



STORY SUMMARY

Daniel is preparing a special gift for his new baby sister, but will it be ready by the time they go to the adoption center? To show baby Angela how much she is loved by her new family, Daniel wants to whistle for her like the songbirds he loves so much. But will she smile for him? When they arrive at the adoption center and Daniel still hasn't got the

knack of whistling, it's Jessie, Angela's birthmother, who knows just what to do.

Links:

Black-Capped Chickadee Calls and Sounds:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfMsUuU9KtQ

Bird Bingo:

<https://bit.ly/38bOfna>

Pair this book with:

- *Over the Moon: An Adoption Tale* by Karen Katz

Robin Heald lives in Ashland, Oregon. Before her 30-year career as a drama teacher and preschool director, Robin was a stage manager in regional theaters, and on and off-Broadway. Her previous works include *Pat, Roll, Pull* and *Liberty Saves the Day*, and her articles have appeared in *Exceptional Parenting Magazine* and *Children's Literature in Education*. Robin's picture book *Isadora's Sandálias* won the Katherine Paterson Prize for unpublished children's literature at Hunger Mountain in 2015. Her newest picture book, *Whistling for Angela*, was inspired by her first-hand experiences with adoption. Robin holds a Master's of Fine Arts in Writing for Children from Spalding University.

Peggy Collins is an award-winning children's book author-illustrator with more than 35 titles to her name, including *Harley the Hero*, *A Sky-Blue Bench*, *In the Snow*, and *In the Garden*. She has also written and illustrated for animated apps teaching math, indigenous history, and education. Peggy lives in Newburgh, Ontario with her two children.

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THEMES

Family, Adoption, Acceptance, Birds

BISAC CODES

JUV013010 JUVENILE FICTION / Family / Adoption
 JUV002040 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Birds
 JUV013040 JUVENILE FICTION / Family / New Baby
 JUV013070 JUVENILE FICTION / Family / Siblings

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social Studies: changing family traditions, roles and responsibilities; Science: characteristics of living things; Visual Art: drawing

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

| ACTIVITY | MAIN SUBJECT AREAS | SPECIFIC SKILLS / STRAND |
|----------------|--------------------|--|
| Read-Aloud | Comprehension | Activate prior knowledge Infer, predict, make connections |
| Families | Social Studies | Changing Family Traditions |
| Changing Roles | Social Studies | Roles and Responsibilities |
| Bird Calls | Science | Characteristics of Living Things |
| Drawing Birds | Visual Art | Drawing |

THE READ-ALoud

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g. activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand texts

You Will Need

- *Whistling for Angela*

How To:

Before Reading

Educators may wish to familiarize themselves with the chickadee’s fee bee call before reading the book aloud, in order to demonstrate this to students. This video [youtube.com/watch?v=LfMsUuU9KtQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfMsUuU9KtQ) is one source, and is also used in the “Bird Calls” activity below. Show and read the front cover. Ask, “Who is Angela? How can you tell?” Invite predictions of what the story will be about.

During Reading

First Spread: As you read, pause to invite students to show any missing front teeth, at the appropriate time. Demonstrate the chickadee’s fee bee call when it is mentioned. Ask what students think of Daniel’s choice of a gift for the new baby. Discuss different places a child might meet a new baby sibling: hospital, home, or, as in Daniel’s case, an adoption center.

Second Spread: After reading, invite students to try whistling.

Third Spread: After reading, invite students to share their thoughts on Daniel’s questions. Do they have a collection of things they love?

Fourth Spread: After the left-hand page, ask students if they know anything else about birds. After the right-hand page, ask what else they know about babies.

Fifth Spread: There is a lot of weighty information on this page. Some students may have experience with adoption, while others may not. Allow students to tell about their experiences or ask questions.

Sixth Spread: After reading, ask if students have any whistling techniques they would tell Daniel.

Seventh and Eighth Spreads: Read expressively.

Ninth Spread: Invite students to think about how Daniel might feel upon learning that Jessie also liked birds.

