It’s a Firefly Night

Story Hour Kit for

• Libraries
• Bookstores
• Pre-K to Grade 1 Classrooms
• Families

Best for Ages 2-6

A Pre-K to Grade 1 Firefly Jar Craft that captures the sweetness of summer nights

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About the Story Hour Kit

Just as the girl in the picture book *It's a Firefly Night* gathers fireflies in a jar, during your story hour children can gather paper fireflies hidden in your space. Taping the found fireflies to the inside of a clear drinking cup, children can capture the ephemeral joy of firefly glimmer. Activities in this Story Hour Kit include:

- Read-aloud prompts for audience participation
- Kinetic search-and-find through your space
- Craft to create a firefly jar
- Math & science facts and questions
- Additional craft to make firefly finger puppet

About the Book

A favorite childhood activity—catching fireflies—glows from the pages of this story-with-a-counting-concept offering. With rhyming lines that read like a song, *It’s a Firefly Night* chronicles the capture and release of fireflies, one by one, sparking the reader to count up to and down from ten. The book is capped off by a page of interesting firefly facts (they flash in rhythmic patterns to send messages!), adding a touch of accessible nonfiction to this charming, not-just-for-bedtime book. It’s a terrific gift, a great winding-down-at-bedtime selection, a lovely story for a parent and child to share. With glittering sparklers lighting up each page, any night can be a firefly night!

“An intimate encounter with nature lit not just by stars and fireflies, but also an affecting dose of daddy-daughter warmth.”—Kirkus Reviews

About the Author/Artist

**Dianne Ochiltree** teaches writing in schools and has written several picture books that feature mathematics. She and her husband live in Sarasota, Florida. Visit Ms. Ochiltree on the web at www.ochiltreebooks.com.

**Betsy Snyder** has written and illustrated numerous award-winning children’s books and created greeting cards, board games, puzzles, scrapbook kits, and much more. Learn more about Ms. Snyder’s books at www.betsysnyder.com.
It's a Firefly Night Story Hour

This activity will guide you through a participatory read-aloud, a search-and-find for paper fireflies, and a craft to capture the glow of fireflies in a jar.

What You Might Prepare—One Month in Advance of the Event

- Locate a copy of the picture book *It's a Firefly Night* by Dianne Ochiltree with art by Betsy Snyder (Blue Apple Books).
- If you are doing an event for the public, copy and display the Story Hour Poster in this kit, hand it out in your community, and include it in a display. List the event in newsletters and online calendars with copy such as:

  Spotting fireflies is a rare summer treat. With a reading of *It's a Firefly Night* by Dianne Ochiltree and illustrated by Betsy Snyder (Blue Apple Books), we will capture the warmth and wonder of a summer night. Your readers will chase and capture fireflies in a jar, learn about the luminescent insects, and grow their knowledge of numbers. All ages welcome, but best for ages 2-6.

- Locate a source for tall, clear plastic drink cups with lids and straws. It is best if the cups have no writing on them. Ask your local coffee shop to donate cups in exchange for a sign thanking them at the event or ask your colleagues to save their iced drink cups. (12 oz. cups are best)

- (Optional) If you want the children's firefly jar to glow, consider ordering yellow glow bracelets from a retailer. Oriental Trading Company (www.orientaltrading.com) offers 50 bracelets for $20.

- Locate double-sided tape (one roll for every three participants).

What You Might Prepare—A Week or Two in Advance of the Event

- Print out a few copies of the It's a Firefly Night Activity sheet for parents who might not have time to do the activity with you.

- Print out the Fireflies! sheet and cut out the individual firefly circles. You will want at least five fireflies for each anticipated participant.

- Print out the Firefly Math & Science sheet (one set for each anticipated participant).

- Make up a prototype firefly jar.

- Locate one or more flashlights. One flashlight will help you pretend that it is a dark night. Many flashlights will let parents pretend.
What You Might Do—The Day of the Event

Getting Ready

- Hide the firefly cut-outs all over your space.
- Lay out the cups (with covers on), straws (separated from cups), and double-sided tape on a craft table.

Read Aloud

Read *It's a Firefly Night* by Dianne Ochiltree and illustrated by Betsy Snyder (Blue Apple Books) aloud to the gathered children. Consider these action prompts for child participation in the story on a first or second reading of the book:

**Book page starting with: When the moon is high…**
Suggested prompt: “Can you make a moon above your heads?”
Action: Start with your arms at your sides and raise them over your head until your hands touch in a circle.

