

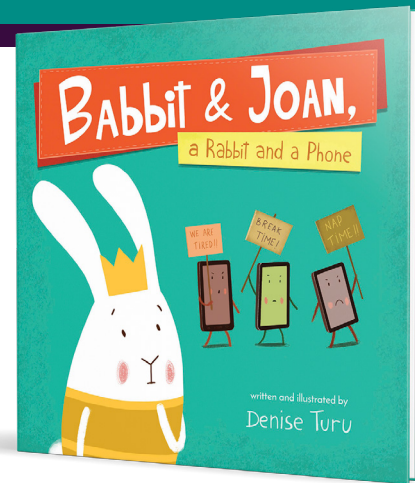
# READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

## A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

### Babbit and Joan, a Rabbit and a Phone

By Denise Turu

The message of this book, that we could all use breaks from our screens, is important for adults and children alike. By personifying Babbit's phone as Joan, and portraying her as Babbit's friend, the author resists the all-too-common temptation to demonize technology. Instead, by focusing on Joan's feelings of exhaustion, the story emphasizes the importance of resting, recharging, and disconnecting from devices in order to reconnect to the wider world, while also acknowledging the value of technology. In preparing to read this story, consider putting frequently used tech items such as phones, smartwatches, and tablets in 'do not disturb' mode, and setting them aside. If you have not created household "tech rules," consider using this book as a starting point for a conversation on balancing the many benefits that technology brings with the pitfalls of overuse.



### ★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- This book shows technology as a useful friend that works hard but also needs rest.
  - In what ways has technology been your friend this week?
  - When, this week, did those same devices need a rest?
- When Babbit went out to explore the world without Joan, he noticed wonderful things he'd never seen before. What is something unusual or memorable that you can recall seeing in nature?
- Because Babbit relied on Joan for directions, he lost his way in the forest. By working together with new friends, however, they made it home. Have you ever been lost? How did you find your way back to where you needed to be?
- What is your favorite thing to do that doesn't require the use of technology?

### ★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Most smartphones and tablets have the capability to keep track of screen time and allow time limits to be set for different apps. Investigate available controls and decide which ones would be helpful to install for your family.
- This story shares one activity to do (walking in the forest) when you are giving your device a rest. Come up with a list of other "low tech" activities that your family can do together and schedule time to do one or more of them.
- *With younger children:* Babbit's phone was named Joan. Come up with a fun name for the devices that members of your household use.
- *With older children:* The story begins with the phones being 'on strike.' Research or interview someone who has participated in a strike to learn more.

### PRAY

God who created all things, we are thankful for the beauty of creation and adventures in your wide world. We are also grateful that you command us to rest and find stillness. With good friends as our companions, we know that you will guide us home. Amen.



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## ★ ★ DIG DEEPER ★ ★

The idea of setting aside time for rest and disconnecting from technology as a way to reconnect with ourselves and our natural world ties in beautifully with the Christian practice of sabbath. Explore the idea of sabbath in both Christian practice and in other faiths. As you look to embody mindful practices, some ideas to explore based on the themes of this book include:

- Learning about the idea of forest bathing. This is one way to describe what Babbit did on his walk. This concept began in Japan (where it is called *shinrin-yoku*) and serves the dual purpose of connecting with the peacefulness and beauty of nature while also disconnecting from technology. While on a walk, adopt a 'forest bathing' mindset, observing things you haven't noticed before, such as movements of creatures or the way sunlight filters through the trees.
- Remembering how Babbit tucked Joan in for a nap early in the story, come up with a regular 'naptime' ritual for the devices in your household. This can include agreeing on times to put phones and tablets to rest (such as during mealtimes, in the hour before bed, or while engaging in family activities such as games or walks), creating a special resting place using a sturdy box or repurposing a decorative basket or bowl, or ideas of your own.
- Read a Bible verse about rest. Starting places include the Psalms (including Psalm 23, 37, 46, 62, and 91) and the Gospels (including Matthew 11:28-30 and Mark 6:31-32). Consider as a family how making time for rest can recharge your faith.
- Bring the ideas of technology and mindfulness together by utilizing mindfulness apps (such as Calm or Insight Timer) or finding YouTube videos that include peaceful music or nature sounds.

## MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

### ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE FOR *BABBIT AND JOAN*, *A RABBIT AND A PHONE*

- Download the [Coloring Sheet](#)

### ADDITIONAL BOOKS ON SCIENCE, NATURE, & THE ENVIRONMENT

- [Saving Delicia: A Story about Small Seeds and Big Dreams](#), by Laura Gehl and Patricia Metola
- [I Love You, Blue](#), by Barroux
- [The Good for Nothing Tree](#), by Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, and Annie Bowler
- [The Marvelous Mustard Seed](#), by Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, and Margaux Meganck - Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Korean](#)

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