

Mommy and Me Supplemental Literature Guides

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The Ugly Duckling

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A Note to the Parents:

I created these supplemental literature guides for those of you looking to supplement the “hands on” nature of the Mommy and Me curriculum with more traditional writing-based activities. Some students, especially those with older siblings, beg for worksheets to be like their elder brothers and sisters. Try not to overburden your little one; use your parental judgement. If the literature guide is too difficult for your student, opt out of this activity. You also can pick and choose activities and discussions, or complete all exercises orally.

The Mommy and Me Supplemental Literature guides are created using stories in the public domain. Sometimes, these are not the same translation as the picture books recommended in the curriculum. It is good for students to be exposed to different versions of the same story. The similarities and differences, even in the subtleties of language are a great starting point for discussion in your home.

I hope that you enjoy the timeless stories found within as you develop your child’s reading ability, vocabulary, comprehension, and awareness of the good, true, and beautiful!

In Christ,

Lylah Molnar

Mommy and Me Designer

The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Andersen

*Adapted From Hans Andersen Forty-Two Stories translated by M. R. James, 1930
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It was very pleasant out in the country. It was summer time, the **corn** was yellow, the oats green, the hay was stacked down in the green meadows, and there the stork walked about on his long red legs and talked Egyptian. He had learnt the language from his mother. Round the fields and meadows there were large woods and within them deep lakes: indeed, it was pleasant out in the country. Full in the sunshine, an old manor house stood, surrounded by a **deep** moat, and from the base of the walls right down to the water great dock plants grew--so tall that a little child could stand upright under the largest of them. It was as lonely in among them as in the thickest wood; and there a Duck was sitting on her nest.

At last, one egg after another cracked, and said: "Pip! pip!" All the egg-yolks had come to life and were sticking their heads out.

"Quack, **quack!**" said she, and they said it too, as well as they could, and looked all round them beneath the green leaves; and their mother let them look as much as they liked, for green is good for the eyes.

"What a big place the world is," said all the young ones: for to be sure they had a great deal more room now than when they lay in the egg.

"**Do** you suppose this is all the world?" said their mother; "why, it stretches out far beyond the other side of the garden, right into the parson's field--but I've never been there. You're all there, I suppose?" and she got up. "No, that's not all; there lies the biggest egg still. How long *will* it take? I'm really almost sick of it," and with that she sat down again.

"Well, how goes it?" asked an elderly Duck who came to call on her. "Oh, this one egg takes a dreadful long time," said the sitting Duck; "it won't break. But just you look at the others! They are the sweetest Ducklings I've ever seen; they're all just like their father."

At last the big egg opened. "Pip! pip!" said the young one, scrambling out; he was very big and ugly. The Duck looked at him: "That's a fearfully big Duckling, that is," she said. "None of the others look like that."

Next day the weather was perfectly delicious: the sun shone all over the green docks, and the mother Duck and all her family came out, and down to the moat. Splash! Into the water went she. "Quack, quack!" she said, and one Duckling after another plumped in. The water went over their heads, but they were up again in a moment and swam beautifully. Their legs worked of themselves, and now they were all out in the water, and even the ugly grey one was swimming with them. "No, no, that's no turkey," she said. "Look how nicely he uses his legs, and how well he holds himself up. That's my own child! He's really quite handsome if you look at him properly. Quack, quack! Come along with me and I'll take you out into the world and introduce you to the duck-yard, but mind and keep close to me so that nobody can **tread** on you, and do look out for the cat."

So they went into the duck-yard. The other ducks round them looked at them and said, quite loud, "Look there! Now we've got to have all this mob on the top of us, as if there weren't enough of us already; and poof! what an object that duckling is! We can't stand him"; and a duck rushed at him and bit him in the neck.

"Let him be," said his mother; "he isn't doing any harm." "Yes, but he's too big and odd altogether," said the duck who had bitten him; "so he's got to be smacked."

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"Those are pretty ducklings that mother has," said the old Duck with the rag on her leg; "all quite pretty except that one. He hasn't been a success; I could wish the mother would alter him."

"That can't be done, your grace," said the mother Duck. "He's not handsome, but he has a really good disposition, and swims as nicely as any of the rest, even better, I venture to say. I believe he will grow handsome, or perhaps in time he will grow even somewhat smaller; he has lain too long in the egg, and so has not acquired a proper shape." And she picked at his neck and smoothed him down. "Besides, he's a drake," she went on, "so it doesn't matter quite so much. He has, I believe, a good constitution and will win through in the end."

"The other ducklings are charming," said the old lady. "Well, make yourselves at home, and if you happen to find an eel's head, you can bring it to me."

