

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

About the story

Title: The Three Billy Goats Gruff

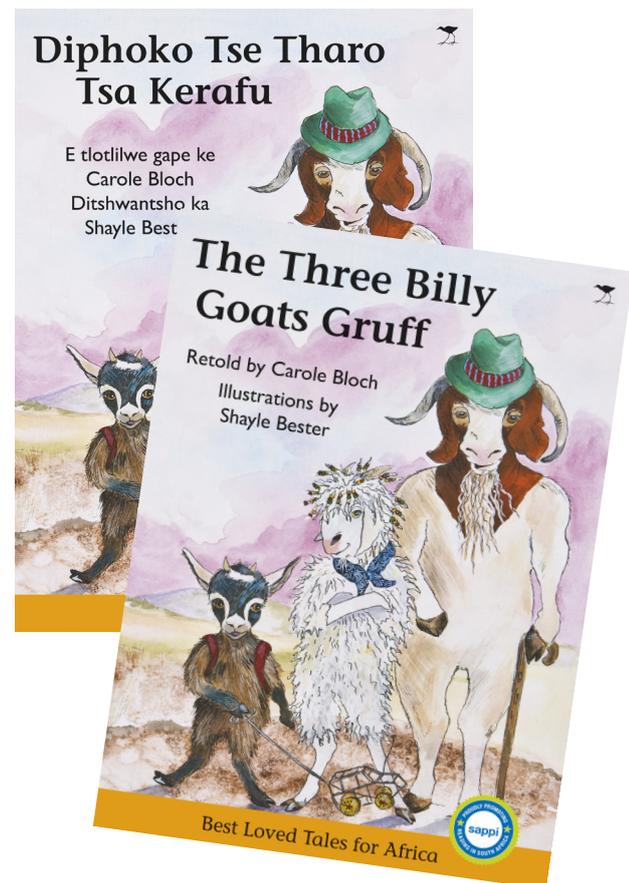
Author: Retold by Carole Bloch

Illustrations: Shayle Bester

Publisher: Jacana Media

Available in English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho and Setswana

In this South African retelling of a classic tale, three goats are hungry and tired of living in the dusty and thorny veld. Close by there is a koppie covered in sweet, green grass that they would love to eat. But they have to cross the bridge to get there and a fierce monster lives under the bridge.



Possible themes and topics

- Safety and danger
- Caring for and looking after one another
- Making friends and enemies
- Dealing with bullies
- Emotions (fear, being scared, being brave)
- Comparative language (big, bigger, biggest, brave, braver, bravest)
- Size (big, middle-sized and small)
- Mass (heavy and light)
- Maps/direction
- Construction (ways to cross a river, making houses and homes)
- Healthy eating (food, being hungry, what we eat, what our bodies need)
- Plants and animals (plants and animals that grow/live in the veld and near a river)

Ideas for activities

Here are some ideas for using *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* with young children aged four to six years. Choose the activities that best suit the particular ages and interests of the children in your class.

You could use the story and activity ideas to tie in with your weekly theme and/or as part of the children's afternoon free-play sessions to enhance their play and their literacy learning.

Introducing and sharing the story

Create an atmosphere of anticipation linked to the main theme of the story. Stimulate the children's curiosity. Encourage thinking and imagining.

Activity suggestions

- ★ Put a piece of rope or string across the classroom with a sign (in one or more languages) that says: DO NOT CROSS! Then use some chalk or removable paint to draw/paint a very large footprint on the floor near the sign. Ask the children: "What do you think this might be?", "What do you think is happening and why?".
- ★ Show the children the book cover and ask if it might have anything to do with the mysterious things that have appeared in the classroom.
- ★ Invite comments about what they see on the front cover and what the story might be about.
- ★ Read the story aloud to the children, allowing them to comment if they want to, but be sure to keep the story alive all the way through to the end.

Thinking and talking about the story

Choose from the suggested discussion questions – try ones that you think best match the children's interests and add your own questions too! Only continue for as long as the children are involved.

