

Our Tree Named Steve

by Alan Zweibel

A heartwarming story, told in flashback by a father to his children, about a tree and how that tree became a beloved family member.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Do you have a favorite tree? Why do you love the tree?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder how tall the tree is?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Our Tree Named Steve*

- nervous: uneasy and timid
- pronounce: to articulate words
- hint: to suggest something indirectly
- greet: to welcome somebody in a cordial way
- target: an area, surface or object that is being aimed at
- outdoor: located in the open air
- adjusted: change something slightly
- hammock: a hanging bed made of canvas or netting suspended between two supports
- sewer: a drain, usually underground, that carries away waste
- overflowed: to flow or pour over
- spared: to refrain from harming somebody
- protected: to shelter from the elements of from something harmful

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Who is writing the letter?
- What was the family doing in the woods?
- What did Adam think the tree was doing when he first saw it? Lindsay?
- Why did Sari call the tree Steve?
- What sort of games did Steve help the kids play?
- What happened when the dryer broke?
- How did Steve help the family enjoy the outdoors?
- Why was it sometimes hard for Steve to be a tree?
- Why did the tree doctor cut off all of Steve's branches?
- What happened to Steve during the storm?
- What was Steve's last trick?
- Why did the parents write the letter to Adam, Lindsay and Sari? Where were they spending their vacation?



Do

Nature Walk

After reading the story, take a nature walk around your school, local park or local nature center. During the walk have the children look for different types of trees. Look for trees that would be good for climbing, swinging, giving shade or a tree that is just growing. Classify the trees by height, leaves or tree type. If desired, take pictures of all the different trees that your children find. Print out the pictures and continue the classification of each tree. Have the children describe each tree and talk about what makes the trees similar and different.