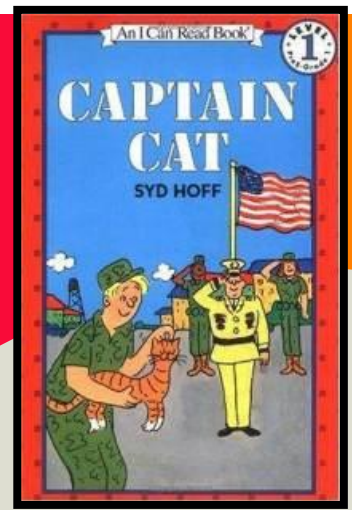




# *Captain Cat* Lesson Plan



## **Life Skills:**

- Communicating Feelings
- Asking Questions
- Appreciating Friends

## **Supplies Needed:**

- Small Paper Lunch Bags
- Colored Construction Paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pipe-cleaners
- Markers/Crayons/Colored Pencils

## **Do Ahead:**

- Read the book ahead of time to become familiar with the story

## **Grade Levels:**

- K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

## **Background**

This book is about a cat that joined the army. After being noticed by the soldiers, he earned the nickname *Captain Cat* because of all his stripes. Captain Cat found one special friend that, no matter what, always made time for him. This special friend was named Pete. Captain Cat and Pete did almost everything together. At night, when everybody went to sleep to dream about their loved ones, Captain Cat would dream of Pete, while Pete would dream of his very best friend, Captain Cat.

## **What To Do**

### **Activity 1:** Read *Captain Cat* by Syd Hoff and Discuss

Make sure you read it out loud. Have your youth follow along and look at the illustrations as you go. This way, they'll gain a visual understanding of what is being read.

After reading, ask your youth to tell you all the things that Captain Cat and Pete did together. Allow your youth to also share their feelings about the story.

### **Activity 2:** Create a Companion for Lonely Times

When a loved one leaves home, whether it is for deployment, a trip or a job, missing them comes naturally. When we miss someone, it helps to have a companion by our side, just as Pete did. With this project, your youth will be able to create an animal of their choice to play with and use when they want a friend. Just as Pete had a pet to hang out with, your youth can have their own pet for company, too.

For this example, we will create a cat.

First, have your youth stick their hand in the bag and use it as a puppet, so that their fingers fit into the area where the bottom of the bag would normally be. Make sure the bag is not pushed all the way open and that the base of the bag stays folded. The fold at the bottom of the bag is the cat's head.

Next, help your youth cut out ears, eyes and paws. Your youth can decide what color paper to do this on. With the cat's eyes, white or yellow are normally the best colors to use. You can then help your youth make the eyes more defined by drawing pupils. On the cat's ears, pink is a great color to shade in the inside with.

# Captain Cat-Lesson Plan

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## What To Do Cont'd...

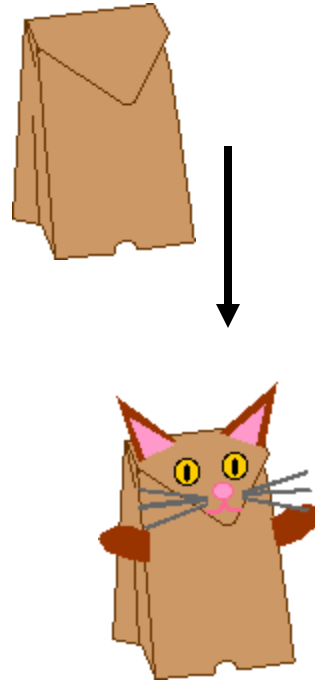
As shown in the photo, help your youth fold the two bottom corners of the cat's head underneath, to create a triangular shape.

With glue, help your youth to then apply the cat's ears, paws and eyes. Then, you can help your youth draw a cat nose and mouth. With the pipe-cleaners, help your youth glue them to the bag as whiskers.

Allow time for the cat to dry. Once it is dried, your youth can color the rest of the cat as they please. They can create spots, stripes or anything that comes to mind. Sometimes, leftover construction paper makes great designs.

Now, your youth has a little playmate puppet to speak with. Sometimes, it is helpful to have a friend we can tell our thoughts to. If your youth would like to create a different animal, use the same concept that was used with the cat.

Have your youth think about things to tell their playmate about the loved one that they miss so much.



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## Talk It Over

Any time after reading the story or completing the activity, time should be set aside to talk with your youth about the military and deployment. Here are some suggestive questions you may want to cover:

- What does it feel like to have somebody you love far away?
- How will having a playmate around to talk to help?
- What can you tell your playmate?
- What should you do when you have questions about the military?
- What do you want to do with the person you love when they come home?

These are just suggestions, but it is important to discuss how your youth is feeling about having a family member in the military. They need to know that it is okay to ask questions, and that they can talk about how they feel.

This lesson plan is meant to ease the pain one goes through when missing somebody who has been deployed. It is our hope that it will help your youth to positively deal with deployment, and for families to grow closer together.