

# Activity Guide

Written by Lauren Adams

To be used with

***I Was Born to Be a Brother***

Author: Zaydek G. Michels-Gualtieri

Illustrator: Daniel Liegey

ISBN: 1-930775-10-5 (book with story and music CD)

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Be sure to read *I Was Born to Be a Sister* with story and music CD, ISBN 1-930775-11-3



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### **Before reading this story...**

- Introduce the story by looking at the cover of the book. Talk about the title. Predict: What do you think the story might be about? Why do you think that?
- Take a "Picture Walk" through the book. Discuss what you think is happening in each illustration. Use lots of details. Who do you think this story is about? (characters) Where do you think this story takes place? (setting)
- Explain that we will read to find out how the little boy feels about being a big brother.

### **Reading...**

Read the story once without interruption. Then read it again and discuss the following questions:

- There are 4 people in this little boy's family. How many people are in your family? Is it more or less than 4?
- How do you think the little boy feels about being a big brother? Do you have a big brother or big sister? What are some great things about having an older sibling? What are some great things about having a younger sibling? What would be great about being an only child?
- Look at the illustrations....can you tell what the little boy likes to do? What do you enjoy doing? Can you think of some things that are better to do by yourself? What are some things that are better to do with someone else?
- The family in this story has a dog and some fish. Do you have a pet? What do you have to do to take care of your pet? What are some things that pets need to survive and be happy? If your family doesn't have an animal at home, find a stuffed animal or other object, and pretend it is your pet. Give him a name, and a good place to sleep. Make sure you walk him, play with him, feed him, clean him and love him. Why do you think people say that having a pet is a big responsibility? What are some reasons that people shouldn't have a pet at home?
- The little boy taught his sister many things. What can you teach someone else to do? What has someone taught you to do? Is it easy to teach people things?

### **After reading this story...**

- Did you enjoy this story? What parts did you like the best? Draw a picture to show one of your favorite parts.
- Find one of your stuffed animals. Look through the book and "read" the pictures to your animal so that he knows what is happening on each page.
- Learn how to set the table properly. Practice putting the napkin, silverware and glass in the right position. Can you help your family set the table each night?

# LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES

## “I Scream, You Scream!” (oral language, personification, poetry)

- The little boy teaches his sister how to eat ice cream with a straw. Have you ever tried to eat ice cream that way? When would using a straw be the best way to eat ice cream?
- Pretend you are a scoop of ice cream that could talk. What would you say to the person who was about to take a bite of you? Should they eat you or not? Why?
- Learn and practice the chant, “I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!”
- Go to the library. Find and read the following poems and then write your own poem about ice cream. “Bleezer’s Ice cream,” Jack Prelutsky, *New Kid on the Block* “I Did Not Eat Your Ice cream,” Jack Prelutsky, *Something Big Has Been Here* “Eighteen Flavors,” Shel Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*



## Read to Me!

Find the picture of the little boy reading to his sister. Find one of your favorite books. Now find someone or something to “read” it to. Use your memory and the pictures to help you tell the story. Use as many details as you can.

## Oral Language/Role Playing

- The main character in this story is a brother. What does it mean to be a brother? Can a girl be a brother? Can a girl have a brother? Have children ask their fathers if they are brothers. Do their mothers have brothers?
- The little boy taught his sister how to call the fire department. Why is it important that she know how to do that? What is an emergency? When would you need to call 911? Would you call 911 if you accidentally hit your finger with a hammer like the little boy in the story did? Why or why not? How about if you saw flames coming out of a neighbor’s garage?
- Find a toy telephone (or make one using anything you can find). Have an adult ask you the questions that a 911 operator would ask you. Practice until you know the answer to each question:
  1. What is the emergency?
  2. What is your name?
  3. What is your address?
  4. What is your telephone number?

Remember that you should never hang up the phone until an adult on the other end tells you to.

- Words Within Words — there are seven letters in BROTHER. How many other words are there in “brother”? ... broth, other, the, rot, her (What about father, mother, sister?)

