

Katie Loves the Kittens
Written and illustrated by
John Himmelman. Holt, 2008*
Genre: Picture book

You will need:

- Alice character card for each child
- Book version of “Three Little Kittens” nursery rhyme (optional)
- Pictures of cats and dogs
- “Purr-fect Pals” activity supplies (page 8-3)

Katie Loves the Kittens

Host: **Alice**

Helen’s friend Alice is fostering a cute little kitten from the animal shelter. The kitten wants to be friends with Martha. Why is Martha acting so antisocial? In *Katie Loves the Kittens*, Katie the dog adores the three new kittens, but ends up terrifying them with her enthusiastic behavior. As Katie learns to control herself, a beautiful friendship begins.

Episode: **There Goes the Neighborhood** (#122)

Martha can’t believe that Helen and Alice are making such a fuss about a kitten. Everyone knows dogs don’t like cats. But could this little kitten change Martha’s mind? (Available free at pbskids.org/martha/parentsteachers/bookclub/episodes.html or purchase from iTunes®.)

Welcome

Sing the song *M-A-R-T-H-A* (see Supporting Materials) or use another warm-up activity of your choice.

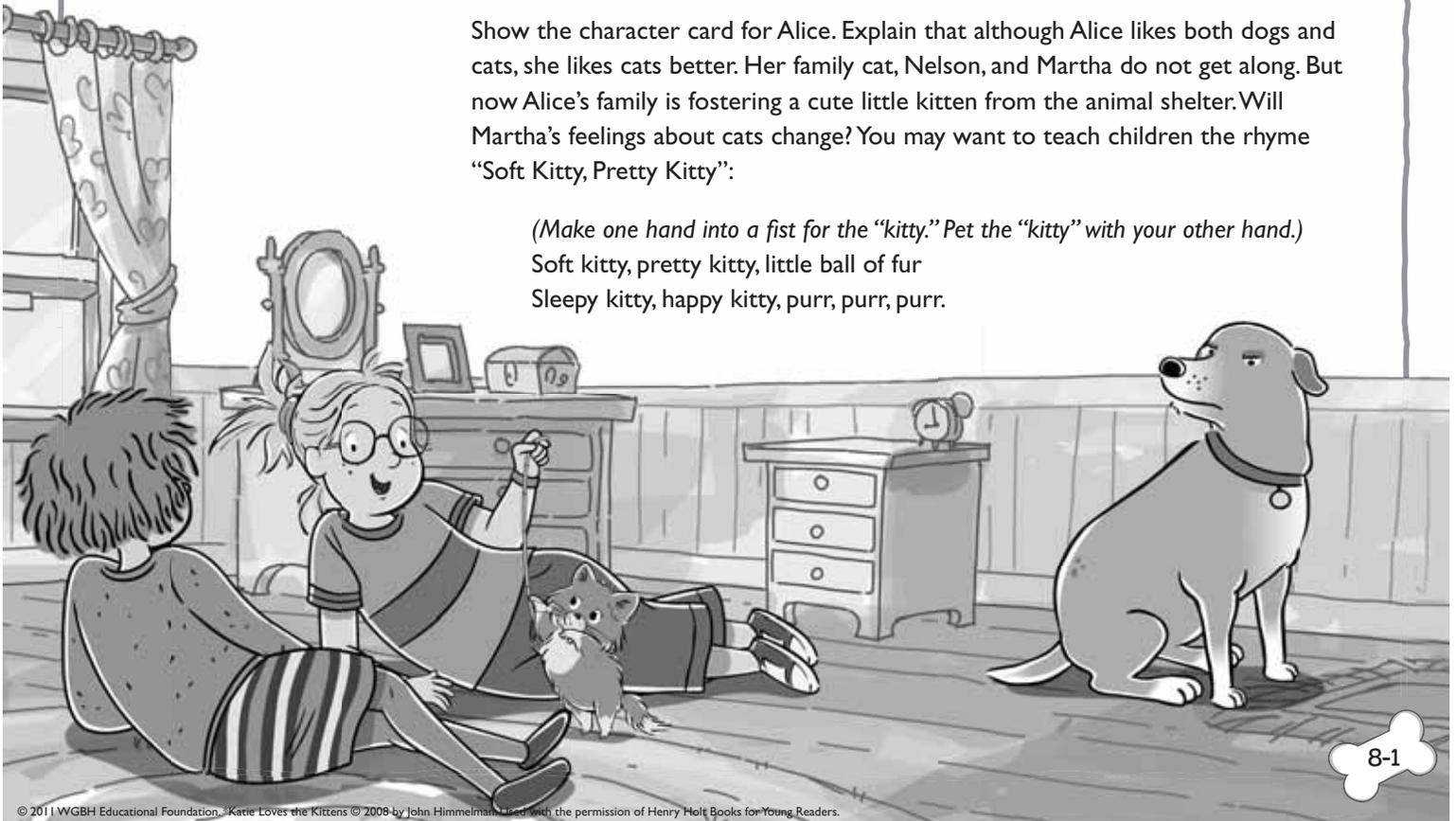
Watch the Episode

Before watching. Display some appealing pictures of cats and dogs from books and magazines. Discuss the idea that dogs and cats *both* make great pets. Encourage children to share the reasons they think a cat or a dog is a great pet to have. Do they prefer one to the other?

Show the character card for Alice. Explain that although Alice likes both dogs and cats, she likes cats better. Her family cat, Nelson, and Martha do not get along. But now Alice’s family is fostering a cute little kitten from the animal shelter. Will Martha’s feelings about cats change? You may want to teach children the rhyme “Soft Kitty, Pretty Kitty”:

(Make one hand into a fist for the “kitty.” Pet the “kitty” with your other hand.)

Soft kitty, pretty kitty, little ball of fur
Sleepy kitty, happy kitty, purr, purr, purr.



After watching. Lead a conversation about the episode by asking children questions such as,

- Why do you think Martha was so mean to the kitten in the beginning?
- Why do you think Martha didn't want to tell the other dogs that she and the kitten were friends?
- What was your favorite part of this episode?

Read the Book

Before you read. Show the book cover. Read the title and name of the author aloud. Encourage children to make predictions by asking: *Who do you think "Katie" is in this story? The title tells us that Katie loves the kittens. Looking at the picture, how do you think the kittens feel about Katie?*

As you read. Invite children to join in with Katie's happy howl each time the word AROOOO appears in yellow type in the picture. Bring the happy howling to a close by saying to the children, *Katies, control yourselves. Shhh. Good doggies!*

