

Family Literacy Event Guide

The Day You Begin

Author: Jacqueline Woodson

Illustrator: Rafael López

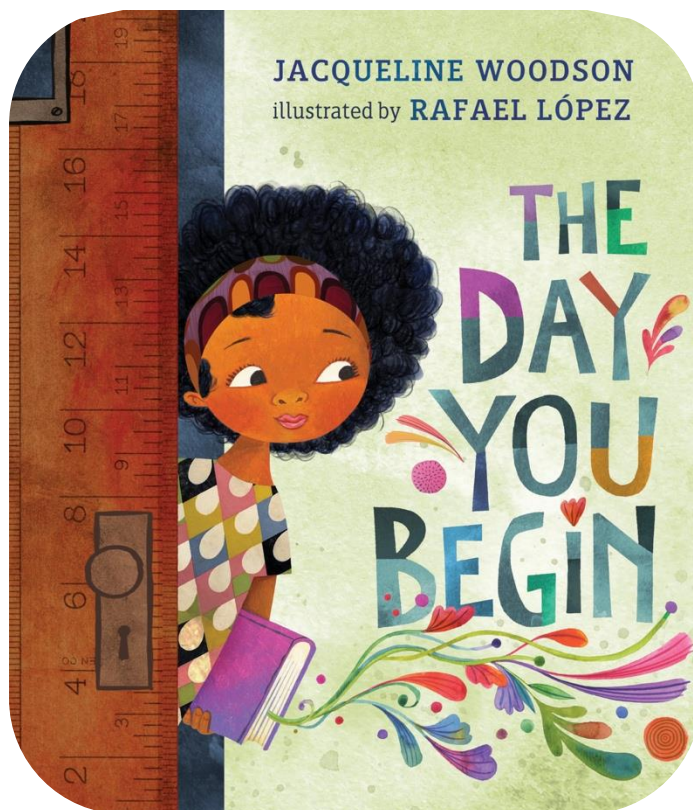


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This guide was created by Pamela Cote, Barbara Bush Fund for Family Literacy

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Introduction

About the Book

From the publisher: “There are lots of reasons to feel different. Maybe it’s how you look or talk, or where you’re from. Maybe it’s what you eat or something just as random. Whatever it is, it’s not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody knows you, but somehow you do it. Jacqueline Woodson’s lyrical text and Rafael López’s dazzling art celebrate the bravery it takes to go forth, even when you feel like an outsider. And they remind us that sometimes, when you reach out and begin to share our story, others will be happy to meet us halfway.”

Why we chose *The Day You Begin* to help celebrate reading

The Day You Begin, available in English and Spanish, has been selected as one of the texts to promote an engaging story share with families! We love this powerful story as it promotes connection and acknowledges that at times, we all may all feel different. The book provides an opportunity for readers to see themselves and promotes readers connecting to familiar and unfamiliar situations. Activities have been designed to support sharing the story with families and free take-home materials are provided. In addition, we hope families will explore other dynamic books by Jacqueline Woodson.

Information on Engagement Activities

- The activities in this guide are designed to offer options during a family literacy event, so you can decide how you’d like to share *The Day You Begin*.

- We have provided ideas for activities when the families arrive (*Welcome Activities*), transition activities to move to the story share (*Opening Activities*), a suggested roadmap for reading the story (*Sharing the Story*), and activities to extend the fun and learning (*Exploring More*).
- In this guide, the term *story share* is used to indicate a read aloud or story time for families.
- We encourage you to modify as needed for families based on their needs, interests, space, time, and supplies. You might use all the activities, or you might use only a few. You might rearrange the suggested order of the events and, for example, share an *Exploring More* activity as a *Welcome Activity*. We can't wait to learn how you use these activities and what new ideas they may spark!
- This book lends itself as a read aloud for younger *and* older children. Make modifications based on the age of your readers – simplify the activities or expand for older readers.
- In addition to this guide, we have drafted a letter (in English and Spanish) you can give to parents/caregivers to support them in reading, learning, and playing together at home.
- We hope families will continue to enjoy this engaging, eloquent story past story time!

Welcome Activities

- Begin your event with collaborative activities to build excitement and background knowledge to support your reading of *The Day You Begin*.
- The following list includes a variety of activities to have available for families as they arrive for the event. Activities can be set up as exploring stations. Choose the activities that best fit your shared space and readers.
- Variations of some of these activities are offered in the parent/caregiver letter – think about which ones you might model and share with families to welcome them.
- These activities easily promote conversations and allow families and children to get to know each other. Join in the fun and look for opportunities to talk with families and model learning engagement. You might help build a puzzle or

tower, add to the *Different and the Same* posters, or talk about the colors you see in *A Tinted View*.