Encourage the children to give reasons for their answers. When they aren't able to, you can help them by saying "I wonder if..." and suggesting a reason to them. Share your own ideas with the children too. Children often feel encouraged to contribute when they also hear your thoughts.

Discussion questions

- ★ Have you seen goats before? Where?
- ★ What similarities and differences do you notice between the three goats?
- ★ How do you think the goats know each other?
- ★ Read the children the following text on page 2 of the story: "They didn't like their dry, flat veld home very much. It was so thorny and dusty that whatever they ate got stuck in their throats". Ask: Has anything ever got stuck in your throat when you were eating? What happened?
- ★ Which goat would you rather be?

- ★ If you were the goats, how would you have felt when the monster shouted, "If anyone dares to cross my bridge, I'll gobble them up!" What would you have said?
- ★ What might monsters be scared of?
- ★ What are you scared of?
- ★ What do you do when you are scared?
- ★ Is it fair that the goats want to eat the grass on the koppie and cross the monster's bridge?
- ★ I wonder, does the monster really own the bridge... what do you think?
- ★ Where else could the monster live instead of under the bridge?
- ★ Do you think we could help the goats get more food without disturbing the monster? How could we do that?
- ★ Maybe the monster was hungry too. What other things could he find to eat besides the goats?
- ★ Do you think the monster deserved to be kicked far, far away?
- ★ What do you think the monster did when he landed after he was tossed into the sky?
- ★ Could the goats have made friends with the monster? What else could they have done?
- ★ I wonder if the big goat was brave because he was the biggest. Was the little goat also brave?
- ★ Can little children be brave or are only big people brave?
- ★ What's something brave that you have done?

Playing with the story

Offer different materials and ideas for the children to retell or "play" parts of the story, and/or to make up new stories that connect with their own lives. Take the opportunity to observe the children's language and conceptual development as well as the interaction between them as they take control of their own learning.

Activity suggestions

- ★ Use recycled materials, fabric scraps and/or other materials to create the koppie or the monsters' house under the bridge.
- ★ Make playdough or clay goats and monsters.
- ★ Make pretend rivers and bridges, then "play" the story using them.
- ★ Make goat and monster masks, using cardboard, paint and string.
- ★ Make paper flowers for the koppie.
- ★ Create a pretend bridge and monster's house or koppie. Provide props for the children to "play" the story.
- ★ Build bridges with wooden blocks.
- ★ Recreate scenes from the book using construction toys like Lego/Duplo.

- ★ Play the game, "Goat, goat, monster!". Seat the children in a circle. Let them take turns to be the player who walks around the outside of the circle lightly touching the heads of the other children and saying "goat" each time. When this player says "monster", the child who was touched last gets up and chases the player around the outside of the circle trying to catch him/her. As soon as the player gets to the child's place in the circle, he/she sits down and the game begins again with the new player.

Shared reading and writing

Focus children's attention on how we compose a piece of writing and how letters and sounds combine to make words. Write on the chalkboard or on large sheets of paper with groups of children, so that they compose with you and watch you as you write. Read out what you have written to them afterwards, pointing to the words.

Activity suggestions

- ★ With the children, choose a few of the repeated or interesting sentences and words from the book. You could write these out on strips of paper. For example: "Click clack click clack!", "Who's that click-clacking over my bridge?", "It's only me.", "Oh no you're not! I'm coming to gobble you up!", "Please don't eat me", "boomed", "bellowed", "Einaaaa!". Invite some children to choose one sentence/word. Display it for a few days at the children's eye level, and if they are interested, show the children the sentences/words in the book. Then encourage them to find these on their own or with a friend.
- ★ Together with the children, write a letter to the goats warning them about the monster. (See an example at the end of this leaflet.) Write it on a large sheet of paper and when it is finished, read it together. Display it (at children's eye level) in your classroom for a while so that the children can reread it.
- ★ Without the children seeing, write a letter from one of the goats in response to the above letter you and the children wrote. (See an example at the end of this leaflet.) Put the letter in an envelope. During the day, "find" this envelope. Read the letter aloud to the children and discuss what it says. Ask the children whether, together, you should write a letter back to the goat, then do that, if that is what is decided.
- ★ With the children, write a shopping list of things the monster could eat instead of eating goats. Afterwards, invite the children to suggest what each of the things might cost. Write the suggested amount next to each item on the list.
- ★ Make a BEWARE or DANGER sign warning the goats that there is a monster under the bridge. Make these in the languages you and the children know. Encourage them to make their own signs as well. They can make them in pretend Monster or Goat language if they like!
- ★ Make recipe books or write up simple recipes as food ideas the monster could make.
- ★ Brainstorm and record the children's ideas about the koppie in the story. What colours might it have on it? Which plants could be growing there? What smells might you smell there? Who might live there? Afterwards, read the children's ideas back to them.