So they made themselves at home: but the poor Duckling who had come last out of the egg and looked so ugly, was bitten and buffeted and made to look a fool by the hens and the ducks alike. "He's too big," they all said; and the turkey cock, who was born with spurs, and considered himself an emperor on the strength of it, blew himself up like a ship under full sail and went straight at the Duckling, gobbling and getting quite red in the head. The poor Duckling didn't know where to stay or which way to go, he was so miserable at being ugly and the butt of the whole duck-yard.

That was the first day, and as time went on it got worse and worse. The wretched Duckling was chased about by everybody, and even his mother and sisters were nasty to him, and kept saying: "I wish the cat would get you." And his mother said: "I wish you'd get right away"; and the ducks bit him and the hens pecked him, and the maid who had to feed the creatures kicked at him. So he ran away, and flew over the fence. The little birds in the bushes shot up in the air in a fright. "That's because I'm so ugly," the Duckling thought, and shut his eyes, but ran on all the same, till he got out into the wide marsh where the wild-duck lived; and there he lay all night, for he was very tired and very unhappy.

In the morning the wild-duck flew up and caught sight of their new comrade. "What sort of a chap are you?" they asked; and the Duckling turned to this side and that and greeted them as well as he could. "You're precious ugly," said the wild-ducks; "but that doesn't matter to us as long as you don't marry into our family." Poor wretch! He wasn't thinking much about marrying, as long as he could be allowed to lie among the reeds, and drink a little marsh water.

He waited several hours yet, before he looked about him, and then he hurried away from the marsh as fast as ever he could, running over fields and meadows, and such a wind got up that he had hard work to get along. Towards evening he was near a poor little cottage, so crazy was it that it didn't know which way to tumble down, so it remained standing. The wind howled so fiercely round the Duckling that he had to sit down on his tail to keep facing it, and it grew worse and worse. Then he noticed that one hinge of the door was gone, and it hung so crooked that he could slip indoors through the crack, and so he did.

Here lived an old woman with a cat and a hen. The cat, whom she called Sonny, could set up his fur and purr, and also throw out sparks, but for this he had to be stroked backwards. The Hen had very short little legs, and was consequently called "chicky short legs". She laid good eggs, and the woman was as fond of her as of a child of her own.

Next morning the strange Duckling was noticed at once, and the cat began to purr, and the Hen to cluck. "What's the matter?" said the old woman, looking all about her. But her sight wasn't good, so she took the Duckling for a fat duck that had strayed away. "That's a splendid catch," she said: "now I can have duck eggs, if only it isn't a drake! We must make sure of that." So the Duckling was taken in on approval for three weeks, but no eggs came.

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The Cat was the gentleman of the house and the Hen the lady, and they always talked of "we and the world"; for they considered that they were half the world, and much the best half. It seemed to the Duckling that some people might think differently, but this the Hen could not tolerate.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No! Then will you kindly hold your tongue."

And the Cat said: "Can you put up your fur, or purr, or give out sparks? No! Then you've no call to have an opinion when sensible people are talking."

So the Duckling lay in a corner and was in the lowest spirits. He began to think of the fresh air and sunshine, and such a strange longing to swim in the water came on him that he could not help telling the Hen.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked. "You've nothing to do, that's why you get these fancies; you just lay some eggs, or purr, and they'll pass off." "But it is so delicious to float on the water," said the Duckling; "so lovely to get it over your head and dive right down to the bottom."

"Oh yes, most delightful, of course!" said the Hen. "Why, you're absolutely mad! Ask the Cat--he's the cleverest man I know--whether he enjoys floating on the water or diving down; I say nothing of myself. Why, ask your mistress, the old woman; there's no one in the world cleverer than her--do you suppose she wants to go swimming and getting the water over her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling.

"Well, if we don't understand you, who is going to understand you, pray? You'll never be cleverer than the Cat and the woman, to say nothing of me. Don't give yourself airs, child, but thank your Maker for all the kindness people have done you. Don't you live in a warm room among company you can learn something from? But there! You're a rubbishy thing, and there's little entertainment in your company. You may take it from me! I mean well by you, and I'm telling you home truths, and that's how people can see their true friends. Now just do take pains to lay eggs, or learn to purr or else give sparks."

"I think I'll go out into the wide world," said the Duckling.

"Very well, do," said the Hen.

So the Duckling went off and swam on the water and dived into it; but he was looked down upon by all the creatures because of his ugliness.

One evening, when there was a lovely sunset, a whole flock of beautiful great birds rose out of the bushes. The Duckling had never seen any so handsome. They were brilliantly white, with long supple necks. They were swans, and they uttered a strange sound and spread their splendid long wings and flew far away from the cold region to warmer lands, and unfrozen lakes. They mounted so high, so high that the ugly little Duckling was strangely moved; he whirled himself round in the water like a wheel, he stretched his neck straight up into the air after them and uttered such a loud cry, so strange, that he was quite frightened at it himself. Oh, he could not forget those beautiful birds, those wonderful birds! And the moment they were out of sight he dived right down to the bottom of the water, and when he came up again he was almost beside himself. He didn't know what the birds were called or which way they were flying, but he loved them as he had never loved anything yet. He was not envious of them--how could it enter his mind to wish for such beauty for himself--he would have been happy if even the ducks had let him into their company--poor ugly creature.

