The Paper Kingdom
The 2021 CLEL Bell Award Book for TALK

by Helena Ku Ree, illustrated by Pascal Campion
Random House Books for Young Readers, 2020

A beautifully illustrated, own voices story about a young boy who accompanies his parents to their night job as office janitors. To keep the boy entertained, his parents tell him stories of an imaginary Paper Kingdom full of wonder and adventure. By telling our children stories, real or imaginary, we are building their language skills and vocabulary.

Activity Ideas for The Paper Kingdom

• Daniel's parents keep him engaged while they work by telling a fantastical tale complete with dragons, royalty and lots of paper. Tell one of your favorite stories and ask your child to retell it in their own way. You can use the plot of your favorite children’s book, a summary of your favorite movie or an event from your childhood. They will learn to use narrative skills like story structure, sequence and expressive language.

• Daniel’s parents use words to illustrate the Paper Kingdom. How do your children envision their own magical land? Ask them to draw their own kingdom. What would you include? Drawing with a variety of implements helps to develop the fine motor skills needed to form letters, so provide pens, pencils, markers, paint, etc.

• There are many types of play! Dramatic play encourages children to practice role playing. Representational play means imagining an object is something else and is an important cognitive step to understanding that the print on the page can stand for words and ideas. Daniel’s mother and father made everyday objects such as paper into something magical. Use your imagination to build a kingdom out of everyday objects around your house, such as paper, blocks, pillows or blankets.

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.ciel.org and select the CLEL Bell Awards tab.

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