy Ladybug* to your child. After reading the book discuss what the ladybug did in the book. Afterwards, ask your child what they did at school today. Don't be surprised if they say, "I don't know." You may have to rephrase the question and ask, "What was your favorite part of the day?" "Why was that your favorite part?" Then ask, "What was the worst part of your day?" and ask additional questions about why that was the worst part of the day. Opening up the conversation in this manner will help your child build needed communication skills, and will decrease your frustration level with trying to gather more details about their day. When having your child describe their day have the feelings chart available for your child to see (one provided below). If your child said the worst part of his day was recess because no one would play with him, ask him to show you how that made him feel. Then talk with your child about ways to encourage others to play or what to do if someone does not want to play with them. It is always a good idea to share similar stories from your childhood. Take the time to discuss how you felt in a similar situation, how you responded, whether it was an appropriate or inappropriate response, and brainstorm with your child what would have been a better way for you to respond in that situation. Showing children that feelings are normal and that we all have had similar incidents helps them to normalize emotions and offers a great opportunity to teach a skill. This is also a great time to discuss appropriate ways to ask a peer to play, appropriate ways to compromise with friends, etc. Don't just talk about these things...practice! Role play activities are an excellent way to practice at home! Act like you are a kid on the playground and have your child "ask" to play a game with you! Practice makes perfect!

**Activity Time:** Go on a Ladybug Hunt! Take time out to spend with your child doing a fun project. In as little as 10 minutes of time you can provide great undivided attention to your child that takes minimal effort and improves the parent-child bond. Before going on your exploration in your back yard, take time to read the book again. Discuss the colors in the book, and ask your child what colors you will be hunting for in the yard. Tell the children they are being trained as junior science explorers. Tell them their job today is to hunt, observe, and journal about a specific insect species....the LADYBUG! Provide each one of your children with a container (Mason jar, brown bag, plastic bottle, etc), a few sheets of notebook paper, a pencil, and take one magnifying glass. As you search in the yard for the ladybugs, have your children take turns with the magnifying glass, offering them an opportunity to once again practice the skill of turn taking and positive peer interactions. Remember to praise them for good behavior! Once a ladybug is found discuss the characteristics of the ladybug (color, size, dots, legs, wings, etc). Have your junior explorers draw a picture of the specimen and write a few things about the insect (for preschoolers have them write the letters in the word LADYBUG). This activity can be continued with other insect species, and before you know it your child has a wildlife journal. Once the 10 minute exploration is completed, pass out Junior Science Explorer Certificates (see sample below). Enjoy exploring!





**Family Time/ Free Time:** Some of the best teaching in a home can be done during free time among siblings. Use this time to observe the interactions of your children, make note of which one of your children tends to have more difficulty in social situations or with others, and intervene to teach needed skills. If you see your children are having a disagreement during free time go over and assist. Do not tell them to stay away from each other (this is our first directive many times....but if we do this have we taught them to work together or resolve the conflict???), instead have them attempt to resolve the conflict through practicing appropriate skills (sharing, taking turns, asking to play, using manners, or finding something else to play with, etc). You may have to guide the conflict resolution by saying, "How do you ask your sister to play the game? Should you yell at her? Should you hit her?" Have the child display how they will ask appropriately. Once they show you the right way to interact you can state, "Thank you...that was so much nicer to ask your sister if you can play the game instead of taking the game from her without permission." If this brief intervention does not resolve the conflict then have the children sit together and talk it out....with you as the mediator. You will have to help guide the conversation and assist with ensuring appropriate outcomes, but allow the children to brainstorm ideas and ways to resolve the conflict. After an appropriate conflict resolution plan is in place, review it, model it, practice it, and then send the children on their way. Make sure your monitor their behavior afterwards and praise them for playing appropriately. If the children cannot come to an agreement, then send them to their rooms until they are ready to work together to resolve the conflict. Sometimes time away can bring clarity and civility to a disagreement.