Tenth Spread: Read slowly and quietly, allowing students to enter this special moment.

Eleventh Spread: After reading the left-hand page, ask students how Daniel might feel. After reading the right-hand page, point to the ellipsis while making your voice hang on the word “and.”

Twelfth Spread: Read expressively.

Thirteenth Spread: After reading the sentence “A real whistle!”, point to the speech bubble and whistle the chickadee’s *fee-bee* call. At the end of the page, give students a chance to cheer.

Fourteenth Spread: Read somberly.

Fifteenth Spread: After reading, invite students to suggest what Daniel might do.

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Spreads: Read expressively.

Eighteenth Spread: Give students a moment to study the illustration, then read aloud all of the bits of text. Invite students to discuss Daniel’s letter, and to share what they have inferred about Jessie.

After Reading

Allow students to demonstrate their ability to whistle, and to try the chickadee call. Invite students to tell any personal connections they have made with the story.



ACTIVITY 1: FAMILIES

Many students have families that differ from the traditional family, and may not see families like theirs depicted in books very often. This activity is designed to help students gain acceptance for both their own family and others.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify and describe different types of families (e.g., families with one parent, two parents, no children; same-sex families; blended and multi-generational families; immigrant families; families where the parents come from different religious or ethnocultural groups)

You Will Need

- *Whistling for Angela*
- A collection of picture books featuring diverse families, such as: *Over the Moon: An Adoption Tale* by Karen Katz, *Everywhere Babies* by Susan Meyers, *Elliot* by Julie Pearson

How To:

1. Re-read *Whistling for Angela*. Afterward, collaboratively draw and label a picture on chart paper with the title “This is Daniel’s family”. Have students come forward to draw and label different members of Daniel’s family. Invite students to discuss who should be included in the picture and give reasons.
2. Read other stories featuring diverse families, such as the ones listed above, or on websites that list books about different types of families, such as parenting.com/child/divorce-books-children/ and readbrightly.com/books-about-all-kinds-of-families/. Include these types of books in shared, guided, and independent reading lessons too, if possible.
3. Choose families depicted in some of these books, and create family pictures for them. Compare these to the one of Daniel’s family. Discuss how the person in the book might like to arrange the family members. In a case of shared custody, would the protagonist draw one big family or two distinct groups? There is no one correct answer. Through the discussion, guide students to realize that a family is defined by the person whose family it is.
4. Invite students to make labeled pictures of their own families, while being sensitive to some students’ desire for privacy. In some cases, educators might suggest that a student make (and keep) a drawing at home, with their caregiver(s).

ACTIVITY 2: CHANGING ROLES

Students explore how their roles and responsibilities, and the roles and responsibilities of other people, change over time.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- describe how and why a person’s roles, relationships, and responsibilities may change in different places or situations and at different times
- describe some of their own roles, relationships, and responsibilities
- describe how some significant events in their lives (e.g., the birth of a sibling, starting school, moving to a new home, getting a pet) led to changes in their roles, relationships, and/or responsibilities

You Will Need

- *Whistling for Angela*
- photocopies of *Roles and Responsibilities* worksheet for each student
- enlarged copy of *Roles and Responsibilities* worksheet
- chart stand

How To:

1. Place an enlarged copy of the *Roles and Responsibilities* worksheet on the chart stand. With students, decide what Daniel’s roles and responsibilities might be, based on clues found in the book. Begin with the “Current” column, taking “current” to mean at the end of the book. You might list things like *big brother, whistling for Angela, love his new sister, take care of his new parakeet*. In the “past” column, you might list *only child, has a feather collection, knows a lot about birds, student, friend*. Decide which of these things might still be true at the end of the story and list them in the “current” column as well. At the end of the worksheet, collaboratively answer the question regarding Daniel’s future, again based on clues in the book. The response might reference his plans to take really good care of Angela, to teach Angela to love birds, and to continue whistling for her.

