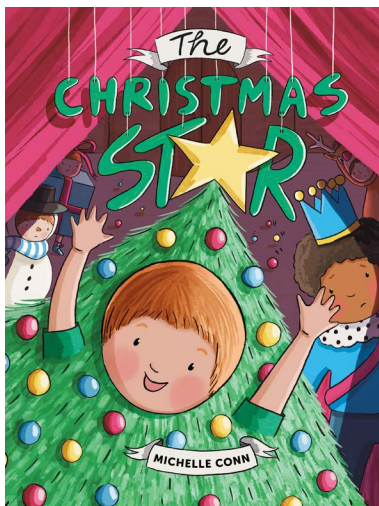




Teacher Notes

The Christmas Star

by Michelle Conn

Teacher notes prepared by Bec Kavanagh.

Publication details

Publisher: Affirm Press
ISBN: 9781922930309
Size/format: 290 x 210mm, 32 pages, HB
RRP: \$22.99
Pub Date: 27 August 2024
Reader ages: 3-8 years

Themes

- Friendship
- Christmas
- Ambition
- Team work

About the Book

Timmy was born to be a star. His best friend Kevin thought so too. They couldn't wait to be in the school play together.

But then Kevin lands the lead role and Timmy is cast as the boring Christmas Tree! Timmy tries to steal the spotlight from his best friend. But Timmy's desire for fame soon backfires, spelling disaster for the school play!

Can Timmy put his friendship with Kevin centre stage and save the Christmas play?

A sweet story about friendship, teamwork and sharing the spotlight – and a little bit of Christmas magic.

About the Author-Illustrator

Michelle Conn is an author and illustrator living on Wadawurrung Country in the coastal town of Torquay, Victoria, with her husband, two children and Border Collie Maggie. After years of working as a graphic designer and primary school teacher, Michelle's love of books and storytelling won over and she spends most of her spare time drawing, writing and wandering around the house in a 'thinking fog'. If Michelle's not writing or illustrating delightful worlds for children to enjoy, you'll find her along the wild and woolly cliffs of Jan Juc or sitting by a fire knitting and dreaming about living in a lighthouse.

Before Reading

- What does Christmas mean to you?
- What are some of the other celebrations that bring people together in a similar way? Invite students to share their family and cultural celebrations.

Comprehension questions

- What are some of the things that Timmy is a star at?
- Describe Timmy's expression when he's cast as the Christmas Tree. How do you think he's feeling?
- What are some of the ideas that Timmy has to make his role more interesting? How do the rest of the cast feel about his ideas?
- Why do you think Kevin is so upset at Timmy?
- What does Timmy do to fix his mistake?
- Is being visible the most important thing? What do you think is more or less important than this?
- What does Timmy learn about being a Christmas Tree? What do you think he learns about friendship?

Literacy

- **Celebrations:** *The Christmas Star* is a seasonal book, which means that it's set during a seasonal celebration – Christmas! Make a list of all the things in the book that tell you (or show you) that this is a Christmas story (look at the blurb, the title, the pictures and, of course, the story itself!). What other celebrations can you think of? As a group, create a reading list of stories that explore or feature these celebrations in some way. Are there any celebrations that don't have books written about them? Could you write one?
- Stories like this might be set during a particular time, or explore a particular celebration, but they also have a more **universal theme** that all readers can connect with. What is the universal theme in this story?

Literacy cont.

- **Feelings words.** Timmy goes through a bit of an emotional rollercoaster in this story! Make a list of all the words that describe how he feels. Can you think of a **synonym** (a different word for the same thing) for each of the words on your list?

Final reflections

- Why do you think the writer of this story chose to set it at Christmas? How might it change or stay the same if it were set at a different time of year?
- What would you say the book is about? Would it be interesting to a reader who doesn't celebrate Christmas? Why/why not?
- How do you think Timmy feels at the end of the book? How would the ending have changed if he had been the star of the show?

Creative Activities

- Compare this to another Christmas story. How is it similar or different? What makes a Christmas book a Christmas book? Is it the pictures, the story, when you read it, or something else? Come up with a title for your own Christmas story and draw a front cover for it.
- Timmy wants to be the star of the show, but he's not really thinking about how Kevin, or any of the other kids, might feel. Rewrite the story from Kevin's perspective. Compare your version to the original. What insight does your version add?
- *The Christmas Star* is all about performance, so put on your own theatrical version of the book. You'll need to fill the following roles – director, set designer, costume designer and, of course, the cast! Work together in groups to write the script, thinking about how the story might break down into scenes with dialogue and action.
- Write a story about your favourite celebration of the year. Why is it important to you? What would you want someone else to know about this celebration? How does it make you feel?