**Empathy Reinforcement Activity:** Ladybug compliment cards and reinforcers. In order to appropriately teach empathy we must first assist the children with learning ways to be empathic (teach them to share, teach them to care for others, teach them to identify emotions in themselves and others, and teach them to respond to these opportunities throughout the day). Just because we have taught the skill doesn't mean that the children will remember the skill....we must PRACTICE it daily!!! This is a great way to motivate the children to display empathy towards others through practicing the skills, and a great opportunity for us to catch them doing something great! For this activity, every time ANYONE (child, adult, staff member in the class, passersby, visitors, parents, etc) mentions that one of your children/ family members has shown empathy or compassion the child/ family member will receive a "dot" on their ladybugs back. Remember when giving the child verbal reinforcement for positive behavior, you must make the information you state behavior specific ("Johnny, Mrs. Smith said that you helped Joe tie his shoe on the playground at school today. That was very kind of you to tie his show...for being so nice to your friend you are going to get a dot on your ladybug!"). After the child has earned so many dots on their ladybug (you must decide as a parent how many dots will equal a tangible prize...just remember that too many will make the children less interested because the prize is too far in the future, but too few dots may also be problematic), then the child will earn a prize. It may be good to start out with the goal of 5 dots=a prize. That will cover a week and as the children obtain this goal the time can be lengthened. Also remember





that prizes can also include a coupon for additional time with a family member. Many young children want to spend time with their caregivers....so why not provide them additional time one on one!

This activity can be done individually or as a family:

Individual Ladybug: Use the ladybug template below. Print and laminate enough ladybugs for all of your children. Place the ladybugs either on the refrigerator or create a ladybug necklace (the ladybug necklace is mobile and will allow you to reinforce appropriate behavior ANYWHERE...this technique can also assist in decreasing behaviors during transition times). Every time an appropriate behavior is noticed, the adult provides appropriate behavior specific praise, and provides a dot to the child. In this scenario each child is monitoring their own behavior to earn an individual prize. This can assist parents with addressing sibling issues.

Family Ladybug: If you decide to work on this task as a family, you can determine how many compliments the family (all siblings/ family members included) must receive for displaying appropriate behavior before a reinforcer will be provided to every member of the family. Print out the letters in **LADYBUG**. For every compliment given to a family member regarding appropriate behavior (manners, empathy, positive friendships, following directions, etc), then a letter is posted on the refrigerator. Once the word **LADYBUG** is spelled the family will earn a collective prize. In this scenario the family as a whole is working together to obtain the prize (this one teaches the children to work together to obtain a goal and to monitor each other in order to earn a reward- this focuses on modeling, social reinforcement, positive reinforcement, and mentoring).





**Great Work!**

**This Award is presented to**

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**For completing the training to  
become a**

