

Foster Parent Ideas for *The Cat*

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The story behind the story

Cathy fostered several children. She adopted one of her foster children and continued fostering others. When her son's sister needed protection, Cathy fostered and eventually adopted her too. Cathy discovered that each child she cared for found his or her own special corner in her heart.

***The Cat* is a story about fostering from the point of view of the foster parent. It can be used to stimulate discussion with your foster child.**

Foster children have been taken out of a setting that, while not ideal, was at least familiar. They know their own feelings but may not understand the motives of the foster parent. *The Cat* is designed to create conversation openings that allow foster parents to explain why they care for children and how their lives are made richer by fostering children.

Foster children may have been removed from their family more than once or been in more than one foster home. Foster children often need reassurance that they matter and they are more than just a transient in other people's lives. The story and illustrations in *The Cat* are designed to show that even in short term placements, foster children have a lasting impact on the foster family.

Be Prepared

First, read through the story on your own. Think of connections that you can make with the story and be prepared to talk with your foster child about them. For example:

“The cat brought the rabbit home. When I brought you home . . .”

“The cat kept the ducklings safe, like I keep you safe . . .”

“The cat felt loved. That's the way you make me feel when . . .”

“The cat keeps pictures of the animals she helps. I remember you by . . .”

Second, read through the story with your foster child. Share your connections to the story, either during the reading or after, and allow the child to express his or her own reaction.

Each Child is Different

Be ready for a variety of reactions, or none at all. If you sense that the child does not want to talk about fostering issues, then this story can be simply about a cat who helps others. By reading the story, however, you plant the seeds for future conversations.



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