The Crayon: A Colorful Tale about Friendship
The 2015 CLEL Bell Award Book for WRITE

by Simon Rickerty
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Two quirky characters take turns scribbling with crayons, mixing and naming colors as they go. For young children, the scribbles in the illustrations and the conversations in the text model age-appropriate written and oral language skills.

Activity Ideas for The Crayon:

- The colors used in the story are all around us! Go on a color scavenger hunt with the children. Ask questions like, “How many things can you find that are red?” With older children, play a game of I-Spy: “I spy with my little eye something that is blue!” Noticing when colors or objects are the same or different helps build the same skills children will use to identify similarities and differences in letter shapes.

- The characters in The Crayon show a variety of emotions with their simple expressions. Using a mirror, ask the children to make an expression for different feelings. What does it mean when you feel content, mischievous, or disappointed? How do our faces look when we feel that way? This is a great opportunity to expand a child’s vocabulary by using new rich, descriptive words in context. Children with larger vocabularies have an easier time understanding what they read.

- Scribbling is good practice for young children! Doodling with large crayons helps to build the muscle strength necessary for writing later. Ask the children to make scribble characters like the ones in the book. For younger children, say the name of each color as they use it. For older children, ask them to tell you about their doodles. Write down what the children say. This will model writing and show children that their ideas, words, and scribbles are important.

- Draw or use clip art to make pictures of sheep with different color wool. Sing “Baa Baa Black Sheep” with the children, changing the name of the color in the song as you hold up different colored sheep. Singing favorite songs provides children with positive language experiences.

The CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards are given to books that provide excellent support of early literacy development in young children. For more information and for other activity sheets, visit http://www.clel.org and select the CLEL Bell Awards tab.

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