

Lilypad and the Quest for the Glimmering Gears

Parent & Teacher Reading Guide

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1 Welcome

Use this guide to turn **Lilypad and the Quest for the Glimmering Gears** into a shared read-aloud, a conversation about courage, and a springboard for creative problem solving. Adapt the prompts to the age and attention of each child. There are no wrong answers when a child can point to a moment in the story and explain an idea.

1.1 Story at a glance

Lilypad is an imaginative frog who wants to complete a flying machine. With her friend Barnaby, she searches for the Glimmering Gears at the bottom of the pond. The journey asks Lilypad to face her fear of water, notice another creature's loneliness, and invent a Friendship Phone before she can finish her dream.

1.2 Themes to notice

- Courage can mean taking one small step while feeling scared.
- Friendship includes encouragement and listening.
- Inventions can solve problems for other people.
- Creative thinking can turn a conflict into a chance to help.

2 Before reading

Invite children to look at the cover and ask what they think a gear does. Then ask them to draw or describe a machine that could help someone. Explain that readers will meet an inventor who has a big idea and an important part still missing.

Try these conversation starters:

- What might a flying machine need in order to work?
- When have you wanted to try something that felt a little scary?
- How could a friend help when a problem feels too big?

3 During reading

Pause at natural points and let children predict, point, or act out an idea. Keep the conversation light; a single question is enough.

3.1 Words to notice

- **Blueprint:** a drawing that shows a plan for making something.
- **Gears:** turning parts that help a machine move.
- **Contraption:** a machine or invention with many parts.
- **Ingenuity:** using clever ideas to solve a problem.

3.2 Read-aloud pauses

When Lilypad says she is scared of the water, ask: "What could help her feel ready?" When the Great Gulper refuses to share, ask: "What might he need besides shiny gears?" When Lilypad thinks of the Friendship Phone, ask: "How does her invention help someone else?"

4 After reading

Choose a few questions rather than asking all of them at once.

- What did Lilypad want to build, and what was missing?
- How did Barnaby help Lilypad face her fear?
- Why do you think the Great Gulper kept the gears?
- What did Lilypad make for the Great Gulper, and why was it important?
- Which part of the story shows that an invention can bring people together?

5 Try-it activity: Build a Friendship Phone

With an adult's help, make a simple phone with two paper cups and a long piece of string. Make a small hole in the bottom of each cup, thread the string through, and tie a knot inside each cup. Stand apart until the string is gently tight. Take turns sharing a kind message through the phone.

Ask children to imagine one more invention that could help a lonely pond creature. They can draw a labeled blueprint, name its parts, and explain how it would help.

6 Classroom extension

Create a "Brave Step" chart. Invite each student to choose a small, safe step they could take when they feel uncertain, such as asking a question, trying a new word, or inviting someone to join a game. Connect the ideas to Lilypad taking a deep breath before beginning her underwater journey.

7 Family note

Return to the story's question: "How can an idea help someone?" A child may answer with a drawing, a kind action, or a make-believe invention. Celebrate the explanation and the effort, not whether the invention would work perfectly.

This guide is a companion resource for the published book. Read, listen, invent, and share the story in the way that works best for your family or classroom.

8 Printable Activity Sheet: Lilypad's Friendship Machine

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lilypad makes an invention that helps a lonely creature. Choose one person, animal, or make-believe character your machine could help.

My machine helps: _____

It helps by: _____

Draw your Friendship Machine. Add a helpful part, such as a gear, phone, wing, or button.

A safe brave step I can take is:

Share your drawing with a grown-up, friend, or classmate. Ask: "How does my idea help someone?"