



Reading Guide:

Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad

Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad

by David Soman and Jacky Davis

Summary

Lulu is excited for all her friends to come play for the day! She has planned everything and is ready for the day to be perfect. Sadly, while trying to keep the day just the way she imagined it, Lulu hurts the feelings of one of her friends. In order to make things right, Lulu remembers that Ladybug Girl never runs away from situations that are hard and always faces her problems.

Thematic Links

Feelings/Emotions – Ladybug Girl goes through many emotions in this story, as do her friends. As the story is read, or reread, ask students how they believe the characters in the story are feeling. Ask students to list all of the feelings/emotions they can name and to give examples of when they have felt that way. In the story, Lulu’s stomach feels funny after she upsets Kiki/Butterfly Girl. Encourage students to discuss the physical feelings associated with strong emotions as well.

Friendship – Lulu has invited three friends over to play for the day. They all love dressing up as the Bug Squad, but they also have different opinions about things. Encourage students to discuss their friendships and how they work. Is it necessary for students to always want to do the same thing as their friends? Do they need to like exactly the same things? How do students work out these differences? What differences do Lulu and her friends have, and how do they solve their disagreements? Some examples of differences in the story include: not all choosing the same costume, contributing different items to the hideout, suggesting different hideout passwords, and painting their rocks differently.

Pretend Play – Children love opportunities to dress up and play pretend! Pretend play encourages children to build both language and social skills while using their imaginations and acquiring a stronger sense of self. Encourage students to talk about what/whom they like to dress up as. What do they like to use for costumes? Do they ever borrow other family members’ clothes/hats/shoes/jewelry to dress up with? Encourage students to dress up for the day or for story time when reading *Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad*.

Purposes

Sharing a story can encourage and help students to:

- Listen to stories read aloud.
- Demonstrate increasing levels of engagement.
- Make predictions of storyline events.

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- Begin to predict words and eventually be able to fill in words to show evidence of listening.
- Discuss the notions of feelings, friendship, and play.
- Show a steady increase in the number of words in listening vocabulary.
- Develop understanding of main events.

Reading the Story

Help children to identify the setting and characters, as well as to track story events.

Suggested Vocabulary

Use these words during story time, and throughout the day.

- Squad** – *noun* A small group of people who work together.
- Perfect** – *adjective* Without any mistakes.
- Bounding** – *verb* Walking or running with leaps and jumps.
- Pine trees** – *noun* Tall trees that grow pine cones and leaves that look like green needles.
- Hideout** – *noun* A special place where someone can hide.
- Password** – *noun* A secret word you need to know to get into a hideout or guarded area.
- Swirling** – *verb* Moving or whirling in circles.
- Lava** – *noun* The hot, liquid rock that pours out of a volcano when it erupts.
- Museum** – *noun* A place where interesting and valuable objects are displayed for others to see.
- Pluto** – *noun* A dwarf planet in the solar system that is very far away from the sun.
- Flickering** – *verb* Burning or shining with an unsteady or twinkling light.
- Mission** – *noun* An important job or task.

Extending the Book

For a child who is ready for the challenge, have him or her help you read the title of the book, *Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad*. Use your finger to underline the title, letter by letter, and sound it out if necessary. Repeat the multi-syllabic word slowly and carefully, helping the child to learn to say it.

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Model for Reading

Use the following discussion points to help you plan your book reading:

- “The title of this book is *Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad*. The authors of this book are David Soman and Jacky Davis.”
- “Who’s this on the front cover of the book?” (Point to Ladybug Girl and encourage children to explain who they think she is. Prompt them again with the title of the book if necessary.)
- “That’s right! This is Ladybug Girl. How do you think she is feeling in this picture?” (Encourage children to explain how they believe she is feeling and why. Do they believe she is happy because she is running with her dog and smiling? Are they running away from something? Encourage all answers with a positive “OK” or “That’s a great observation.”)
- “The title of the book is *Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad*. What do you think Ladybug Girl is going to do with the Bug Squad in this story? What do you think the Bug Squad is?” (Encourage children to come up with different ideas about what they believe the Bug Squad is. Provide lots of enthusiasm and encouragement for their answers and a final excited “Let’s go find out!” before starting the story.)

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NOTE: Because the pages in Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad are not numbered, the “page numbers” provided below are for orientation only and do not directly correspond to numbers in the book. “Pages 1–2” refers to the pages where the author begins the story, and the page numbers that follow are provided simply for sequential reference.



Read pages 1–2

How is Lulu feeling? Is she excited? Ask children to describe the last time they were really excited. Have them describe the situation and how it feels inside to be so excited. What types of things do they do while having to wait?