After the page that says "She tried to control herself. She tried and tried. But Katie couldn't stop herself any longer," you may want to pause and let children make predictions. Ask, *What do you think Katie does next?*

After you read. Look at the last picture with the children. Let children describe what is happening and how they think the kittens and Katie are feeling. You may want to ask children to share stories about a time that they, like Katie, were so happy and excited that it was hard to control themselves.

Do a Related Activity

Choose one or both of the "Purr-fect Pals" activities (page 8-3). Adapt the activities as needed or substitute one of your own. If you prefer, distribute the Friendship Card template as a take-home activity.

Wrap Up

Repeat or teach the rhyme "Soft Kitty, Pretty Kitty" (see Before Watching section), then add a second verse: "Soft doggy, pretty doggy, let me pet your fur./Good doggy, happy doggy, AROOOOO, AROOOOO, AROOOOO!" Give each child an Alice character card to take home.



Purr-fect Pals

You will need:

- Friendship Card template (see page 8-4)
- Pencils, markers, or crayons
- MARTHA SPEAKS stickers (optional, see Supporting Materials for template)

You will need:

- One mitten

Option 1: Friendship Cards

Using the Friendship Card template (page 8-4), children will write or dictate a message to Martha or the kitten or to a person or animal in their life. Children can then cut out the card, fold on the dotted line, and decorate the front of the card with crayons, markers, and/or stickers.

Option 2: Kitten, Kitten, Where's Your Mitten?

If you have time, introduce children to the nursery rhyme "Three Little Kittens." You may want to recite it or read it from a book version.

To play the game:

1. Have children sit in a circle and pretend they are cats and kittens.
2. Ask for a volunteer to be Martha's friend, Kitten, and to sit with his or her back to the rest of the children.
3. Say to the volunteer: "Kitten, here's your mitten. I'm putting it behind you and one of your kitty friends is going to take it and say meow. When I tell you to, you will turn around and guess who took your mitten."
4. Select a child to quietly take the mitten from behind Kitten's back, then hide it behind his or her back and say, "I took your mitten. Meow! Meow!"
5. Have other children also put their hands behind their back.
6. Signal Kitten to turn around and ask, "Who took my mitten?" Give Kitten three guesses.
7. Repeat with different Kittens.



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Friendship Card Template



Dear _____

I like you because _____

Love,