## Skill Development:

- Compound words: On the first page, you see the little boy playing basketball. Basketball is a compound word. A compound word is two words put together to make a new word. List as many compound words as you can.
- Similies: Sentences that compare two things are called similies. Brainstorm words that can describe a person (a person can be... fast, happy, smart, angry, frightened etc). Now, use one of these descriptive words to create your own simile. For example: Fast as a racecar; Happy as a kid with ice cream, etc.

## Measuring/Cooking

### Make Your Own Ice Cream!

Find the picture of the children eating ice cream. With an adult's help, make your own ice cream.

1 (4 oz) pkg. instant pudding

2 cups milk

1/4 cup sugar

1 cup canned evaporated milk

2 ten-pound bags of ice

2 boxes of table salt (28oz.)

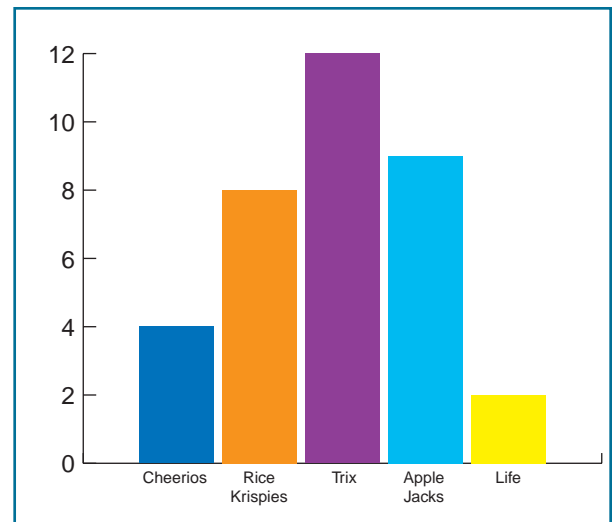
Freezer bags—quart size and gallon size

Make pudding according to directions using 2 cups milk. Stir in sugar and canned milk. Pour equally into several quart size plastic bags. Place each small bag inside a gallon bag. Put 2 cups of ice cubes in the large bag and about 1/4 to 1/2 cup salt. Let out as much air as possible, zip up the large bag and SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE!

If too much water accumulates in the large bag, pour out the water, put in a little more ice and salt and keep shaking until the ice cream is frozen. It should take about 10 minutes for the ice cream to freeze.

## Graphing

- Find the picture of the little girl grabbing for the cereal box. What is your favorite cereal? Think of any 5 cereals. Make a bar graph that shows each cereal across the bottom. Ask as many people as you can which cereal is their favorite. Graph the results. Which cereal got the most votes? Which got the fewest votes? By how many? Were there any ties? What other things can you graph?



## Have a Ball!

Find the picture of the children playing basketball. Have you ever played basketball before? Do you enjoy it? If you've never played basketball before, would you like to learn how?

- How many children do you see in the picture? How many more children would need to join the team if they wanted 10 players? How many would there be if 2 of the boys went home?
- What is the shape of a basketball? (sphere) Look around your house...what other objects have a sphere shape? Can you find any spheres outside? What is the difference between a sphere and a circle?

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- Can you find other balls around your house? (tennis ball, golf ball, marble, ping-pong ball, rubber ball, bowling ball, volley ball, beach ball...) Can you put these balls in order from largest to smallest? Heaviest to lightest?

## **Time to Eat!**

The little boy helps his family set the table for dinner. There are 4 people in his family.

- How many pieces of silverware would he need if each person gets a fork and spoon? How about if his mom and dad wanted to use a knife?
- The family is eating chicken for dinner. What is your favorite food? Take a poll...ask several people what their favorite food is.
- Help an adult to prepare your favorite food. Can you help get out the ingredients? Measure? Mix? Pour? Clean up?