- We have created optional *station sheets* for you to place at the different *Welcome Activity* stations. This will help families explore when they first arrive. Look for the station sheets in your Literacy Explorer Kit with this event guide.

➤ Let's Work Together

- Supplies needed: children's puzzles, safe objects to stack, and a stacking tower game (optional)
- A great way to welcome families for *The Day You Begin* story share is with a collaborative activity. Ideas are plentiful and can be found online by searching *collaborative activities for children (specify age range)*.
- Here are a few of our favorites:
 - Have a station set up with a few small puzzles, so children can work together to complete the puzzles.
 - Create a stacking station with objects available in the room (maybe blocks or popsicle sticks) or include a building tower game. If you are using random objects, gather ones that are safe for stacking before families arrive.
 - Join in the fun to promote a conversation and ask: *How can we work together to build something tall? How can we work together if our tower falls?*

➤ Different and the Same

- Supplies needed: pieces of paper, writing utensil to stamp or mark the papers (stamp markers, regular markers, or crayons), space to place or post the papers (wall, floor, or tables)
- *The Day You Begin* explores how at times we may feel different from others and promotes making connections. For this activity, set up an area to explore how individuals are unique and how they are the same.
- Use different sheets of paper of any color and label each paper with a statement that explores differences and similarities. We encourage you to be creative with your category statements and choose ones that will spark conversation. Tape these papers to walls, place them on floors, or use tables.

- These are suggestions – write each statement at the top of its own piece of paper:
 - I have curly hair, I have straight hair
 - I am a pet owner, I have a dog, I have a cat
 - I speak English, I speak Spanish, I speak _____ (choose a language)
 - I am a loud sneezer, I am a quiet sneezer
 - I can run backwards, I can hop on one foot (movement options)
 - I love cookie dough ice cream, I love chocolate ice cream, I do not like ice cream, or I like a different flavor
- Children can visit the different papers, read the statements, and place a mark on the paper if it applies to them.
- If you have encouraged them to bring a stuffed friend or toy to the event, let them mark the papers for their friends too. Sometimes this helps children who may be feeling shy!
- Join in as they complete this activity to celebrate conversations about how we are all different *and* the same and how we are all equally amazing individuals!

➤ A Tinted View

- Supplies needed: shared space with windows, easy to remove tape, and colored cellophane cut into sheets or shapes
- *The Day You Begin* has beautiful illustrations that share a multitude of colors! Celebrate exploring colors with colored cellophane.
- Choose different colors of cellophane. Cut out shapes and tape them to windows in different parts of the room.
- Encourage children and families to look through the window and notice how the color cellophane changes the view. What is different? What is the same?
- If you have extra supplies, send each child home with their own piece of colored cellophane to experiment at home OR have cellophane available, so they can cut out their own shapes and add to the window display!
- If your shared space does not have windows, search online *play with colored cellophane* for additional ideas.

Opening Activities

Consider using either of these activities to transition families to the story share or search online for *transition activities* best suited for the age of your readers.

➤ March or Say Your Name

- The families will be busy exploring the different activities. Determine how you will transition them to reading the story. Here are two options to consider:
 - Play some upbeat music and encourage them to march as they put any items away and move to the story area. Consider adding silly movements to get them excited for this transition. For example, *Who can hop to our reading area? Who can pretend to play an instrument while marching to our reading area?*
 - Play a name game as you move to the reading area:
 - Say, we all have a name, but our names are different. Can you clap your hands for each sound (syllable) you hear in your name? Example: Bob – 1 clap, Bobby – 2 claps, Caroline – 3 claps. Choose names from your families for your own example.
 - Start with your name and continue with the grown up and children's names.

Once you are in the reading area, consider doing this activity either before or after you read the book. This activity connects to the Welcome Activity: *Different and the Same*.

➤ Getting to Know Each Other

- Supplies needed: movement prompts/statements based on your participants and what you would like to explore. What questions can you ask that are culturally responsive to all children and families? Use some of these and create your own:
 - Hold up your arms if you have curly hair!
 - Jump up and down if you play a sport!
 - Wiggle if you speak more than one language!
 - Turn in a circle to the right if you are a loud sneezer! Turn in a circle to the left if you are a quiet sneezer!
 - Stomp your feet if you like to play games!

