

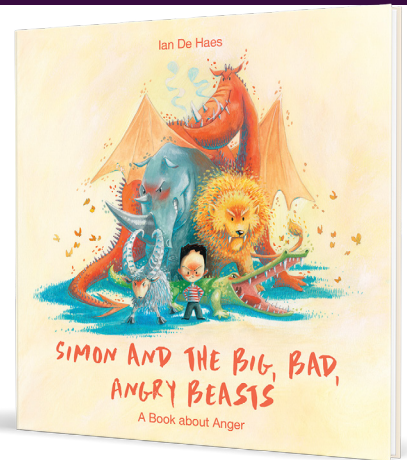
READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Simon and the Big, Bad, Angry Beasts

By Ian De Haes

In addition to this guide, *Simon and the Big, Bad, Angry Beasts* has a comprehensive "Guide for Parents and Teachers" at the back of the book that you can reference for additional discussion ideas. As you prepare to share this story, reflect on the temperament of the children you'll be reading it with. Are they prone to bouts of anger or meltdowns? What reaction do they have when those around them express anger? Consider, as well, your own feelings around expressing anger. Before you begin reading, explore the front cover, discussing choices the illustrator made such as colors, font, and the types of characters depicted, especially noticing the expressions on their faces. While reading, consider playing a "caption this" type of game for pages without words, inviting the children to imagine what might be written in a thought bubble over each character's head.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- Simon got angry at things like losing games or being forced to do something. What makes you feel angry?
- Why do you think Simon thought it was "great," "marvelous," and "magical" when different animals appeared with his anger?
- Midway through the story, things shifted. Rather than feeling good and marvelous and magical when his beasts came out, Simon felt lonely, and realized he preferred the affection of his parents or the chance to play with friends to holding on to anger. When you're lonely, what things do you miss?
- When Simon found a nice quiet spot to sit, he was able to concentrate and, eventually, calm spread through his body, releasing his anger. How do you get rid of angry feelings?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Have each person you're reading with recall the last time they felt mad. Try, as much as possible, to step back from remembering those emotions, and instead look at the events leading up to the anger. Discuss what caused the anger, how each person reacted and how they moved on from that anger.
- Simon's anger showed up in a variety of increasingly large and ferocious animals. Draw a picture of what your anger might look like in animal form.
- Near the end of the book, Simon sent his anger away by finding a quiet spot where he could find calm. Together, imagine the perfect place to find calm, inviting each person to contribute ideas and descriptions of things that would make a place feel peaceful and calming.

PRAY

God who is with us always, help us feel your presence through good and bad times. When we feel angry, help us find quiet, calm, and peacefulness so that we can send anger away, so that we feel renewed and ready for whatever challenges we face. Amen.



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While reading this book, it's easy to judge Simon as being "bad," but we should remember that anger is a natural and universal emotion. All of us feel anger at times, as well as frustration, exasperation, grumpiness, embarrassment, and a host of other emotions that can cause us to lash out and display behaviors that are far from our best selves. Sharing stories like *Simon and the Big, Bad, Angry Beasts* helps us name the 'beasts' that show-up when we experience big emotions, and normalize the fact that, to different extremes, we all sometimes lose control of our emotions and act in ways that we may later regret. As you delve further into understanding anger and other big emotions, some ideas to explore include:

- Researching Bible stories about God's people getting angry. Stories about people like Moses, Jonah, David, and even Jesus expressing anger show how universal these emotions are. They also reinforce that God can handle our anger. Use an online Bible concordance to search for occurrences of the word "angry" in Scripture and read some of those stories together.
- Discovering anger-management strategies. For Simon, finding quiet and turning his thoughts inward helped him find peace and allowed his anger to dissipate. Look for books, videos, or other materials for additional strategies and ideas for dealing with anger. Your pediatrician or school counseling department may have additional resources.
- Creating a plan. Rather than viewing anger as a shameful emotion that warrants punishment, recognize that it is a natural, albeit unpleasant, part of life. Invite your child to come up with a plan for what they will do when their emotions get out of hand. Possibilities include having alone time, designating a special place to go, or using anger-management strategies.

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE FOR *SIMON AND THE BIG, BAD, ANGRY BEASTS*

- Download the [Guide for Parents and Teachers](#)

ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT ACKNOWLEDGE & EXPLORE EMOTIONS

- [My Elephant Is Blue: A Book about Big, Heavy Feelings](#), by Melinda Szymanik and Vasanti Unka
- [Grandpa's Window](#), by Laura Gehl and Udayana Lugo
- [Sidney the Lonely Cloud](#), by Tim Hopgood
- [Max and the Purple Worry](#), by Kitty Black and Jess Rose
- [One Thursday Afternoon](#), by Barbara DiLorenzo
- [What in the World Is Wrong with Gisbert?](#), by Jochen Weeber and Fariba Gholizadeh

Guide written by Becky D'Angelo-Veitch and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](#)" (pcusa.org/aroundthetable).



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