## **Up, Up and AWAY!!**

The little boy and his dad are playing with a model airplane. What are some things you like to do with your family? Have you ever flown in a real airplane? Where were you going? What was it like? If you have never flown before, would you like to? Where would you like to go? Look up in the sky...do you see any airplanes? Why do they look so small? Can you hear them? What other things are in the sky?

- Build your own paper airplane (see Appendix A for paper airplane template) See how far you can make it fly. Get a tape measure or ruler to see how far it went. Have a contest. Which plane flew the greatest distance? Which plane flew the shortest distance? Which flew the highest? What can you do to make your plane fly better?

## **DON'T BE A BLOCKHEAD!!**

In the song, the little boy builds a "way tall tower." Can you build a tower with blocks? What else can you build a tower with?

- Number index cards 1-5. Give your child 5 blocks. Hold up a card and have child identify the number and count out that many blocks.
- Get a pile of blocks. Choose any block and place it on the floor. Take turns — each person adds a block to create a block sculpture. When all blocks are used, start again.
- Find a set of pattern blocks and see what patterns you can make.

# SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

## Trains, Planes and Automobiles

There are several different forms of transportation mentioned in this story. What are they?

- Planes are a form of transportation. They get us from one place to another. What other forms of transportation can you think of? Can you make up a new way to get from your house to the store? Draw a picture of it, or build it. Who would use it?
- Visit an airport, watch the planes. Where do you think everyone is going? Who are they going to visit?
- Make your own transportation book: "This is a \_\_\_\_\_. It \_\_\_\_\_." Illustrate each page.

## We Are Family

Most children grow up in a family. Some families are small and some families are large. Children are born or adopted into a family. Families protect, take care of, and teach young children. Families help each other, work together, play together and celebrate holidays and special times together.



- Draw a picture of your family in order of size, from shortest to tallest.
- Make finger puppets (see Appendix B for finger puppet template). Cut strips of paper and tape them to fit around your finger. Cut out paper figures and decorate them to look like real family members, an imaginary family or an animal family. Glue the figures to the rings to complete the puppets.

Put on a puppet show and act out a variety of different family situations-

- ❖ One family member won't share with another one
- ❖ One family member won't wait her turn
- ❖ One family member wants to play, but the other one doesn't want to
- ❖ A family is getting ready for a new baby to arrive
- ❖ One family member is teaching something to another family member

## We're Having a Ball!

- Do all balls bounce? Find as many different types of balls as you can. Which of the balls will bounce? Which will not? Test your predictions. Which ball bounces the highest?
- Look at (observe) the texture of each ball. Use your finger to feel each one. What words can you use to describe each ball? (bumpy, smooth, fuzzy,....)

## Mmm...Mmm GOOD!

- Become a flavor scientist. Create your own ice cream flavor. What would it be? Mix it with vanilla ice cream. Taste your new creation. Is it good? How would potato chip ice cream taste? How about liver and onion?
- What senses do you use when mixing ingredients (i.e. sight for color, touch for texture, smell for scent, taste for flavor)? Can you use touch and sound in developing a new flavor?
- Vanilla and chocolate are the most common ice cream flavors. Where do they come from? How do you get flavor from a seed or a bean?

## Be a Detective!

What is the little boy looking at with his magnifying glass? What does a magnifying glass do? Why would someone need to use one?

- Get your own magnifying glass. Use it to look at your fingerprint. Look at someone else's fingerprint. Do they look the same? Go on a nature walk...find different objects to magnify. Describe their color, parts, texture....Magnify some food. Do you see anything new when you use the magnifying glass?
- What would it be like to use a magnifying glass all day? Would this be fun? Why or why not?
- How is a magnifying glass different than a microscope? A telescope?



