

# The Gift

## The 2023 CLEL Bell Award Book for WRITE

by Alain Serge Dzotap, illustrated by Delphine Renon

ISBN: 978-0802855831

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2022



A young jaguar named Leo gets a pen for a gift and must figure out what it does. Reading and writing skills develop together, and with help from Leo's caregivers and friends, he discovers the joy of creating a story.

### Activity Ideas for *The Gift*:

- Use a pen and write your child's name in large, clear letters on a piece of paper. Allow your child to trace those letters in multiple ways - with the pen, their pointer finger, or their nose! Continue exploring letter shapes by covering the letters with household items. Can you cover the lines of the letters shapes with pasta noodles, stickers, blocks, pickle spears, or string? Tracing letters helps children remember their shapes. Understanding how shapes and letters create words is an important step in learning to read.
- In the story, Leo visits his giraffe friend Super-Zombo, who believes the pen is a flute. Choose an ordinary object, like a pen or spatula. ask your child to help you pretend it is something else. A spatula could become a conductor's wand, a baseball bat, or a stuffed friend's flipping bed! Pretending that one object can stand for another is a cognitive milestone children need to reach before they can understand that the letters on the page can stand for words and ideas.
- Did you notice that Leo's big sister was reading on a tree vine? Bring storytime with your child outside! Reading in an interesting place is special and fun, and will let your child know that reading happens everywhere. Why stop with the outdoors? Try reading in the bathtub (with clothes on and without water) or under the bed!
- At the end of the story, Leo uses his pen to draw pictures of the world around him. Try drawing your own pictures of what you see. Then, put them in different orders to share tell a story. Mix them up and do it again! Practicing telling stories helps children build comprehension skills.

---

The CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards are given to books that provide excellent support of early literacy development in young children. For more information and for other activity sheets, visit <http://www.clel.org> and select the CLEL Bell Awards tab.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en\\_US](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en_US).