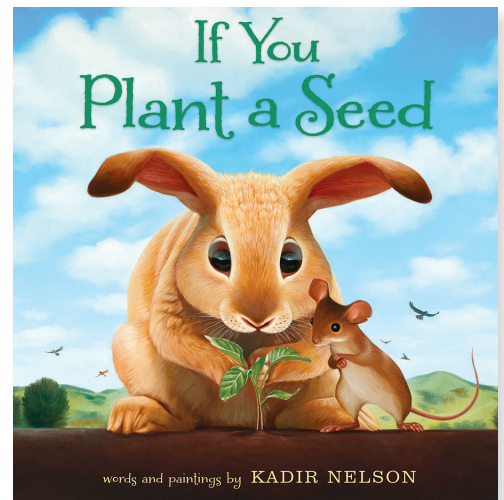


# ABOUT THE BOOK

A mouse and a bunny plant seeds and are jubilant when their vegetables start to grow. They quickly discover what happens if they decide to share their bounty and what happens if they do not. Young children will learn about the consequences of both selfishness and generosity, and they will cheer when the mouse and bunny make the altruistic choice.



# ABOUT KADIR NELSON



David Harrison

**KADIR NELSON** is the author and illustrator of *Baby Bear*. He won the 2012 Coretta Scott King Author Award and Illustrator Honor for *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans*. He received Caldecott Honors for *Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levine and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Lead Her People to Freedom* by Carole Boston Weatherford, for which he also garnered a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award and won an NAACP Image Award; *Ellington Was Not a Street* by Ntozake Shange won a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award. Nelson's authorial debut, *We Are the Ship*, was a *New York Times* bestseller, a Coretta Scott King Author Award winner, and a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor book. Kadir Nelson lives in southern California. You can visit him online at [www.kadirnelson.com](http://www.kadirnelson.com).

# BEFORE READING

Ask the children if they have ever planted seeds. Discuss how a tiny seed can grow into a large plant. Tell the children that as you read this story, they should try to figure out what else can grow from something tiny into something larger and more powerful.



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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read the first two pages of the story (“If you plant . . .”), and then pause. Ask the children what they think will happen. *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
2. Read the next page (“tomato, carrot, and lettuce plants will grow”), and then ask the children how they think the bunny and the mouse are feeling. How can you tell? *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
3. Have the children look at the next page. (It shows the bunny and the mouse eating their vegetables.) Discuss the illustration, and if a child doesn’t notice, you can mention that there are quite a lot of vegetables for only two animals. Then turn the page and ask the children why they think the birds have come along. *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
4. On the next page, have the children look at the birds’ expressions. Ask: What do you think the birds want? What should the bunny and the mouse do? Why? *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
5. Turn the page and discuss the illustration. What did the bunny and the mouse decide to do? Therefore, what do you think the birds will do? *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
6. Pause again after reading the pages, “If you plant a seed of selfishness, in a very short time, it will grow, and grow, and grow into a heap of trouble.” Ask the children what happened and why. What do you think the bunny and the mouse should have done differently? Would the same thing have



- happened if they had made a different choice? Why or why not? *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
7. Read the page “But if you plant a seed of kindness,” and then ask the children what they think will happen. *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
  8. Finish reading the story. Ask the children what the bunny and the mouse ultimately decided to do. How did the story end? Why? *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
  9. Refer to the question you asked before reading the story. Ask the children to think about how the tiny seeds grew into large vegetables. Then ask them to describe what happened when the mouse and the bunny were selfish and did not share. Discuss how just one small, unkind decision resulted in a “heap of trouble.” Then ask the children to consider the other choice that the bunny and mouse made when they decided to share their vegetables. Discuss again how one small, generous decision resulted in a big, beautiful garden. *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*
  10. Ask the children if they think small acts of kindness can make a difference in someone’s life. Discuss how selfishness or generosity can grow with powerful consequences. Ask the children if they would like to plant seeds of kindness in the world and what they think would happen if they did. *RL.K-2.1, RL.K-2.3, RL.K-2.7, RL.K-2.11, SL.K-2.1, SL.K-2.2, SL.K-1.4, SL.K.6*

# GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the children to think about a time when someone showed them kindness. What did that person do for you? How did it make you feel? Then ask the children to think about a time that they did something kind for someone else. What did you do? How did you feel when you did it? How did the other person respond? Younger children can dictate their responses to an adult. Older children can write a narrative about their experiences. After children add illustrations to their work, collate the pages into a class book about kindness. *W.K-2.3, W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-2.5, S.L.K.6*
2. Building on the first activity, discuss with the children how they can plant a seed of kindness at home or in school. Have children suggest ideas while you record them on a chart. Make a class poster of a flower with a title (e.g. “Kindness Flower”) and have each child write his/her name on a leaf. Then, every time someone plants a seed of kindness by showing kindness to someone else, a leaf or blossom can be added to the plant. The class can observe the plant growing larger and larger as their acts of kindness grow. *W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-1.5*

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## SCIENCE CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

1. Show the children two objects, one nonliving (e.g. a rock or a book) and one living (e.g. a plant or an insect). Discuss the differences between living and nonliving things and list them on a chart. Using age-appropriate language, list characteristics of living things. (They grow and change, reproduce, need food and water to survive, etc.) Then provide the children with a set of photographs and have the class sort them into categories of living and nonliving things. Each child should articulate why he is putting a photo into his chosen category. *S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-2.6*
2. Have the children use the internet or nonfiction texts to research the major parts of a plant (roots, stem, leaves, flower) and to learn about each part’s function. In small groups, have the children create a plant poster to illustrate what they have learned. *W.K-2.2, W.K-2.7, W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-2.2, S.L.K-2.5*
3. Discuss how many of our foods come from plants and create a class list of these foods. The list should include fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Then ask the children which of their favorite foods come from plants. Have them create a “Food from Plants” booklet in which they illustrate and label each food. *W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-2.5, S.L.K.6*



4. Enable the children to observe the entire plant life cycle by creating germination bags. Have the children work together cooperatively in small groups. Each group will need a quart-size resealable plastic bag, a paper towel, a stapler, and several bean seeds. Help the children do the following:
- *Fill the bag with a flattened paper towel.*
  - *Put four staples across the width of the bag, spaced apart and placed about an inch up from the bottom of the bag.*
  - *Place a bean seed in the bag, positioning it on the paper towel and above the staples.*
  - *Add water to the bag and move it around so that the entire paper towel is damp. Only a half-inch of water should be visible at the bottom of the bag, so pour out any extra water.*
  - *Close the bag and hang it near a window so it will get sunlight. If the bag is sealed, you will not need to add water because it will keep the moisture locked in.*

In a few days, the children will be able to see the seeds germinate; they'll observe the seed coat splitting, the roots growing, and eventually the stem and leaves forming. When the plant is as tall as the bag, you can remove it and replant it in a pot of soil. Keep observing the plant as it grows. When a pod is ready, open it up and show the children the beans. Remind them that this was how the bean plant first started. They will have observed the entire plant life cycle. Throughout this process, have the children complete an observation journal, depicting the plant life cycle and its stages. *W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1*



5. Ask the children why plants are so important to us. In small groups, have the children discuss this question and record their ideas. Younger children can draw pictures; older children can write down their ideas. Then discuss the topic as a whole class and record the children's ideas on a chart. Facilitate the discussion, making sure to address the fact that plants provide oxygen, food, medicine, wood, shelter, paper, and beauty. Write a class book about the many reasons plants are important. *W.K-2.2, W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-2.5*
6. Discuss how plants are able to make their own food through the process of photosynthesis, and introduce this term to build up the children's scientific vocabulary. Emphasize how important sunlight is in this process. Then plant a seedling in a cup and place it near a window. Observe it daily with the children. Ask them to note which way the plant is leaning. Discuss how a plant in a yard, in a forest, or on a windowsill will lean toward the sunlight. (This process is called phototropism.) Ask the children why they think this occurs, and then discuss how plants adapt to their environment just as all living things do. Have the children complete a plant journal to record their observations of the plant's movement. *W.K-2.11, S.L.K-2.1, S.L.K-2.3, S.L.K-1.5*

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