## Physical Activity

- Play your own game of basketball. Get a pair of socks (or a crumbled up piece of paper) and make them into a ball. Toss into a waste basket. See how many baskets you can make! Shoot ten times. If each basket is worth two points, how many points did you get? What if you lost a point for each shot you missed?
- What other sports can you think of? See if you can act out a sport and have someone guess which sport you are playing.
- Pretend you are an airplane. Fly around the room. What sounds do you make? Where are you going? Who is travelling with you? What did you pack?
- Go to a park and find a swing (or do you have a swing in your back yard?) What happens if you pump your legs really hard? What happens if you stop pumping? How high can you go? Make sure you hold on tight!
- Can you crawl around and pretend you are a lion or giraffe? What other animals can you pretend to be? See if someone can guess which animal you are.
- Do you have any toy cars? Do they go faster on the floor or on the carpet? Can you build a ramp for them? Pretend you are a race car. How fast can you go? Now, how fast can you go if you are walking like a crab? Backwards? On one foot?
- In the song, the boy makes funny faces “just to make her laugh.” Can you make a face that makes someone else laugh?

## Music

- It looks like the dad in the story plays the guitar. Can you play a musical instrument? Try to make your own instrument...how will it make noise? Will you shake it, blow into it, hit it, strum it? Get your friends to make their own instruments and have a band!
- Listen to the song, “I Was Born To Be A Brother” several times (see Appendix C for lyrics) Can you clap to the rhythm?
- The little boy thinks that being a big brother is the best job in the family. What are some other jobs that you have in your family? Can you change the lyrics to show that?

“I’m a \_\_\_\_\_,  
I’m a \_\_\_\_\_ and it’s easy to see,  
I was born to be a \_\_\_\_\_  
It’s the very best job in my family.”

## Do you hear what I hear?

The little boy taught his sister which sounds go with which toy. Sound is made by vibrations. Sing your favorite song with your fingertips on your throat. Do you feel vibrations? That is what is making the sound.

*Continued on p. 10*



- Make rubber band guitars using empty tissue boxes and rubber bands (why does the box need to be empty?) Make a drum. Make a shaker instrument (beans and dry, empty soda bottles work well for this). How else can you make sound?
- Close your eyes. Have an adult or friend make a sound using something from your house. Can you guess what it is?
- What items in the picture make sounds? In different areas around the world, people speak many different languages. What about animals? Do animals in different areas make different sounds?

## Arts

Make a book – the hands of my family

- Fold a number of sheets of paper in half to make a booklet. Have kids trace and cut out family members' hands on the right side of the page. On the left side, have them write or draw why that person is special. Encourage kids to get pawprints as well.
- The little boy likes to make things with clay. Can you make your own play dough?

Try this quick and easy Playdough Recipe

In saucepan mix:

1 cup flour

1/2 cup salt

2 teaspoons cream of tartar

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 cup water

Cook over medium heat until consistency of very thick mashed potatoes.

Scrape saucepan as you turn the play dough onto a work surface. Divide and knead in food colors or cake decoration paste.

Store in plastic bag.

OR... Try this Edible Play Dough Recipe and eat your results!

Ingredients:

1 cup powdered milk

1/2 cup peanut butter

1/4 cup honey

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well. This can be eaten..

However, do not keep longer than a day, as it does not last. The recipe above will make dough for 3 children.



### **About The Author/ Zaydek G. Michels-Gualtieri**

A fifth-grader living in Washington, DC, Zaydek Michels-Gualtieri loves making clay creatures, racing cars, playing computer games, and working on his solid foil ball. He is a little brother to Akaela (14) and a big brother to Miralah (4). Though he occasionally works on his catapult designs, he really does love being a brother!

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### **About The Illustrator/ Daniel Liegey**

A resident of Jersey City, New Jersey, Dan Liegey is a professional illustrator and storyboard artist who loves his job. When he's not working, he spends time honing his skills at The Art Students League. He loves chocolate and candy so much that sometimes he has to remind himself to eat some vegetables. Like Zaydek, he has been a brother ever since the day he was born.