- This is a movement activity based off the *Different and the Same* activity – make modifications as needed for all participants.
- Gather in a circle, so everyone can see each other. Share with them that you learned a lot about each of them during the *Welcome Activities*. Point to the *Different and the Same* posters and ask them what they notice. Let their comments lead the conversation.
- Next, explain you are going to play a movement game. Ask them to pay close attention to what you say and then they will follow the direction.
- Say the movement prompt or statement. Children can do the motion in their spot or step forward and do the motion. Encourage the grown-ups to join in!
- End with a few things that everyone can celebrate: *Show us your silliest move!* or *Clap your hands if you are AMAZING just as you are!*
- Start a conversation after the movement activity: *Phew, that was fun, and I just learned SO much more about everyone. I noticed everyone did this ____ when I said this _____. What did you notice?* Encourage children and families to share what they noticed. (What do we have in common? What is different?)

Sharing the Story

- This story celebrates differences and promotes conversations about sharing our individual stories and making connections. Determine if you want to read it more than once. Maybe before the first read, you discuss some of the illustrations and then read the book. Maybe you read it once and then you re-read certain parts to support a conversation about the book.
- Read aloud *The Day You Begin* with families. You might use all these ideas and activities, choose a few, or create your own plan to share the story! We have offered many choices, so you can select how you would like to read the book based on the age of your readers.

Reading the Book

- **Book Themes:** This book explores many themes – friendship, acceptance, bravery, empathy, and more. Consider using some of these themes as conversation starters with the children and their families. Make connections to any of the *Welcome Activities* that align with the conversation.

- **Background Knowledge:** The characters in the book are from different places. Places throughout the world are mentioned that the children might not be familiar with (just like Angelina in the story) – Venezuela, France, Maine, India, and South Carolina. Be sure to pause when reading and build knowledge around these places. Ask: *Has anyone been to _____? Has anyone heard of _____? Would anyone like to visit _____?*
 - You might also create an activity about setting and places in the story as one of the *Welcome Activities*. For example, if you have access to a map or globe, have it available and show them the location of these different places. You can also ask them about places they have lived or visited.
- **Setting:** The parent/caregiver letter shares this information about setting: The setting is where the story takes place and when the story takes place. It is the environment of the story. Consider using some of this language when discussing the different settings in the book.
- **Before Reading:** You might ask: *What do you think this story is going to be about? Why do you think that? What do you notice about the front cover? What do you notice about the book on the front cover? Why do you think the illustrator, the person who created the pictures, did that?*
- **During Reading:** You might ask: *If you were in this book, what do you think you would be hearing? Seeing? Tasting? Smelling? Feeling? Have you ever done anything like any of the characters did? Have you ever been in some of these same situations?*
- **After Reading:**
 - Let's talk about the book in our own words. *The Day You Begin* is sharing a message – it's trying to help us learn something. What do you think the message is? Flip back through the pages of the book and point out characters that are feeling big feelings or showing how they are brave in new situations. Talk about this and allow space and time for this important conversation.
 - How are the characters different? How are they the same?
 - What do you like about this story? What do you think Angelina learned? Angelina says she and her sister “got to go EVERYWHERE” over the summer. What does she mean? Look at the front cover and the illustration of the book again and discuss.
 - There are so many beautiful illustrations in this book – which pages are your favorite and why? Is there anything you would add to the

illustrations? Do you think the illustrator did a good job of showing how the characters were feeling in this book?

➤ **What If...Even If...**

- This book is meant to inspire us to be brave and “go forth even when you feel like an outsider.”
- Sometimes it is hard to not worry and think, “What if...” Start a conversation about this and ask if anyone was feeling shy when they arrived today.
- Share new language with them – instead of saying “What if...” say “Even if...”
- Determine how you will lead this conversation. Maybe share some examples:
 - CHANGE “What if I go to a birthday party, and I don’t know who I will sit next to when we eat cake.” TO “Even if I go to the birthday party, and I am not sure who I will sit next to for cake...I can always find someone I already know, or I can make a new friend. By doing this, I will have someone to sit next to while I eat my cake.”
 - Ask the grown-ups to help with different scenarios and talk about feelings with these situations. This can demonstrate to the children that even grown-ups worry and wonder at times too.

