

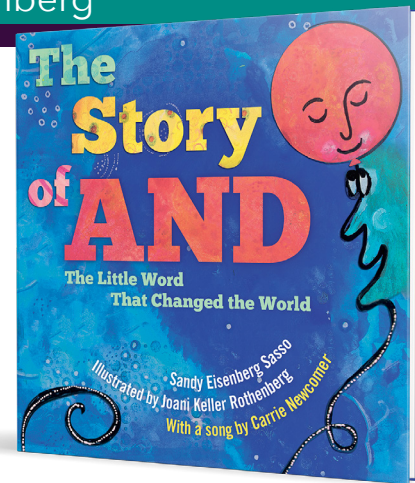
READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

The Story of AND

By Sandy Eisenberg Sasso & Joanie Keller Rothenberg

This story has many themes children can relate to—cooperation, community, being different, friendship, fitting in, and creative thinking to name just a few! *The Story of AND* is a wonderful book not only for helping children learn about working together, but also for showing how the word “and” can be a unifying and collaborative word to use in daily life. As you’re reading, consider inviting your child to count how many times they hear the word “and” in the story, just like the little girl did. A wonderful supplemental companion to this book is a free downloadable song by artist Carrie Newcomer that is available on the Flyaway Books website (<https://www.flyawaybooks.com/resources>), which places the text of the story to a fun and catchy tune. You may want to download it in advance so that you can listen to it together, perhaps even reading the book a second time while following along with the lyrics.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- This book is full of color except for two pages where adults were critical of the way the young girl chose to count while reading. Why do you think the illustrator decided to avoid bright colors on those pages?
- Was there a character in the story that you especially related to? What was it about that character that made them stand out?
- Each time AND brought two of the shapes together, she joined their hands to do so. What is it about holding someone’s hands that might make it easier to cooperate?
- Of all the pairs that AND combined, which was your favorite? Why?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- The girl in the story loved to count—from sidewalk cracks to clouds and stars to words! What is something similar that you always notice or are aware of?
- Each time AND brought two different items together, they said, “Yes, we can!” When have you experienced someone looking at a difficult situation and bringing a can-do attitude to help?
- *With Younger Children:* Imagine that you had AND’s job. What two shapes would you bring together? What would those two shapes create?
- *With Older Children:* When was a time that you had to work together with someone that you didn’t like very much (or who didn’t like you)? How did things go? What was something that helped you to work together?

PRAY

Loving God, we give thanks that you created us and love us; we’re grateful that we can live in community as your unique creations. May we share your love with others and celebrate the amazing things that happen when we work together. Amen.



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★ ★ DIG DEEPER ★ ★

In improvisational theater, one of the core principles is the idea of “yes, and.” This is a method of collaborating where every idea, even ones that seem off the wall or unrealistic, are accepted and added to. The opposite of “yes, and” is not only a simple “no,” but can also include “yes, but.” This idea has been adopted in a variety of settings (not just improv!) as a way of thinking collaboratively, building creativity, and encouraging and validating the ideas of others. Below are some ideas for exploring and adopting a “yes, and” mindset:

- Search online for videos of improv comedy to observe this idea in action. Be sure to preview any videos to make sure that they are age appropriate. After getting a sense of the concept, try out a few improv games or storytelling exercises, or purchase a commercially available improv-style game to play together.
- Create a craft from things you have on hand. Much like the story showed how AND could bring two seemingly unrelated objects together to create something wonderful, explore items around your house (from the random leftover craft items that often accumulate to the contents of your recycling bin) to create inventive and unique crafts using overlooked materials.
- Ban the but. Sometimes, without even realizing, a conversation can be closed or challenged with the word “but.” As a family, work to intentionally try to replace the word “but” with “and” in order to be more open to the ideas and perspectives of others.
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Notice how in this story, like in *The Story of AND*, different parts worked together. Reflect together on the use of the word “and” in the final verse of the passage, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27).

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE FOR *THE STORY OF AND*

- Download the [Activity Sheet](#)

ADDITIONAL BOOKS ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY

- [Saving Delicia: A Story about Small Seeds and Big Dreams](#), by Laura Gehl & Patricia Metola
- [Who Is My Neighbor?](#) by Amy-Jill Levine & Sandy Eisenberg Sasso & Denise Turu
- [Crocodile's Crossing: A Search for Home](#), by Yoei Slegers
- [Three Lines in a Circle: The Exciting Life of the Peace Symbol](#), by Michael G. Long & Carlos Vélez
- [Walking toward Peace: The True Story of a Brave Woman Called Peace Pilgrim](#), by Kathleen Krull & Annie Bowler
- [The Coat](#), by Séverine Vidal
- [Brian the Brave](#), by Paul Stewart & Jane Porter

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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