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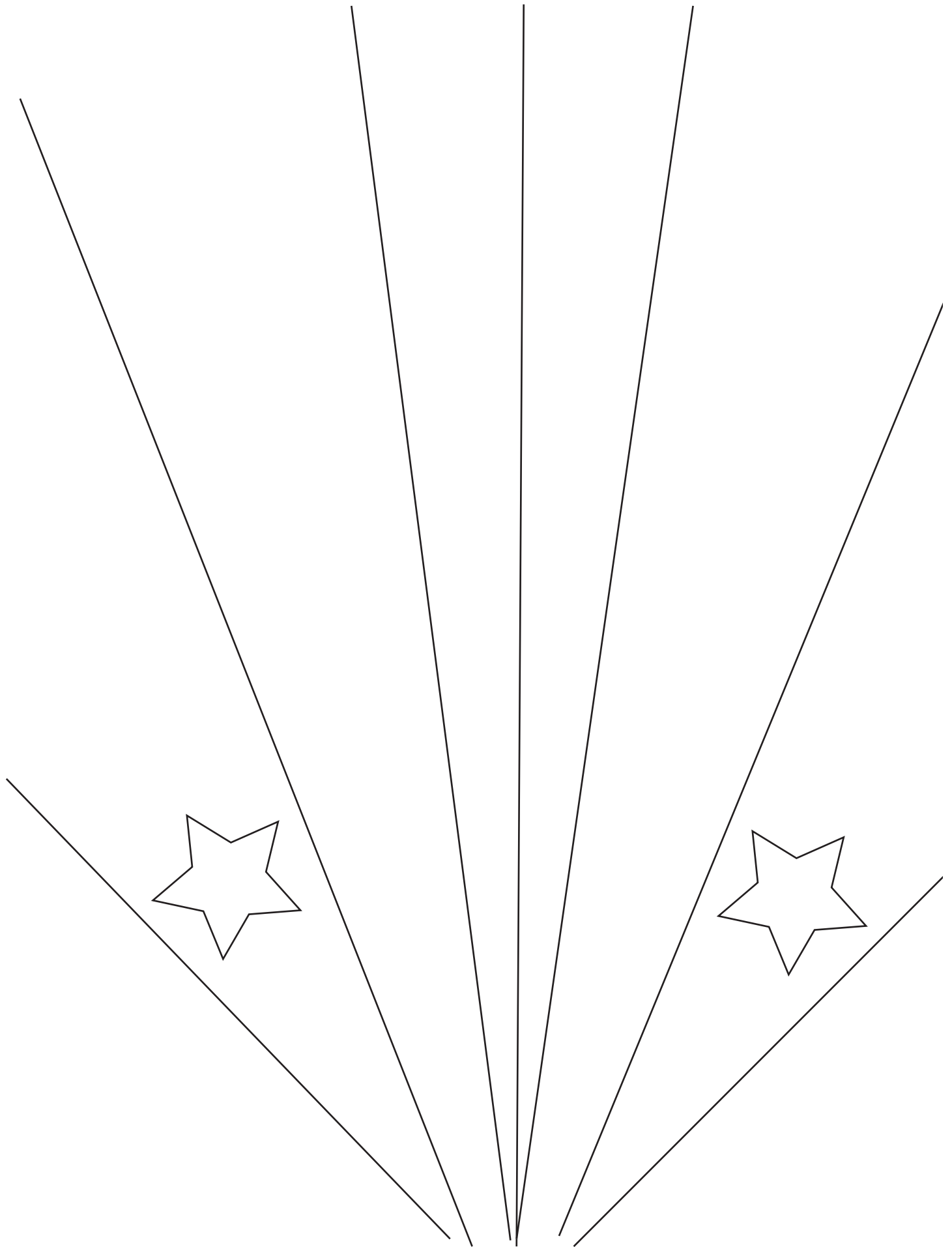
### **About The Activity Guide Writer/ Lauren Adams**

For as long as Lauren Adams can remember, she wanted to be a teacher. She fulfilled her dream and spent 15 wonderful years teaching first and second grade students in Prince William County, Virginia. In the past year, however, she has downsized her class to one student ... her beautiful 18 month old daughter, Rylie. Although Lauren is not a brother, she has one (and a sister, too!) who she loves very much.

