



What You Can Do with a Wordless Book

- * Make up the words
- * Use different languages
- * Change the story
- * Personalize it to your child's experience
- * Let your child "read" to you
- * Add to your child's vocabulary

Researchers "looked carefully at the language of mothers using a wordless picture book and compared it to their language when using a book with text. They found more complex language interactions between parent and child with the wordless book. Naturally, [with books with words] most adults are tempted to read the text, or stick to the story at the expense of giving the child an opening to talk." Wordless books are more open-ended and encourage natural conversation!

<http://www.wlearning.com/articles/more-words-with-wordless-books>

Things to try, depending on your child's age:

* Page through the book talking with your child about what is going on in each picture. Ask questions. Take your time and allow your child to notice details along the way. This builds vocabulary, comprehension, communication skills, and sparks creativity and imagination. The time it takes to "read" a wordless picture book may be a bit longer than straight reading but it pays off in the skills that children gain by doing so.

* Page through the book again, making a story as you connect the images one to the other or to the child's experiences. It's all about talking, cuddling, and having fun!

* Give a name to the dogs, the boat, the children.



* On another day, "read" the book again, noticing other details you may have missed previously. For example: the little loops on the top of the blue boots, why the brown boots might be flopped over, who would wear which kind of boots and when.



* Add more and varying descriptive words. Previously you may have said, “The pretty shirt”; this time say, “The pretty purple shirt” or “the flowered shirt with purple trim.” One time the girl might be “worried,” another time “Do her teeth hurt?” “What could she be looking at?” or “What is she doing with her eyebrows?”

* Include time of day or year, such as “in the afternoon” or “during the winter.”

* Point to things as you read so that little children connect the **words** you are saying to the **pictures** in the book.

* As soon as children express an interest, allow them to “read” the wordless book.

* Tell the story bilingually, if you know more than one language.

* Allow for **creative alternatives** to the story. Imagining *conversations* between characters is one easy way to get creative with wordless books.

* Invite another person, such as an older brother or grandparent, to “read” the book with both of you, listening to their versions.

Craft: Your Own Story Book

Take 6 or 8 pictures of people, things, and areas inside and outside your home that are familiar to your child.

Print them out and glue each one on a separate piece of construction paper. Now arrange them in the order of a story that you would like to tell. You can bind the pages together by punching a hole in the top corners and linking them on a plastic ring.

Here’s an example:

- *This is a story about Taffy* (picture of your dog).
- *One day I couldn’t find Taffy. I looked in the kitchen* (picture of kitchen). *But I couldn’t find him there.*
- *I looked under the bed* (picture of bedroom). *But I couldn’t find him there, either.* (You can add more locations.)
- *Then I had an idea. I took his favorite squeaky toy* (picture of squeaky toy) *and squeezed and squeezed so that it made very loud sounds. I cried, “Taffy! Taffy!”*
- *I found Taffy!* (picture of your child and dog)