Exploring More

After you read the story, complete one or more of these activities with families. Choose the activities that work best for your shared space and available supplies.

➤ **Create Art with Bleeding Tissue Paper**

- Supplies needed: bleeding tissue paper cut or torn into smaller pieces, water, paintbrushes to spread the water OR a few spray bottles filled with water, pieces of sturdy paper or shapes and images cut from sturdy paper for each child, such as images from the book – animals, a book template, dragonfly, etc. Note: Regular tissue paper will not work for this activity.
- *The Day You Begin* is filled with beautiful illustrations and amazing colors. Children will experiment with bleeding tissue paper and create colorful pictures to take home.

- Prepare the craft area because the tissue paper color will transfer onto other objects like tables and clothes. Make sure the grown-ups are aware of this too.
- Provide each child with their own piece of paper or shape/image cutout. You'll want sturdy paper like cardstock or watercolor paper because the paper will get wet.
- Using a paintbrush and water, *paint* the paper until it is wet or provide small spray bottles with water and spray the paper.
- Give each child pieces of differently colored bleeding tissue paper, so they can have a variety of colors.
- Show children how to press the pieces of tissue paper on the wet paper in any design. Apply another layer of water with the paintbrush or spray bottle on top of the tissue paper.
- Allow to dry and then remove the tissue paper. Families can take these home and then use markers to create their own beautiful scenes!

➤ **Create a Kindness Wall**

- Supplies needed: full or half sheets of paper (have different colors available to choose from), other craft supplies like crayons, markers, and stickers, and wall space to post the children's designs.
- Ask the children to work together to create a kindness wall in the shared space. Future visitors can view and contribute to the wall.
- First, have a conversation about what a kindness wall is – it is designed to promote gratitude, empathy, acts of kindness, love, and more! Tailor your conversation based on the age of the children – be sure to explain and share examples of gratitude, empathy, acts of kindness, etc.
- Explain that they will each have a piece of paper, and they can create a design for the wall. The design can be a picture, a word, a sentence, a cartoon, etc. It can be anything that expresses a kindness that was given to them, a kindness they shared with someone, or a hope they have about a kind act.
- Encourage children to think about examples. Help them by reminding them of conversations you had during the book discussion. Consider having a few examples already created on paper to show them or even an image of a kindness wall. Search online using the words *kindness wall* to view images.

- Give each child a piece of paper and the other craft supplies. Once everyone has created their design, work together to create the wall by taping the pieces of paper together on a wall or tacking them to a bulletin board.
- Explain to the children that people who visit and see the wall can add to it too! Encourage families to visit again to see what has been added and what they inspired or helped others to think about and do!

➤ **Let's Keep Talking About the Book!**

- Encourage families to have conversations throughout all the activities and join the conversations.
- Model how to ask questions around learning: *What did you like about the book "The Day You Begin"? What do you think your child's favorite part was? What other books do you read about making friends? What other books have you read about how we are different and how we are the same?*
- Suggest new books for the families to read together.

Closing Activity

- It's time to say goodbye. Choose how you will end your time and send families home with their activity bags.
- Determine if you would like this closing activity after the *Exploring More* activities, or when you finish reading *The Day You Begin*. Either option works depending on your shared space and overall event plan.

➤ **I Am Brave – Positive Affirmations**

- Supplies needed: strips of paper, writing utensil
- Determine how you will end your time together and reconnect to *The Day You Begin* and its message of bravery. Share that an affirmation is a statement of what you think about yourself (positive or negative) and everyone is going to create a positive affirmation. Lead a conversation that leads each child to a positive affirmation about themselves.
- Provide an example, "I am kind when I share with a friend" or "I am brave when I try something new like..." Give families time to talk and write their positive affirmation on a strip of paper (or just share verbally). It should be a short statement in the present tense.

- Encourage children to share their positive affirmations!
- Families can explore this more with the activity included in the parent/caregiver letter.

Family Activity Bags

- Remind families to take their activity bags, so they can keep learning and playing together!
- Consider reviewing the parent/caregiver letter with them to answer any questions and to encourage them to take home other engaging books to share with their child!

What to Pack in the Family Bags

- **Parent/Caregiver Letter** for *The Day You Begin*
- **Which Book is Right for My Child Right Now?** (This resource is for children birth to age 3, so include it for families that have young children too!)
- Any materials you have prepared for at-home activities. For example, if you used colored cellophane, add some pieces to the bags so families can continue to explore at home.