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The winter grew very very cold: the Duckling was obliged to swim about on the **water** to keep it from freezing quite over, but every night the hole he swam in became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the ice cracked again; the Duckling had always to be moving about to keep the water open, till at last he was tired out and sat still, and was frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning a labourer came that way, saw him, went on the ice and with his wooden shoe broke it up and carried the Duckling home to his wife, and there he was brought to life again. The children wanted to play with him, but he thought they meant to hurt him, and in his fright he dashed right into the milk-pan and made the milk splash out into the room. The woman screamed and threw up her hands. Then he flew into the butter-tub and after that into the meal-bin and out again. Goodness, what a sight he was! The woman screamed out and hit at him with the tongs, and the children tumbled over one another trying to catch him, laughing, calling out--by good luck the door stood open, and out he rushed into the bushes, on the new fallen snow, and there he lay almost in a **swoon**.

But it would be too sad to tell of all the hardships and miseries which he had to go through in that hard winter. When the sun began once more to shine out warm and the larks to sing, he was lying among the reeds in the marsh, and it was the beautiful spring. Suddenly, out of the shadows, came three beautiful white swans with rustling plumage floating lightly on the water. The Duckling recognized the splendid creatures, and a strange sorrowfulness came over him.

"I will fly to them, these royal birds, and they will peck me to death because I, who am so ugly, dare to approach them; but it doesn't matter; it's better to be killed by them than to be snapped at by the ducks and pecked at by hens and kicked by the servant who looks after the poultry-yard, and suffer all the winter." So he flew out into the open water and swam towards the stately swans, and they saw him and hastened with swelling plumage to meet him. "Yes, kill me," the poor creature said, bowing his head down to the water, and waited for death. But what did he see in the clear water? He beheld his own image, but it was no longer that of a clumsy dark grey bird, ugly and repulsive. He was a swan himself.

It doesn't matter in the least whether you are born in the duck-yard, if only you've lain in a swan's egg.

It really **delighted** him now to think of all the hardships and adversities he had suffered, now he could rightly discern his good fortune and all the beauty that greeted him. The great swans swam round him and caressed him with their bills. Some little children now came into the garden and threw bread and corn into the water, and the smallest of them cried: "There's a new one!" And the others called out in delight: "Yes, there's a new one come!" They clapped their hands and danced about and ran to their father and mother. More bread and cake was thrown into the water, and everyone said: "The new one is the handsomest of all; how young and beautiful he is!" And the elder swans bowed before him.

At that he felt quite ill at ease, and covered his head with his wings, and knew not what to do. He was more than happy, and yet not proud, for a good heart is never puffed up. He thought how persecuted and depressed he had been, yet now he heard everyone saying he was the most beautiful of all beautiful birds. And the lilacs bowed their branches down to the water, and the sun shone warm and pleasant, and his plumage ruffled, and he raised his slender neck, and from his heart he said joyfully: "Such happiness I never **dreamed** of when I was the Ugly Duckling."

Focus on Phonics

This section of the literature guide helps to review the foundational skills of language acquisition with young children. Feel free to complete this activity orally with young learners.

Directions: Circle the words from the story that have the same initial sound as the word, “Duckling.” Initial is another word for beginning. All of the words found below are highlighted in the story in yellow to help your child recognize the connection between this exercise and the narrative you enjoyed together.

Did

Fur

Corn

Do

Quack

Yellow

Ugly

Deep

Differently

Water

Eel

Bang

Chap

Dreamed

Delighted

Legs

ANSWER KEY

Directions: Circle the words from the story that have the same initial sound as the word, “Duckling.” Initial is another word for beginning. All of the words found below are highlighted in the story in yellow to help your child recognize the connection between this exercise and the narrative you enjoyed together.

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Narration

This section of the literature guide helps children to internalize the story that they read by retelling the story and committing it to memory. Pupils often receive the most joy out of oral narration. This also helps to develop proper elocution and presentation skills.

Directions: *First.* Tell back the story to a parent or recording device. Remember to keep the events in the correct order, include details such as the names of the different animals, and to use any interesting vocabulary you can remember from the story. *Next,* draw a picture to represent the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative.

Beginning

Middle

End

ANSWER KEY

Directions: *First.* Tell back the story to a parent or recording device. Remember to keep the events in the correct order, include details such as the names of the different animals, and to use any interesting vocabulary you can remember from the story. *Next,* draw a picture to represent the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative.

Beginning

Picture should pertain to the first part of the narrative. In this case, an appropriate drawing would be of the mother duck, her ducklings, and the ugly duckling.

