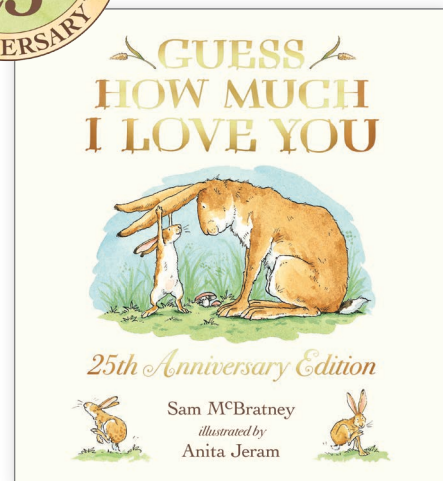


# Storytelling fun with **GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU**

Sam McBratney *illustrated by* Anita Jeram

The timeless and heart-warming tale of Little Nutbrown Hare and Big Nutbrown Hare has become one of the world's best-loved picture books. There is plenty of space for action and props. If you are a newcomer to the book, try telling the story with just actions first. If you are already familiar with the story, try adding some multi-sensory props. Above all, enjoy the warmth and love on every page when you share this enduring classic. Relax, pace yourself and have fun with it – your guests will have a wonderful time!



9781406391169 • £6.99 • Board Book

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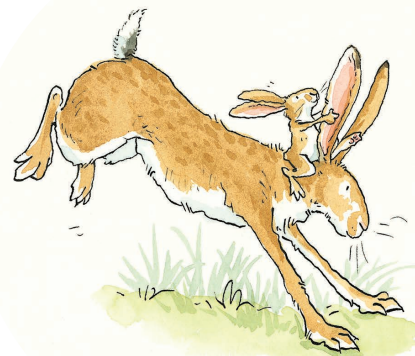
## THE STORYTELLING SPACE

When planning the session make sure you are in a cosy, enclosed space where parents can sit with their children comfortably. This touching tale is all about the very special relationship between the big person and the little person they love. This means babies even a few months old will get huge enjoyment from the storytime experience, especially when the adults join in! Beware of distractions, such as a basket of toys or an interesting chair to crawl under. If there is a window in the room with a view onto the street, aim to have it behind the audience, not behind the storyteller!

## BEFORE YOU START

Prepare by reading the book aloud to yourself several times. You may find putting the book on a music stand is easier than holding it or you might want to enlist a volunteer to sit beside you, show the book for you and turn the pages. This will leave your hands free to point and do actions!

Babies might not be able to speak or understand words but they are certainly aware of feelings which is why this is such a great book for the very young. It takes us on an emotional journey – yearning, insecurity and hope, finishing with the wonderful security and love of the ending. Take your time with every page. Look at the gentle illustrations and allow the story to progress slowly, exploring the different feelings on each page with the audience.



## WARMING UP

It's nice to interact with the group before you start reading. Start off with a strong "hello" and encourage everyone to wave and say "hello" back. Warm everyone up with a joining-in action song, for example "*Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*" or "*If You're Happy and You Know It*".



## READING THE STORY

### Actions

The text really lends itself to actions which grown-ups can do with their baby:

- Holding onto your ears
- Stretching your arms wide
- Reaching up high
- Tumbling upside down (a roly-poly movement with your hands)
- Stretching out your toes
- Hopping (or bouncing a baby on your lap!)

### Props

If you are already using actions and are very confident with the story, you could try adding props as well. They are brilliant fun, multi-sensory and will engage even the most stubborn child.

Consider using a big scarf/sheet/blanket of soft blue fabric to represent the river.

As you get to "*I love you all the way down the lane as far as the river...*" you could try getting out the fabric and gathering around it, putting your feet underneath and pretending to paddle, asking parents to take hold of it and wave it as if it was water. (Make sure toddlers don't run around too much at this point or they could slip over!)



Then you come to "*he looked beyond the thorn bushes out into the big dark night. Nothing could be further than the sky*" it is time for the moon to make an appearance. Be creative! The simplest option is to make your own moon from card but you can experiment – a round tin tray, a mirror (so long as it's not too fragile) a frying pan or silver balloon ... whatever you like! If you have some fairy lights, you could make the stars as well.

The final prop which is fun to create is Little Nutbrown Hare's "*bed of leaves*". Collect a pile of dry leaves into a bag and pass it round. The leaves make a satisfying crispy rustle and the audience can smell and hear them, touch the bag and shake them. Don't let the babies or toddlers hold an actual leaf as they could put it into their mouths.

Introduce the props before the story starts. Get out each item one at a time, introduce each sensation gently and calmly. Never force a child to touch anything they are not happy with – children can get just as much fun from watching other people experience things. They often LOVE to watch their parents trying things! Allow ten minutes for the prop-exploration before reading the book.

Props can be kept in a box throughout. Bring them out one at a time and put away as soon as they are done with. Take a pause, relax and allow time to explore each prop before putting it away. You might want to allow between three to five minutes of “play” before picking up the book for the next bit.

### **Kids who don't like it**

Of course all the above is very good, but no matter how brilliant the book or the storyteller, sometimes a child won't respond. They might be over-tired, hungry or just plain grumpy! When this happens, it can be good to have an “out” for them. Is there a nearby room or hallway where a noisy child can be taken to calm down so their yells don't disturb everyone else? Often they will quieten down in just a few minutes and they can come back in. (Sometimes they won't, but hey, that's toddlers!).

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Another joining-in song can be a good way to finish storytime. If you have a goodbye song, that's great. Otherwise a few choruses of “*Sleeping Bunnies*” is always popular!



Visit [guesshowmuchiloveyou.com](http://guesshowmuchiloveyou.com) for fun activities and games.

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