

When Santa Was a Baby



LINDA BAILEY & GENEVIÈVE GODBOUT



TUNDRA BOOKS

Penguin
Random
House

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

ALIGNS WITH
COMMON
CORE STATE
STANDARDS

“HO, HO,
HO!”





LINDA BAILEY

Linda is the author of more than two dozen books for children, including the acclaimed *Stanley's Party* and, most recently, *Seven Dead Pirates* and *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur*. She is the recipient of numerous awards across North America, such as the California Young Reader Medal, the Georgia Children's Picture Book Award and the Ontario Blue Spruce and Silver Birch Awards. Born in Winnipeg, Linda has traveled around the world, and so have her books. She now lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she once saw a baby wearing a Santa hat on Christmas Day and began to wonder ...

GENEVIÈVE GODBOUT

Geneviève is a children's book and fashion illustrator born and raised in Quebec. She studied traditional animation in Montreal and at the prestigious school of "Gobelins" in Paris. Geneviève is the illustrator of the picture books *Joseph Fipps* and *Kindergarten Luck*. She also works for clothing designers such as Nadinoo and Mrs. Pomeranz creating illustrations and prints for their collections. When Geneviève was a baby, she used to open other people's gifts!

ABOUT THE BOOK

Santa's parents think their little one is absolutely wonderful, even though he has a booming voice instead of a baby's gurgle, loves to stand in front of the refrigerator, gives his birthday presents away, trains his hamsters to pull a match-box sleigh ... and has an unusual interest in chimneys. This adorably funny portrait of an oddball kid who fulfills his destiny can be used in a number of ways including:

- Exploring thematic and conceptual concepts such as pride, curiosity, destiny, family, connection, personal history, generosity, friendship, creativity and courage
- Discussing the challenges of being different from one's peers
- As an introduction to exploring students' personal histories
- As a fun and entertaining holiday read-aloud experience

Where applicable, activities have been aligned with Common Core State Standards.



Pre-reading Discussion/

Activities **RL** **SL**

- Do you know any funny or interesting stories about what you were like as a baby?
- What do you think Santa was like as a child?
- How do you think Santa prepared as a child for the big job he had as an adult?
- Brainstorm a list of words that you associate with Santa.

Learning Activities

1. Discussion Questions **RL** **SL**

- Vocabulary to introduce and/or review: dandy, generous, harnessed, matchbox, creative, ashes and soot, curious, inherited.
- What did Santa look like as a baby? What kinds of things did he like to do? What was special about his behavior and likes? Why was his behavior sometimes thought to be unusual?
- What connections can you make from some of his behaviors as a baby to what you know about Santa as an adult? For example, how did his love for standing in front of the refrigerator connect to where he ended up living as an adult?
- What did Santa's parents think he might be when he grew up? Why?
- How did Santa come up with the idea for his reindeer?
- How do you think the tradition of leaving out milk and cookies for Santa began?
- What role do Santa's parents play in Santa becoming who he is? Did Santa have any siblings? If he had any brothers or sisters, do you think that would have made a difference in how he grew up? Why or why not?

- “As Santa got older, it became clear he'd inherited the family good looks.” In what ways did Santa resemble his parents? Is there anybody in your family that you are said to have inherited something from?
- “When Santa became a teenager, he continued to be unusual. He knew his own mind. He didn't always fit in with the crowd.” What does “he knew his own mind” mean? Do you think it bothered Santa that he didn't fit in with his peers?
- Why do you think the author wanted to write a story about Santa as a baby?

2. True or False? **RL**

Based on what you read in the story, answer the following true/false questions aloud or by marking a T or F beside each statement. Locate sections in the book that support your answer.

- Santa was a skinny baby.
- Santa had brown hair as a baby.
- Santa always liked the color red best.
- Uncle Ned gave Santa a pair of yellow pajamas for his birthday.
- Santa did not like to share his toys.
- Santa wanted a unicorn for his birthday.
- Santa's pet hamster had eight babies.
- Santa didn't like to get his clothes dirty.
- Eldred lived two doors down from Santa.
- Santa's dad had a belly like a bowl of jelly.
- Santa's parents leave cookies out for their son every Christmas Eve.