Middle

Picture should pertain to the middle part of the narrative. In this case, an appropriate drawing would be of the duck being laughed at and teased.

End

Picture should pertain to the final part of the narrative. In this case, an appropriate drawing would be of the duck turned into a swan and admired by others in a group of "his kind."

Vocabulary

This section of the literature guide helps children to learn dictionary skills, gain a richer appreciation of the English language, and learn to use context clues to deduce the meaning of new words.

Directions: Practice using context clues. First, read the word in context. Next, choose from the list the definition that makes the most sense in the story. All words from this activity are highlighted in the story in blue.

1. "Come along with me and I'll take you out into the world and introduce you to the duck-yard, but mind and keep close to me so that nobody can **tread** on you, and do look out for the cat."

Because the mother duck told her ducklings that they should remain close to her so that no one treads on them, the word tread most likely means:

- A. To make fun of.
- B. To play a game with.
- C. To step on.
- D. To closely examine.

2. "The **wretched** Duckling was chased about by everybody, and even his mother and sisters were nasty to him, and kept saying: "I wish the cat would get you.""

Because everyone chases the Duckling and even his own family is mean to him, the word "wretched," most likely means:

- A. Beautiful.
- B. Ugly
- C. Miserable
- D. Handsome.

3. "'Well, if we don't understand you, who is going to understand you, pray? You'll never be cleverer than the Cat and the woman, to say nothing of me. Don't give yourself **airs**, child, but thank your Maker for all the kindness people have done you.'"

Because the Hen thinks the Duckling is acting like he is better than the other animals, she demands that the Duckling not put on airs. In this contest, "airs" most likely means:

- A. Oxygen.
- B. The thing that we breathe.
- C. The feeling of being better than or above others.
- D. Beautiful feathers.

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Textual Evidence

This section of the literature guide helps children to look to the text for evidence. It focuses on the questions, “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how.”

Directions: Practice using what happens in the story itself to support your answers. Depending on your age and ability, your teacher might ask you to write in full sentences, write only what is necessary to answer the question, or discuss your answers aloud.

1. Who makes fun of the Ugly Duckling throughout the story? Look back so that you don't leave out any animals. ****Hint, there are at least seven****

2. Where does the story take place?

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3. How does the Ugly Duckling react when he realizes that he is a swan?

4. What do the children say about the Ugly Duckling at the end of the story?

ANSWER KEY

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1. Who makes fun of the Ugly Duckling throughout the story? Look back so that you don't leave out any animals. ****Hint, there are at least seven****

The Mother, the siblings, the Ducks in the Duckyard, the Hens in the Ugly Duckling's first home, the Turkey Cock, the Hen with the old Woman, and the Cat all made fun of the Ugly Duckling.

2. Where does the story take place?

The Duckling is born out in the country in a deep moat surrounded by plants near an old manor house. Then, the ducks go into the world. The first place they travel to is the duckyard. Then the Ugly Duckling ran away and flew over the fence to a marsh where the wild ducks lived. After this, he flew over fields and meadows to an old woman's cottage. He then goes to a laborer's home. Finally, the Ugly Duckling went to the marsh where he realized that he was a swan.

3. How does the Ugly Duckling react when he realizes that he is a swan?

When the Ugly Duckling realizes that he is a swan, he was both humble and happy because it says in the story, "At that he felt quite ill at ease, and covered his head with his wings, and knew not what to do. He was more than happy, and yet not proud, for a good heart is never puffed up."

4. What do the children say about the Ugly Duckling at the end of the story?

At the end of the story, the children say, "The new one is the handsomest of all; how young and beautiful he is!"

Lessons to Learn

This section of the literature guide helps children to recognize what is good, true, and beautiful in the story that they read. Discussing these things with peers and teachers will help students to recognize the importance of these transcendentals and how they contribute to the timelessness of the narrative.

Directions: Engage your child in a meaningful discussion to help him take to heart the life lessons that this narrative teaches. Encourage thoughtful answers, rather than quick responses. Allow yourself to linger on the ways this story has touched hearts for many generations.

The Power of the Tongue:

The words we speak matter. Proverbs 15: 4 says, “Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.” In the story of the ugly duckling, words are used to both tear down and build up. What type of damage did the careless words of the animals cause to the Ugly Duckling? How can you guard your tongue against this type of evil? How did the children's words of praise affect the ugly duckling at the end of the story? How can you similarly use your words for the building up of God’s Kingdom?

Perseverance:

Perseverance means not giving up when things are difficult. James 1:12 says, “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.” How did the ugly duckling show perseverance throughout the story? What was his “crown of life?” What types of difficult situations might you? Likely you will not experience such a dramatic reward for your own perseverance as the Ugly Duckling received. What could be the fruit of perseverance in your own life?

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