**Junior Science Explorer**



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**Signature**

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**Date**



# Emotions



happy



sad



angry



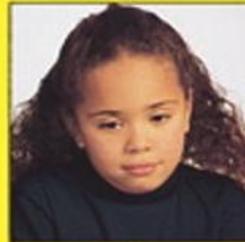
excited



afraid



shy



guilty



tired



jealous



loved



hopeful



bored



proud



sorry

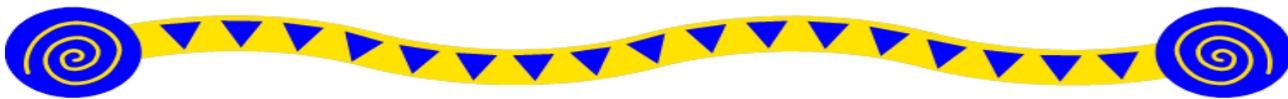


embarrassed



surprised

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Frustrated



Embarrassed

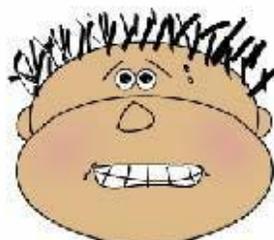


Sad



Mad

**This  
is  
how  
I  
feel  
today!**



Nervous



Happy



Proud



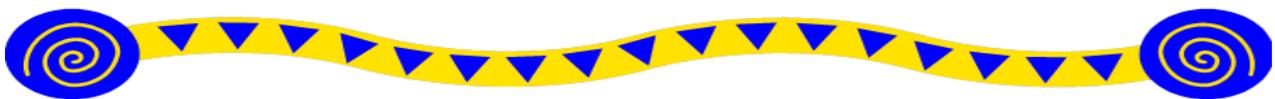
Scared

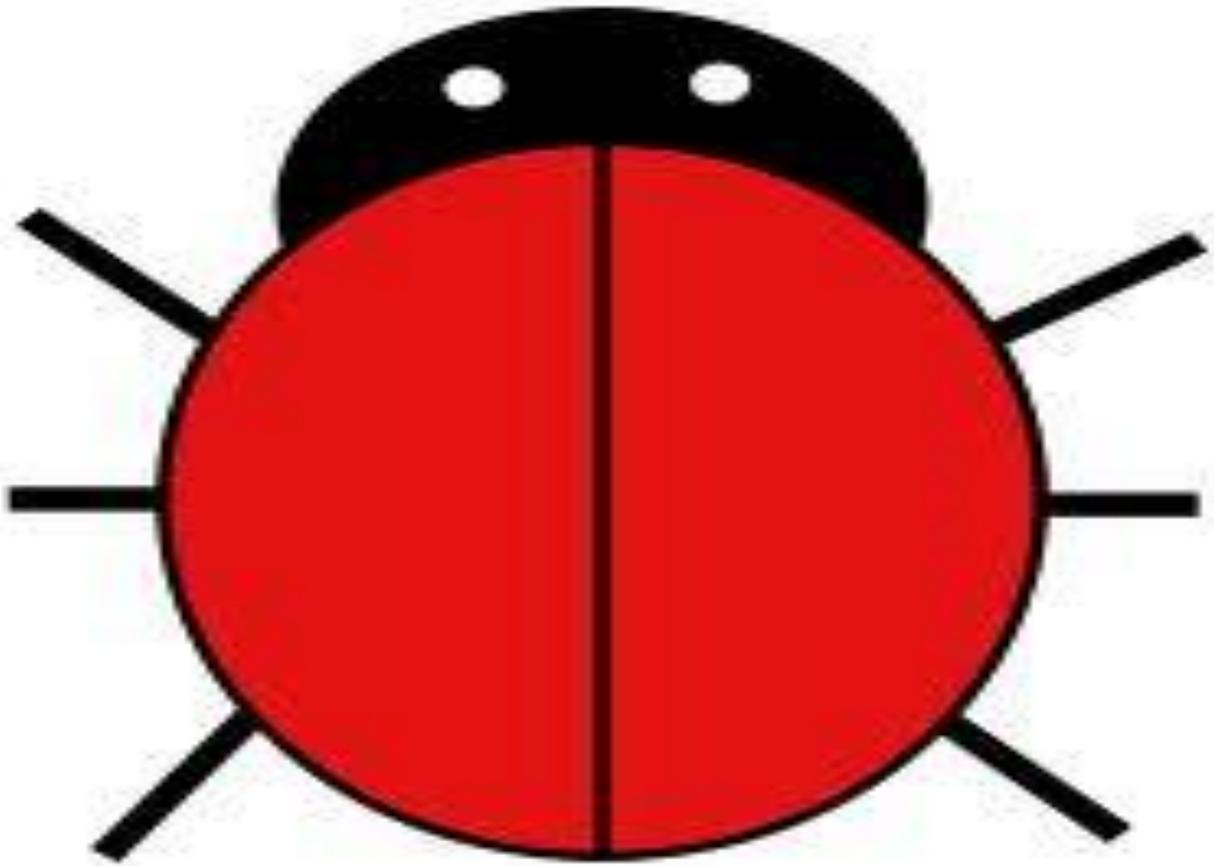


Loved



Lonely







*This Book Curriculum was developed by Dr. Susan Elswick. Dr. Elswick is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University Of Memphis Department Of Social Work. She received her master's in social work from the University of Tennessee in 2006, and her doctorate in Special Education with a specialty in Applied Behavior Analysis from the University of Memphis in 2011. She is a Licensed School Social Worker in Tennessee, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and she runs a small private practice that provides in home social work and behavior analytic programming for families in the surrounding area. Prior to joining the faculty at the University Of Memphis Department Of Social Work she was a school-based social work clinician for 10 years. One of her research interests includes the use of early intervention programming to enhance emotional literacy in order to curb child maladaptive behaviors to improve social and educational outcomes.*

