TEACHERS NOTES

 YOU'RE IN GOOD PAWS

MAUREEN FERGUS  KATHRYN DURST

Written by
Maureen Fergus

Illustrated by
Kathryn Durst

Suitable for
Age 3-7: Pre-school to Grade 1

Themes
Overcoming nerves
Trusting others
Understanding hospital procedures
Leo is a little nervous about getting his tonsils out – even more so when he realises he is in an animal hospital! But the hospital staff take great care of Leo. He gets to eat ice-cream, watch TV, explore the hospital – and he even makes a friend! Maybe going to hospital isn’t so scary after all.

About the Author
Maureen Fergus is an award-winning author of books for kids of all ages. Her picture books include *The Day My Mum Came to Kindergarten*, *The Reptile Club* and the Buddy and Earl series. She lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba with her husband, three kids and Buddy the Wonder Dog.

About the Illustrator
Kathryn Durst is a graduate of Sheridan College in Ontario, Canada. With a background in animation, she has interned with Pixar Animation Studios in addition to working with various children’s book publishers. When she is not illustrating books like *Merry Christmas* and *Vlad the World’s Worst Vampire*, she may be found playing the accordion, growing vegetables, folk dancing, or putting on shadow puppet shows.

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THEMES

Overcoming nerves
Leo is nervous about his tonsil operation, and we see this in many illustrations. Leo moves through the hospital looking apprehensive and confused, and worries about ‘Dr Stan’s tiny size and lack of opposable thumbs’. These subtle indications of Leo’s nervousness at the start of the story help us to feel that we are journeying with him, and sharing in his emotions as he awaits his procedure. But Leo’s hospital experience goes smoothly, and we see him smiling and making friends after his operation. This shows young readers that nervous feelings can disappear in time.

Trusting others
Leo’s hospital experience teaches him to trust in others. Leo realises that his family has entered the animal hospital, and tries to alert them to this mistake. He’s even more confused when his dad reassures him that they are in the right place! Leo is at first bewildered that he is being greeted and treated by animals, but he follows their lead, and ends the book thanking them for taking care of him. Leo’s journey will show young readers to trust in other people, even if they are different to how you expected them to be.

Understanding hospital procedures
You’re in Good Paws is set within a hospital. Sure, it might technically be a hospital for animals, but it has all of the staff and hallmarks that you’d expect from a typical hospital. We move through the hospital with Leo, from checking-in at reception, waiting to be called into surgery, being examined pre-op, being anesthetised, waking up with a sore throat and being treated to ice-cream and jelly, and even making friends with fellow patients. Young readers who are scared of going into hospital will be reassured by this book, which demystifies hospital procedures and depicts them as simple and even friendly experiences. The book’s use of comical events, such as Leo being pampered, and the various funny signs and characters shown in the background, will help young readers to see the humour in a potentially daunting procedure.
DISCUSSION POINTS

• Take a look at the cover of this book. What do you think this story is going to be about? Discuss your ideas with the class. Here are some clues: the book’s main character, Leo, has a cone around his neck, and there is a sheep carrying ‘get well soon’ balloons.

• Can you spot the two types of hospital on page two? One of the hospitals is an animal hospital. Do you know the name for this type of hospital?

• There are many animals in this book! Count how many different animals are featured. Did you include all of the animals in the photographs and pictures on the walls?

• Which is your favourite animal in this book, and why?

• Leo is going for an operation to remove his tonsils. How do you think Leo would be feeling before this operation? Are there any hints at how Leo is feeling at the beginning of the book, either in words or in the pictures?

• Towards the end of the book, Leo leaves the hospital feeling happy; he isn’t nervous anymore. Why do you think Leo feels happy when he leaves the hospital?

• Leo is cared for by many hospital staff. Describe some of the jobs that characters do in this book. Were there any jobs that you’ve never heard of before?

• Leo has foods like ice-cream, jelly and icy poles after his operation. Why would he eat food like this after his surgery? What would be your ideal treat be if you were in Leo’s position?

• There are lots of funny signs in the background of pictures in this book! Can you spot any of these signs? Tell a friend which was your favourite, and why.

• Leo is originally confused and a bit worried about his operation because the hospital staff are all animals. But Leo has a great experience at hospital. What do you think Leo learned from this experience?

• Usually people in hospitals are given ‘get well soon’ presents such as balloons, cards and grapes. Can you spot any gifts given to hospital patients in this book? Are there any unusual objects that patients have in their rooms?

• There is lots of activity happening around Leo! What is the funniest moment that happens in the background of this story?
ACTIVITIES

Activity One: Find the words!
These 12 words feature in You’re in Good Paws. Can you find them all? Clue: the words are hidden horizontally and vertically!

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\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
  L & E & O & Y & S & U & R & G & E & R & Y & B \\
  O & P & E & R & A & T & I & O & N & D & F & L \\
  O & B & S & E & R & V & A & T & I & O & N & A \\
  J & A & M & A & L & T & H & R & O & A & T & N \\
  N & U & R & S & E & G & R & O & G & G & Y & K \\
  H & O & S & P & I & T & A & L & Q & O & V & E \\
  U & P & O & R & D & E & R & L & Y & I & Z & T \\
  E & X & A & M & I & N & A & T & I & O & N & O \\
\end{array}
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Blanket  
Examination  
Groggy  
Hospital  
Jamal  
Observation

Orderly  
Leo  
Nurse  
Operation  
Surgery  
Throat
Activity Two: Spot the difference!
There are 12 differences between these two pictures. Print this page in colour to spot them all!
Activity Three: Story time!
It’s your turn to form a group and write a story together! *You’re in Good Paws* sees Leo go to hospital for a tonsil operation. When Leo gets to the hospital, all of the staff and the patients are animals! Can you think of a story about an unusual hospital experience? First, think of a reason for your main character to go to hospital. Maybe they need a tonsillectomy like Leo, or perhaps they have a broken arm or a fractured foot. Then, when your character gets to the hospital, weird and wonderful things start to happen ...

Activity Four: Design a doctor
Leo is operated on by Dr Stan, a tiny mouse! If a mouse can be a doctor, surely anyone can! It’s your turn to imagine a new doctor for Leo’s story. Perhaps your doctor is a leopard, or an emu, or a kangaroo? Draw your new doctor and give them a name. Remember to include your doctor’s trusty stethoscope!