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Tips for sharing wordless picture books

1. Recognise that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' ways to read a wordless book. One of the wonderful benefits of using wordless books is how each child creates their own story (or stories!) from the same pictures.
2. Spend time looking at the cover and talking about the book title. Based on those two things, make a few predictions about the story.
3. Take a "picture walk" through the pages of the book. Look carefully at the expressions on characters' faces, the setting and the colours they can see. Talk to each other about what you see. These conversations will enrich the storytelling.
4. Enjoy the pictures and point out a few things, but don't worry too much about telling a story yet. Just enjoy the pictures and get a sense of what the book is about.
5. Go back through the book a second time and get ready for some great storytelling! Consider going first and acting as a model for your child. Have different voices for the characters, add sound effects and use interesting words in your version of the book.
6. Encourage your child to "read" you the book with their storytelling. Focus on the words your child uses when they tell the story. Help your child expand their sentences or thoughts by encouraging them to add information from the illustration's details. One way to encourage more details is by asking "W" questions: Who? Where? When? Why?

Sharing wordless books is a terrific way to build important literacy skills, including listening skills, vocabulary, comprehension – and an increased awareness of how stories are "built", as the storyteller often uses a beginning, middle, end format. For a book with no words, you'll be surprised at all the talking you will do, and all the fun you'll have!

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