



Storytime Activity Guide

The Most Magnificent Thing

written and illustrated by Ashley Spires

This book is about a girl who sets out to make the 'most magnificent thing.' Although she clearly imagines how this thing will look and work, she runs into difficulties translating her vision into reality. After trying and failing (and feeling frustrated) many times, the girl finally manages to get it just right.

Did you know?

Everyday experiences provide a rich and engaging learning environment that supports children's understanding of science concepts. ***The Most Magnificent Thing*** offers children (and grownups) an opportunity to engage with the process and practice of **engineering and problem solving**, as they see how the girl uses creativity and critical thinking skills to design and build the 'most magnificent thing.'



Words to Practice

magnificent
idea
supplies
measures

Talk about it!

Note: These questions are intended as conversation starters to get you and your child talking about the book. Feel free to ask and answer the questions yourself, while also providing entry points for your child to participate in an age-appropriate way.

- What do you think the girl's idea for the most magnificent thing is?
- How could her creation feel 'all wrong' after she was so confident about the design?
- In this book, we see how it takes the girl several tries to make the most magnificent thing. What do you think she learned from each time that she tried and failed to make it?
- Have you ever wanted to make something but weren't able to right away? What was your experience like? What did you learn from it?

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Explore!

Using everyday 'loose parts,' work with your child to build their own magnificent thing.

Note: Loose parts is the label given to any collection of natural or man-made materials that can be used for children's play. Loose parts create endless possibilities and invite creativity. For example, if a child picks up a rock and starts to play, most likely that rock can become anything the child wants it to be. Loose parts play fuels imagination, creativity, and curiosity.

Materials needed:

Gather a selection of 8-12 everyday items for this activity. There is no hard and fast rule about what the items should be, but here are some suggestions:

- Items from the recycle bin (bottle caps, toilet paper rolls, cans)
- Spoons, forks, plates, bowls, measuring cups and spoons
- Buttons, pompoms, wool balls
- Stuffed animals, toy figurines, blocks, hot wheels
- Rocks, pebbles, leaves



1. Tell your child you are going to use the materials that you have gathered to make the most magnificent thing. Before you begin, ask your child if they want to add anything to the collection of materials.
2. Brainstorm the design of the most magnificent thing with your child. Accept all responses from your child — all ideas are good ideas!
3. After brainstorming the design, work with your child to build your most magnificent thing according to the design.
4. Review the thing you have constructed and discuss how it aligns with what you and your child designed.
5. Are there changes you or your child want to make? If so, make the desired changes.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until you and your child are happy with the magnificent thing.



Play: When is a spoon not a spoon?

Everyday objects can have different uses, other than the ones for which they are designed.

- Pick up a household item and observe it carefully. Consider its shape, size, color, and other characteristics. For example, a spoon has a long handle and an oval or round shallow bowl.
- Talk with your child about all the purposes for which this object can be used. A spoon is used for eating food, but what are some other ways we can use it? Spoons can be used in the bath for water play; in the sandbox for scooping sand; to make noise by drumming it against a surface; or as art and jewelry.
- Repeat this activity as often as you like with other objects.

