

Bats at the Beach

by Brian Lies, with illustrations by the author • Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006



Reviewed by
Jennifer Shank

Quick, call out! Tell all you can reach: the night is just perfect for bats at the beach.” This is how Brian Lies’ wonderful book begins. It is an enchanting and fanciful look at a day at the beach from a slightly different perspective. *Bats at the Beach* takes place at the seaside during the night with all of the necessary fun items including buckets, banjos and blankets, and who could forget the moon-tanning lotion. Brian Lies uses rhythm and rhyme in the narrative to create a wonderful story and a vehicle for great Orff opportunities. The story is engaging and will hold children’s attention pre-kindergarten through third grade.

Each page is illustrated with beach-themed activities but with a twist. On one page the bats are relaxing by the seashore just as a family would, complete with water wings for the youngest bats and sand bat caves instead of sand castles.

The illustrations by Lies are charming, with wonderful quirks that make a day at the beach uniquely batty. Each page is illustrated with beach-themed activities but with a twist. On one page the bats are relaxing by the seashore just as a family would, complete with water wings for the youngest bats and sand bat caves instead of sand castles. This book will certainly be a favorite of anyone who reads it. Readers will want to revisit it many times as the illustrations are detailed and much of the clever “bat” items can be missed on the first reading. This book tells a wonderful story, but it also introduces children to different bat species, what they eat and where they live (when not at the beach).

This book offers multiple opportunities. The rhythm and rhyme scheme

of the prose is perfect for Orff-based activities. Students of just about any age could take portions or the entire book and create chants, simple melodies, or ostinati. The book can be used to introduce several very clever songs about bats including, “Five Black Bats.” The story could also be presented as a concert piece with dancers, narrators and props. It would tie in nicely with conservation, and the book would work well as part an integrated lesson that focused on bats as a science topic.

Other resources that would complement *Bats at the Beach* include:
Stellaluna by Janell Cannon
Beautiful Bats by Linda Glaser
Zippping Zapping Zooming Bats by Anne Earl.

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