- ★ Brainstorm and record the children's ideas for how to make the monster's under-the-bridge home in the classroom. Afterwards, read the children's ideas back to them.
- ★ Write a letter from the monster asking for advice on how to make friends.
- ★ Write messages using monster writing.
- ★ Draw and label a map helping the monster get home from where he landed.
- ★ Draw maps to help the goats get to the koppie.

Emergent reading, writing and drawing

Make time and space available for the children to initiate drawing and writing. Spend time sitting with them, sometimes writing and drawing too. In this way you are able to role model conventional practice and give help if the children ask for it. Show that you value the children's own attempts at reading and writing.

Activity suggestions

- ★ Offer one or more copies of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* to the children so that they can retell or "read" it alone and/or with friends.
- ★ Invite the children to write their own letters to one or more of the goats. Either supply old envelopes or make some for their letters. Create a post box from a cardboard box.
- ★ Invite the children to write their own shopping lists for the goats and monster. Provide food advertising flyers and inserts from newspapers and magazines. The children can cut out and stick individual food items onto their lists.
- ★ Invite the children to work in groups to draw a picture of the koppie on a large sheet of paper or make a koppie from recycled materials. Suggest that they might like to include things from the brainstorming list (see "Shared reading and writing" on page 4).
- ★ Suggest that the children draw the goats and the monster, the place where the monster lives, the beautiful koppie or the goats' house in the veld.
- ★ In the book corner, include fiction and non-fiction books that tie in with the themes of the story – homes and houses, rivers, food and recipes, monsters, bridges, journeys – as well as traditional stories/fairytales with similar endings. Introduce these books to the children, read them or explore them with the children if they ask.

Dictating, scribing and acting out stories

As part of Storyplay, PRAESA offers and supports a specialised technique for dictating, scribing and acting out stories, called the magic carpet. To find out more about this, contact info@praesa.org.za and see www.praesa.org.za for training and mentoring opportunities.

Activity suggestion

- ★ Invite the children to dictate their own stories. These might relate to *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* but they don't have to. Write down the children's stories for them and make time for acting them out.

Taking the story home

Encourage the parents or other caregivers to do all or some of the activities below at home with their children.

Activity suggestions

- ★ If their child brings home a magic carpet story to share, read it to him/her or ask someone else to read it aloud.
- ★ Ask their child to retell the story or tell them about the storybook they are reading at "school".
- ★ Borrow *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (or another version of this story) from the library. Then read it to their child or look through it together, talking about the illustrations.
- ★ Look at pictures their child draws and read any writing he/she shows them, asking "What did you draw/write?".
- ★ Draw a scary monster with their child. Then draw on the monster or paste pictures on it to make it look silly.
- ★ Together make up a story about the scary-silly monster. If possible, write it down under the picture of the monster and then read it together.
- ★ Talk about what they were scared of when they were young, what their child finds scary and what we can do when we feel scared.

Examples of letters

24 June 2018

Dear Goats

We want you to know that the monster who lives under the bridge is VERY dangerous! Please find food somewhere else. Do not go near him because he will try and eat you up! Why don't you try and grow your own food?

From

Your friends, the children

25 June 2018

Dear Friends

Thank you for your advice. We are a little bit nervous ... but, we have thought of a plan. We thought we might try to make friends with the monster. Do you think that might work? Do you know what monsters like? How can we make friends with it?

We would grow food if we could! It's just too dry, so we have to try and do something!

From

The Three Billy Goats Gruff