**Book page starting with: I hop off the porch...**
Suggested prompt: “Pretend the air and wind are blowing your hair.”
Action: Fluff your hair and shake your head.

**Book page starting with: Grass tickles my toes...**
Suggested prompt: “Can you pretend to capture a firefly in your jar?”
Action: Open your “jar” and reach out for a pretend firefly, capture it, and say, “gotcha.”

**Book page starting with: Fireflies shimmer...**
Suggested prompt: “Can you count to five with me?”
Action: Count the five fireflies on the page with the children.

**Book page starting with: Fireflies glimmer...**
Suggested prompt: “Can you make your hands into glimmering fireflies?”
Action: Turn your palms out and open and close your hands slowly.

**Book page starting with: Flickering quicker...**
Suggested prompt: “Can you make your fireflies flicker quicker?”
Action: Open and close your hands quicker at different positions high and low.
Book page starting with: *I take one gently out of the jar…*
Suggested prompt: “Can you cup your hands like the girl in the picture?”
Action: Cup your hands like the girl in the picture.

Book page starting with: *Unfurling my hand…*
Suggested prompt: “Who knows how to unfurl your hand?”
Action: Demonstrate cupped hands to unfurled hands.
Suggested prompt: “Can you whisper ‘goodbye’ to the firefly?”
Action: Whisper.

Book page starting with: *Soon many fireflies…*
Suggested prompt: “Can you make your fireflies soar?”
Action: Open and close your hands quicker at different positions high and low.

Book page starting with: *Ten, nine, eight, seven, six…*
Suggested prompt: “Can you count backwards from ten with me?”
Action: Count the fireflies on the page backwards from ten.

Book page starting with: *We walk back to the house…*
Action: Use this final page as a transition to the activity.

**Activity**

**Note:** If you do not have time to do this activity in your story hour, print out the Firefly Night Activity sheet for each family to take home!

On the final page the girl asks, “Will tomorrow be a firefly night?” Use this page to transition to the activity with something like this:

“We are going to pretend that it is a firefly night. What makes a firefly night? What do we need to imagine?”

Go back to the pages and prompt for answers like: a moon in the sky, nighttime, stars, warm breeze, grass tickling your toes, an adult to go with you, and fireflies, of course.

“Let’s hold the picture of nighttime, warm breezes, grass, stars, and the moon in our heads as we go looking for fireflies. What do you need to capture a firefly? Yes, you need a jar. You will need a jar to collect five fireflies”.

Activities created by Blue Apple Books for the picture book *It’s a Firefly Night* by Dianne Ochiltree and illustrated by Betsy Snyder.

Illustrations copyright © by Betsy Snyder
“When I give you your jar, I want you to pretend it is a summer night and look for five fireflies. Count as you find the fireflies; count them as you place them in your jar: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

When you find five fireflies come back to the craft table and we will make your fireflies fly.”

Hand out the cups and send the children off to search and find. You might use a flashlight or provide families with flashlights to help with the imaginative play.

**Craft**

- Have the children pull their fireflies out of the jar, counting them as they place them on the table.

- You may choose to do the math activities now or to send families home with the Firefly Science & Math sheet.

- Demonstrate pulling a piece of tape off the double-sided tape roll, putting it on the front of the firefly circle and placing the circle (illustration facing out) on the inside of the cup. Ideally, they will do this with three firefly circles.

- Demonstrate pushing a straw through the cover. On the portion of the straw below the cover, tape two firefly circles back to back.

- Place the cover with the straw on the cup and show how you can twirl the straw to make the fireflies dance.

- If you have obtained glow bracelets, decide whether to activate them now or to place them in the cups for later. Families might also be encouraged to place a flashlight under the cup at bedtime to mimic the glow of a nighttime firefly jar. Demonstrate this with your own flashlight.

- Take pictures of your firefly jars and share them on the Blue Apple Books Facebook page! We would love to see them!

**Science & Math**

- Explore some math and science facts and questions as part of this activity. If you don't have time, send home the attached Firefly Math & Science sheet.
It’s a Firefly Night

STORY HOUR

Chase imaginary fireflies and remember the warmth of summer nights.

All ages welcome, but best for ages 2-6.
Capture the warmth of a summer night and the shimmer of fireflies with this simple activity.