3. Santa through the Years **RL** **W**

Draw a picture of Santa as a baby, a teenager and as an adult. Look for clues in the written story and within the illustrations that show different details to include in your drawings.

- What kinds of activities might Santa have enjoyed doing as a teenager?
- How does Santa's story about growing up show that it is okay to be different? How might Santa's behavior growing up be thought of as courageous?
- Santa followed his childhood dreams. Do you have any dreams that you would like to follow? Draw a picture of the dream that means the most to you. Share your dream with a classmate and explain how and why you want to follow this dream.

4. Walk a Day in Santa's Shoes **SL**

- Review the list of words from the pre-reading brainstorm about Santa. Can you add any words after reading the story?
- If you were to collect five items that you think best represent Santa, what would they be? Begin a collection of items and store them in a shoebox. Present your box to a partner, small group or class and ask them to guess the connection to Santa's identity.
- Santa is probably one of the most famous personalities in the world. Can you think of somebody else who is as well-known as Santa? Collect five to ten objects, pictures and/or clues and see if your classmates can guess your famous personality.
- If you were to collect a box full of items that represent you, what would you include?

5. Santa's Parents **SL**

- Santa's parents probably know him the best. If you had the opportunity to interview Santa's parents, what would you want to ask them? Create a list of questions you would like answered. Try to include at least one who, what, when, where, why and how question in your list.
- A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity has just come your way: you have been selected to interview Santa himself! What would you like to know about him? In partners, take turns playing the role of Santa and interviewer. When it is your turn to be Santa, be creative and try to answer your interviewer's questions in role.
- Parents and caregivers are a good source of information. Create a questionnaire to conduct with your parents about what you were like when you were younger. Younger students can create a dictated questionnaire as a class, older students can write the questions themselves. Present your findings in small groups or partners. Ask the audience what kind of job you might have when you grow up based on what they learned about you.
- Write and illustrate a baby album about yourself. Title your album When <your name> Was a Baby. Feel free to be creative in the details you include.





6. Eldred **RL** **SL** **W**

- What did Eldred and Santa have in common? How were they different? What role did Eldred play in Santa's future? What did Santa's parents think about their friendship?
- Do you have a best friend? What do you like to do together?
- Eldred knew Santa when he was just a little boy. Draw and/or write an adventure story about Santa and Eldred as boys. Make sure your story has a clear beginning, middle and ending. What is the problem that needs to be solved?

7. Pride **RL** **W**

- What does it mean to feel proud of something? Have you ever felt proud or been told that somebody is proud of you? What were the circumstances? Draw and/or write a journal-style piece of writing about the concept of pride. Why do you think Santa's parents were so proud of him?
- "His parents are so proud they could burst!" This sentence is an example of an idiom. An idiom is a phrase that has figurative meaning as opposed to literal meaning ... Santa's parents won't actually burst! What does this particular idiom mean?

8. Acrostic Santa

- An acrostic poem is one in which the first letter of each line or phrase spells out a word. Write the letters S A N T A vertically down a piece of paper. Think of words or phrases that begin with each of these letters that help describe Santa as a baby according to the story.
- Think about what you may be like as an adult. What will your likes and dislikes be? What kind of job will you have? Where will you live? Write an acrostic poem about yourself as an adult.



Appendix: Common Core State Standard

RL Reading and Literature **SL** Speaking and Listening **W** Writing

Pre-Reading Discussion/Activities

Reading and Literature—K.10

Speaking and Listening—K.1, K.6, 1.1, 2.1

Learning Activities

1. Reading and Literature—K.1, K.3, K.10, 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3

Speaking and Listening—K.1, K.2, K.6, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

2. Reading and Literature—K.1, K.10, 1.1

3. Reading and Literature—K.1, K.10, 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3

Writing—K.2, 1.2, 2.2

4. Speaking and Listening—K.6, 1.3, 2.3

5. Speaking and Listening—K.1, K.6, 1.1, 1.3, 2.3

6. Reading and Literature—K.1, K.3, 1.1, 1.3, 2.1

Writing—K.3, 1.3, 2.3

Speaking and Listening—K.5, 1.2, 2.2

7. Reading and Literature—K.1, 1.1

Writing—K.2, 1.2, 2.2





TUNDRA BOOKS

Penguin
Random
House

penguinrandomhouse.ca