

# READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

## A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

### I'm Fabulous Crab

By Nicki Greenberg

On its surface, *I'm Fabulous Crab* may seem like a tale of one who goes from drab and dull to fancy and fabulous, but there is more to the story. Henry the hermit crab not only has the courage to become sparkly, and even overdo it to his peril, but he suffers at the opinion of his friends, discovers a surprising new friend, and later helps his friends to find their own sense of fabulous.

Children may delight in the glitter and glam of this story, but some may tap into its deeper message of self-expression and wonder what it means to express themselves. This is a good opportunity to explore God's wonderful gift of diversity in both nature and humanity, and how each of us is a fabulous creation of God's love.



### ★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- Henry the hermit crab describes himself as fabulous. What are three words that you might use to describe yourself?
- Why do you think Henry wanted to be fabulous? How did adding sparkles to his shell allow him to express himself?
- Who are some of the other characters in the story? What words would you use to describe them?
- Why do you think the shark saved Henry/Fab? How do you think the shark would tell this story about Henry/Fab?
- Some of Henry/Fab's friends put him down for expressing himself. Has that happened to you, and if so, how did it make you feel? What makes you feel better? What could you do if you see this happen to someone else?

### ★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Learn about hermit crabs by doing an internet or YouTube search. Find out how hermit crabs help one another change their shells.
- Visit an aquarium, pet store with sea life, or watch a YouTube video about sea life or aquariums. Talk together about what you notice and what your favorite sea creature is and why.
- Draw a picture of a hermit crab or other sea creature. Add some sparkle! Use glitter glue, sequins, shiny buttons, and/or broken pieces of jewelry. If using heavy decorations, glue your picture to a piece of cardboard first.
- Notice how different people express themselves and appreciate their sense of creativity and style. This may be through jewelry, clothing, hairstyle, fingernails, shoe choices, makeup, or in some other way. Talk together about which of the things you notice you may like to try out.

### PRAY

Loving God, thank you for making each one of us fabulous in our own ways. Thank you for your great gift of diversity. Help us to appreciate how others express their fabulousness and be a friend when another needs help. Amen.



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## ★ ★ DIG DEEPER ★ ★

Think about the role of the shark in this story. The shark would have been a natural enemy, as was the octopus, but instead the shark is a helper, an ally. It is never too young to teach your children about empathy and what it means to be an ally. One mother writing about allyship defines being an ally like this: "An ally is a friend who's willing to stand up for what is right and has your back if you're being treated unfairly because you're different" (Jody Lee Cates, "[How to Raise Kids to Be Allies](#)," *San Diego Family*).

Use these tips in beginning to help your children understand allyship:

- Do a self-check. Be honest with yourself and your children about how you view the world. Consider where you may need to learn and grow. Model kindness and respect for others.
- Talk together about what empathy is and how it is different from sympathy. Empathy helps us see a situation through another person's eyes and feelings, not just feel sorry for them. Empathy allows us to move toward someone with compassion. Look for and point out examples of empathy in books, videos, and everyday life. Encourage your children to do the same.
- Encourage imaginative play and engage in this play with your children. Create scenarios where there may be differences among people, model how people might show that they need help, and don't be afraid to explore real-world situations. These are times when children learn communication, cooperation, and compassion.

A few books to start conversations about empathy and allyship include:

- *A Little Spot of Empathy: A Story about Understanding and Kindness* by Diane Alber
- *A is for Activist* by Innosanto Nagara
- *Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* by Sonia Sotomayor
- *Just Help!: How to Build a Better World* by Sonia Sotomayor
- *One* by Kathryn Otoshi

## MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

### ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE FOR *I'M FABULOUS CRAB*

- Download the [Discussion and Activity Guide](#)

### ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT ENCOURAGE BEING FABULOUS OR SHOWING EMPATHY

- [The Dress in the Window](#), by Robert Tregoning and Pippa Curnick
- [No One Else like You](#), by Siska Goeminne and Merel Eyckerman
- [Bruno's Hat](#), by Canizales
- [Binkle's Time to Fly](#), by Sharmila Collins and Carolina Rabei
- [Who Is My Neighbor?](#), by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

Guide written by Meg Elliot Rift and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](#)" ([pcusa.org/aroundthetable](http://pcusa.org/aroundthetable)).



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