**Gather**
- Double-sided or regular scotch tape and scissors
- Clear drinking cup with a lid and straw or a jar from the recycling bin (It is best to use a container with no label or writing on it.)
- Yellow or green glow bracelet or stick (optional)
- Flashlight (optional)

**Prepare**
- Print and cut out the ten fireflies.
- Hide the fireflies around your space.

**Read, Play & Pretend**
- Read *It's a Firefly Night* by Dianne Ochiltree and illustrated by Betsy Snyder (Blue Apple Books) with the child.
- Tell the child you have seen fireflies “nearby.” Give your child the cup or jar, ask him/her to look for and collect 10 fireflies and put them in the jar.
- Count the fireflies as they go in and out of the jar.
- Play addition and subtraction games with the fireflies as they come in and go out of the jar.
- Tape the fireflies to the inside of the jar with the illustrated fireflies facing out.
- If you have a drinking cup, insert the straw and tape some fireflies to the portion of the straw that sits inside the cup. Show the child how you can make the fireflies dance by turning the straw.
- Surprise your child by placing a glow bracelet or stick in the jar at night so your fireflies glow! Alternatively, shine a flashlight down into your firefly jar.

Print and cut out enough fireflies so each child attending your event can find and keep at least five fireflies.
Activities created by Blue Apple Books for the picture book *It's a Firefly Night* by Dianne Ochiltree and illustrated by Betsy Snyder.
Fireflies are not only magical to see on a summer’s night. Fireflies are also amazing creatures. You can explore more about them using science and math!

**Firefly Science**

Fireflies are fascinating! Here are some facts and questions about the incredible glowing insects.

Although we call them “fireflies” and “lightning bugs,” this insect is really a beetle. Are you interested in beetles? Ask your librarian for books about them!

Fireflies like a moist or wet habitat. A habitat is where a plant or animal normally lives. If the fireflies like their habitat moist, can you guess where you might see fireflies?

Most species have intriguing tricks to survive. What is a firefly’s trick? They taste awful to predators! What tastes awful to you?

Fireflies produce efficient light! Efficient means there is not much wasted or lost. The lightbulbs in your house are not very efficient; they can waste a lot of energy! Can you turn out lights you are not using? When we turn out the lights both inside and outside, we are more likely to see a firefly on a Firefly Night!

**Firefly Math**

Fireflies appear and disappear. Fireflies get caught in jars and then are let go. That sounds like addition and subtraction, or Firefly Math! See if you can solve these math problems. Use your paper fireflies to help you.

If you and your friend each caught five fireflies, how many fireflies would you have together?

\[ 5 + 5 = \quad \text{__________} \]

If you caught eight fireflies and you let two go, how many fireflies would you have left?

\[ 8 - 2 = \quad \text{__________} \]

If you caught one firefly on each day of the week, how many fireflies would you have caught in seven days?

If you walked nine steps from your house until you saw a firefly, how many steps would it take you to return to your house? How many steps do you take all together?
A fun alternative to the Firefly Jar Craft is creating Firefly Finger Puppets. Children get to take home a lit firefly perched on their finger!!

What You Might Prepare—A Week or Two in Advance of the Event

- Locate a few sheets of yellow vellum.
- Locate a package of pipe cleaners.
- Locate “Finger Lights” or “LED Finger Lights.” Amazon sells 40 lights for under $10, and Oriental Trading Co. has them for $8 per dozen. (Purchase one light for each anticipated participant, plus a few extra, as there are sometimes duds in the package.)
- Locate rolls of double-sided tape to share.
- Locate kid’s scissors to share.
- Locate crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils to share.
- Print the Firefly Finger Puppet page and cut it in fourths.
- Snip the pipe cleaners in thirds.
- Cut out rectangles of vellum the same height as the firefly on the Firefly Finger Puppet page. Round off one end.
- Make a prototype.
  - Color the firefly.
  - Cut the firefly out along the dashed line.
  - Poke and thread the pipe cleaner through the head of firefly. Twist to make antennae.
  - Attach the vellum to the backside of the firefly with tape so rounded end extends beyond the end of the firefly’s body.
  - Attach the finger light to the back of the firefly with the light portion closet to the vellum end.

What You Might Prepare—A Week or Two in Advance of the Event

- Lay out cut pipe cleaners, vellum cutouts, finger lights, double-sided tape, scissors, Firefly Finger Puppet 1/4 sheets, and crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils for participants..
- Lead the participants through the assembly of a Firefly Finger Puppet!
Firefly Finger Puppet
1. Color.
2. Cut along dashed line.
3. Poke & thread a piece of pipe cleaner for antennae.
4. Tape vellum to the back to give firefly a rounded backside.
5. Tape finger light to back of firefly.
6. Watch the firefly glimmer & shimmer!