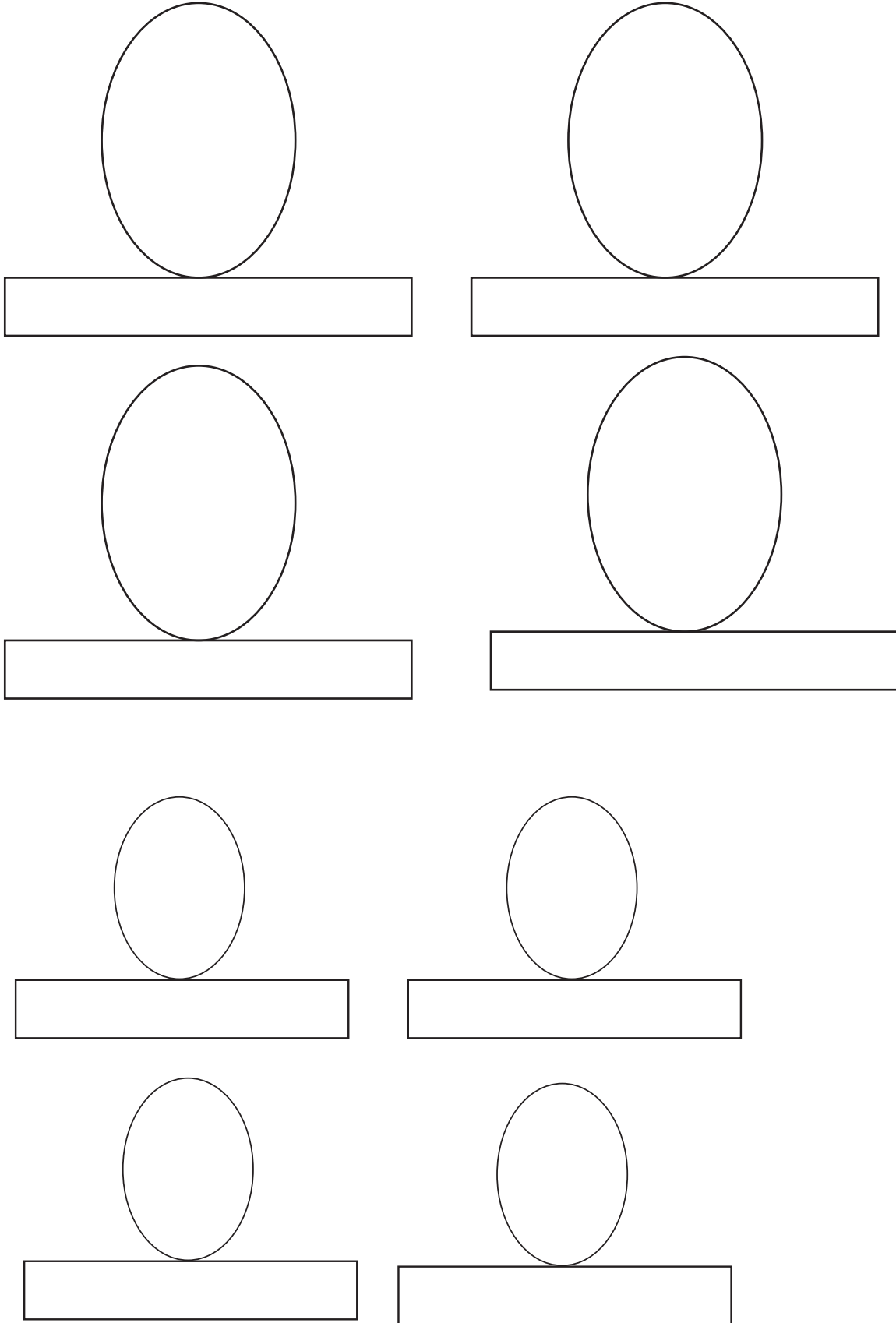
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**APPENDIX A: Paper Airplane Template**



## APPENDIX B: Finger Puppet Template



## APPENDIX C: Song Lyrics

### I Was Born To Be A Brother

This is the companion book/song to *I Was Born to Be a Sister* by Akaela Michels-Gualtieri (ISBN 1-930775-11-3). For more information on this book and song, visit [PlatypusMedia.com](http://PlatypusMedia.com).