- In a similar way, fill in the roles and responsibilities of other characters in the book. For Jessie, draw students' attention to the university acceptance letter on the fridge and the box labeled "Jessie's Dorm". Help students understand how these items relate to her roles and responsibilities.
- Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Have them fill in the boxes relating to the book's characters, copying from the chart if they need to. Next, have them write their name in the next box, followed by the names of their family members. They may not need all the boxes. Have them fill in the "current" column for themselves and their family, and then the "past" column, taking the sheet home for help from caregivers if necessary. For the final question, a think-pair-share activity may help students imagine their own future roles and responsibilities.

ACTIVITY 3: BIRD CALLS

Instead of simply focusing on physical characteristics of birds, learning about their calls can lead to a life-long interest for students.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- investigate and compare the characteristics of animals
- describe an *adaptation* as a characteristic body part, shape, or behavior that helps a plant or animal survive in its environment

You Will Need

- Internet
- printer
- scissors
- outdoor space

How To:

- Watch a video about chickadees and their various calls, such as this one: youtube.com/watch?v=LfMsUuU9KtQ
- Give students a chance to practice whistling the chickadee's fee-bee call. Note any students who have figured out how to whistle.
- Invite students who are successful at whistling to share tips with those who have not yet learned.
- Referring back to the video, discuss the purpose of the chickadee's various calls and how they help them survive in their environment.
- Play recordings of various other birdcalls. Twenty such recordings are included in the Bingo materials linked below. For a wealth of further information, including App recommendations, check out allaboutbirds.org/news/browse/topic/sounds-songs/.
- Play Bird Call Bingo. All the materials, including recordings of the various bird calls, are available here: bit.ly/38bOfna. A demonstration of the game being played can be found here youtube.com/watch?v=qZP7qxM0iqk.
- Take students outside and invite them to listen for bird sounds. Do they recognize any from the recordings?



ACTIVITY 4: DRAWING BIRDS

This activity gives students an opportunity to develop their drawing skills while continuing to explore the topic of birds.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- create two-dimensional works of art that express feelings and ideas inspired by observations of nature

You Will Need

- *Whistling for Angela*
- *The Boy Who Drew Birds* by Jacqueline Davies

How To:

1. Read aloud *The Boy Who Drew Birds*. Discuss the fact that the call of the Pewee (now known as Eastern Phoebe) in this book is described as fee-bee, just as the call of the chick-a-dee was in *Whistling for Angela*. Listen to a recording of a phoebe, and of the chickadee's fee-bee call. In what ways are they similar and different? Discuss the limitations of using human letters to describe bird sounds.
2. View some of Audubon's artwork: www.audubon.org/birds-of-america
3. Examine the fifth spread of *Whistling for Angela*. What evidence do students see of Daniel's interest in birds? Make sure they notice the owl drawing. Do students think that Daniel might one day become a great painter of birds, like John James Audubon?
4. Take students outside to observe birds in the wild. Use field guides and knowledge of bird calls to help identify the birds. You will not likely get close enough to take good pictures with student-friendly devices, so focus on real-time observation. Encourage students to look for color of feathers, beak, eye and legs, size of bird, etc.
5. Provide an age-appropriate bird-drawing tutorial, such as this one: [youtube.com/watch?v=rzxRWTV237M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzxRWTV237M). You might wish to have students label the bird's body parts, if relevant to your science curriculum.
6. Set up a bird-drawing centre for students to use during self-directed

learning times. It might contain photos of a variety of birds, drawing paper, a variety of pencils (2H, HB, 2B), colored pencils, and a box of water-colour paints.

7. Frame students' artwork by mounting on black paper and create a display.



Bibliography

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<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/social-studies-history-geography-2018.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/scientec18currb.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/arts18b09curr.pdf>

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Roles and Responsibilities

Name: _____

| Person | Past Roles and Responsibilities | Current Roles and Responsibilities |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Daniel | | |
| Daniel's Mom and Dad | | |
| Jessie | | |
| Angela | | |
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What roles or responsibilities might Daniel have in the future? _____

What roles or responsibilities might you have in the future? _____