Read pages 3–4

The Bug Squad is Lulu’s friends! How does this match with the children’s initial predictions about the Bug Squad? What kind of bugs would the children be if they were going to join Lulu and her friends? What would their costumes look like?



Read pages 5–6

Where is the Bug Squad going? What do children think “Let’s go to the Bug Squad base!” means? Ask children if they have seen an area that looks like this. Where did they see it? Have they ever visited an area that looks like where the Bug Squad is going?

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Read pages 7–8

Talk to the children about the setting of the story. Lulu’s playdate seems to have changed drastically, but they are still at her home. Ask children where they go to play. What places do they find to set up “bases”? What makes the Bug Squad’s base a good one? Be sure to point out that they are still in Lulu’s yard so the adults know where they are!



Read pages 9–10

The Bug Squad has readied their base, but they have an important decision to make. Lulu and Marley have different ideas about a password. How do they come to a decision? What do children think the Bug Squad is going to do next? What will happen if all the Bug Squad members don’t agree on what to do next? How do children think the Bug Squad would handle different ideas?



Read pages 11–12

Super powers! Were any of the students’ predictions correct? Ask children to remember what kind of bug they wanted to be if they were joining the Bug Squad. What would they want their super power to be and why? How would they use it? Would they be a good bug or a bad bug?



Read pages 13–14

Let’s play! The Bug Squad is making up an imaginary adventure. Does this match the children’s predictions? Will the Bug Squad make it safely through the lava? What else could they have pretended to be doing while walking on a big log?



Read pages 15–16

Now the Bug Squad faces an army of giants! Ask children what kind of flowers these are. Have they ever seen any fully grown sunflowers? Where? What other kinds of plants grow taller than children? Where have they seen them? What else could the Bug Squad have pretended the sunflowers were?



Read pages 17–18

So far things are going perfectly for Lulu. What do children think the Bug Squad is going to paint? Ask the children to describe fun activities they do with their friends. Do they play games? Make art projects? Have snacks?

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Read pages 19–20

Before reading these pages, have students look at them closely. What is the Bug Squad doing? What do they get to paint? When painting with friends, do children think they should get to pick what they paint or be told what to paint by their friends?

After reading these two pages, ask students how they think Lulu is feeling about the painting project. Did her friends do what she asked? Should it matter to her what they painted? Why does it matter to her what they paint on their rocks?



Show pages 21–22

Wow, cupcakes for snacks – with candles! How does it feel to get to blow out your own candle? What do the children think of Lulu’s idea that they all should blow out their candles at the very same time? How do you think Lulu’s friends feel about her saying this?



Read pages 23–24

Uh-oh! How do children think Lulu and Kiki are feeling now? Was it OK that Lulu blew out Kiki’s candle? Did Kiki need to do what Lulu had asked, or would it have been OK for her to do whatever she wanted with her own candle?



Read pages 25–26

Ask children why they think Lulu’s stomach feels funny. How do they feel when someone is unhappy with what they have done? Ask children to give some of their own ideas about how they could solve this problem. How does it feel to watch two friends fighting? What do the children think Ladybug Girl is going to do?



Read pages 27–28

Ladybug Girl apologizes and gets Kiki’s candle relit so Kiki can blow it out! Does this match any ideas children had for a solution? Sometimes admitting you are wrong and apologizing takes a lot of bravery. When was the last time the children had to apologize? How did they feel before they did it? Did they feel different after apologizing? What do children think of Kiki’s response? Are Kiki and Lulu back to getting along, and will they be able to have fun together?

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Read pages 29–30

Now that the members of the Bug Squad have finished their snacks, they are ready to play again! What kind of mission might they find in the house? Who might the alien be?



Read pages 31–32

Now what? What do children think the Bug Squad will do with this alien? Ask children if they have ever pretended that a brother or sister was the enemy. What did they do?

Prompting Discussion with Questions

Lulu experiences lots of emotions during her playdate. Out of her excitement she ends up making Kiki mad at her. Encourage students to talk about situations where they have hurt, or had their feelings hurt by, someone they care about. Have they ever had anyone make them sad, angry, or hurt? If a friend or loved one hurts your feelings, can the situation be fixed? How have children helped to solve these situations? Did someone apologize? What happens if someone hurts your feelings but doesn't apologize?

Relating the Story to the Students' Lives

Ask the students:

- “Do you like to play dress up? Who do you dress up as?”
- “Do you like to play with friends? What are your favorite things to do when you play with your friends?”

Thank the students for sharing the story with you. Be sure to tell them that you enjoyed reading together!