Words and Music by Zaydek G. Michels-Gualtieri

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Song accompanies the book: *I was Born to Be a Brother*

By Zaydek G. Michels-Gualtieri

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I am the mister, she'll always be my sister,  
I'm the big brother, same father, same mother.  
I was born to be a brother, a big, big brother.  
That's my job in the family.

We crawl around together  
Playing lion or giraffe,  
I make lots of funny faces  
'Cause I like to make her laugh.  
She climbs on my lap,  
Wraps her arms around my neck,  
Rubs her boogers on my shirt,  
But oh, what the heck, I'm her brother.

Chorus 1:

I'm her brother, the big, big brother,  
I'm her brother and it's easy to see,  
I was born to be a brother, her big, big brother.  
That's my job in the family.

I hold our little puppy,  
so she can feed and pet it.  
When her helium balloon escapes  
I always go and get it.  
I build way tall towers  
Just for us to wreck.  
She drools in my cereal  
But oh, what the heck, I'm her brother.

Chorus 2:

I'm her brother, the big, big brother,  
I'm her brother and it's easy to see,  
I was born to be a brother, her big, big brother.  
A very special job in my family.

Who made this feeling?  
It's a wonderful feeling.  
Even though I don't like to say it out loud,  
She makes me proud.

Chorus 3:

I'm her brother, the big, big brother,  
I'm her brother and it's easy to see,  
I was born to be a brother, her big, big brother.  
A very special job in my family.

I'm her brother, the big, big brother,  
I'm her brother and it's—

[Telephone Rings]

Who could be calling at this hour?

[Devil speaks]  
Hello...reality check?  
Aren't you forgetting?

[Boy speaks]  
...Forgetting what?

[Devil speaks]  
Before she came...

You were all that mattered,  
The one who was flattered,  
The baby came along and your world was shattered.

Before she arrived  
You got it all  
You had it made  
No one rained on your parade

Oh, yeah...I forgot.

Now that she's here  
She invades my space  
She's in my face  
And takes over the place.  
Day after day  
She always gets her way,  
No one listens  
To what I say!

And did I mention  
She gets all the attention!  
"She's so pretty!  
She's so cute!  
She's so sweet!"  
It makes me wanna puke!  
Let's send her back  
I'll even help her pack.

She hides the remote, breaks my toys,  
Smells up the room, makes a ton of noise.  
My world was good  
Now it's bad.  
It's all because of  
mom and dad.

Once upon a time, way back when,  
One kid was quite enough for them.  
Now all I hear is  
"You have to share."  
I don't know why  
I should care.

Continued on p. 14

[Mira sings]

Old McDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O.  
And on that farm he had a horse, E-I-E-I-O.

[Boy speaks]

Oh, brother.

[Mira speaks]

You're silly.

[Boy speaks]

Maybe she's not so bad.

[Mira speaks]

I'm the baby sister, I love my brother, I love everybody.

[Boy sings]

Okay, whatever,  
She'll be my sister forever.  
Even though I don't like to say it, it's true.  
(whisper) I love her, too.

Chorus 4:

I'm her brother, the big, big brother, (I feel it deep inside)  
I'm her brother and it's easy to see,  
I was born to be a brother, her big, big brother.  
The very best job in my family.

I'm her brother, the big, big brother, (I am so satisfied)  
I'm her brother and it's easy to see,  
I was born to be a brother, her big, big brother.  
The very best job in my family.

I'm her brother, the big, big brother,  
I'm her brother and it's easy to see,  
I was born to be a brother, her big, big brother.  
The very best job in my family.

[Mira speaks]

He's my big brother.

### **Songwriting Consultants:**

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