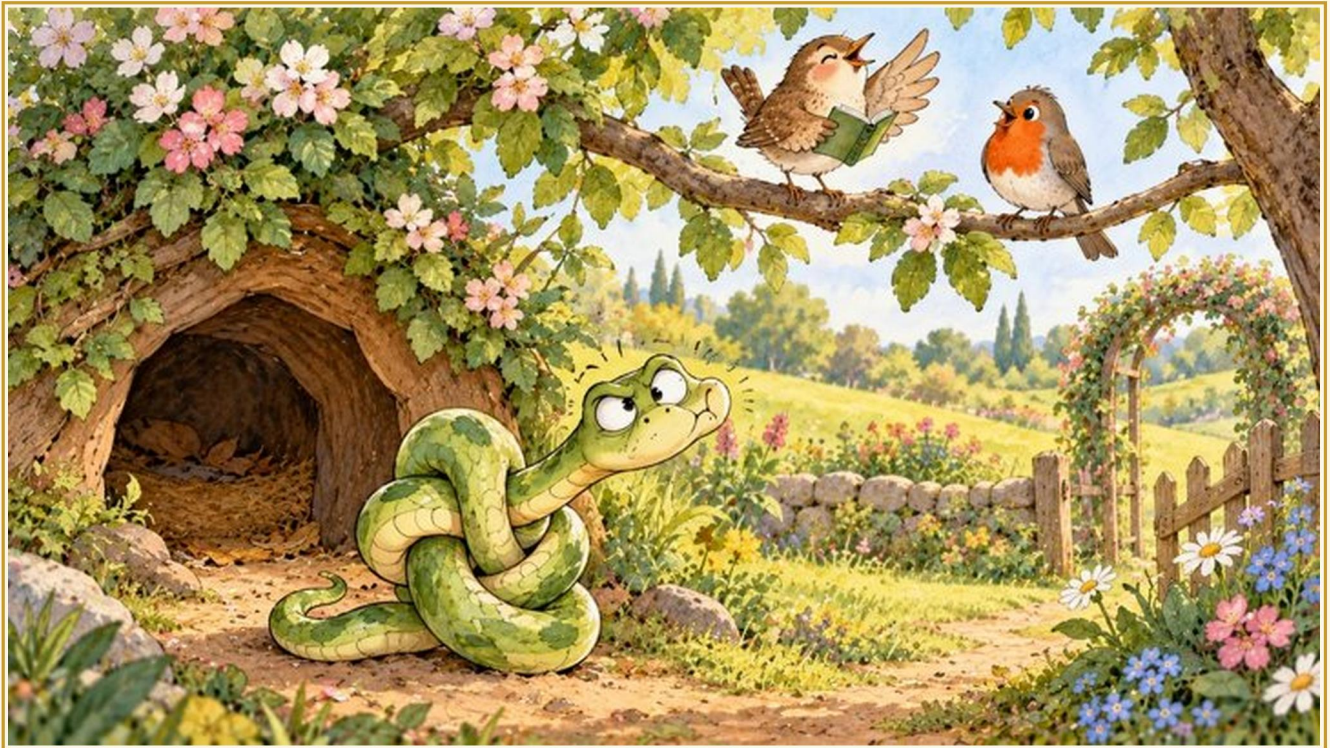




PRINTABLE LESSON

The Jealous Snake

A lesson in what holding on too tightly does to a friendship



One complete lesson from The Sing Me a Fable Lesson Book

Ages 4 to 8 . Printable . 26 lessons in the full book

singmeafable.com



The Jealous Snake

Fable J from Sing Me a Fable – a lesson in what holding on too tightly does to a friendship

AGE	LENGTH	SUBJECT	GROUP
4–7 (Pre-K to Year 2)	30–40 minutes	PSHE · SEL · Speaking	Whole class, then pairs

Learning objective

Children understand that a friend is not a possession, and that guarding a friendship from other people is the surest way to lose it.

You will need

The fable, read aloud A paper wren Four other paper birds A small open box Poster J to colour

The box is the snake's den. It must be a box with no lid, so the class can see that the wren was never actually trapped.

Before the story

4 minutes

Put the paper wren in the open box and stand the four other birds a little way off, facing it, where everybody can see them.

Ask: “Can you keep a friend by holding on to them?”

Then: “Keep your answer. We will see where the wren is at the end.”

Read the fable

5 minutes

Read fable J aloud. Move one of the four birds further away every time the snake hisses or chases somebody off, and say nothing about it while you read.

By the third stanza the four birds are as far away as the room allows and the wren is alone in an open box, which is the moment before she flies. Do not explain it.

Talk about it

10 minutes

1. The snake really did love the wren. So what did he get wrong?
2. The wren could have flown at any time. Why did she stay as long as she did?
3. What is the difference between wanting to be with someone and wanting to keep them?

Question 3 is the whole lesson and five-year-olds can reach it. Give them time. The answers they give are usually about doors and boxes, which is exactly right.

Main activity: The open box

12 minutes

1. Put the wren back in the box and the four birds back close by.
2. Read a situation from the teacher's sheet. Each has a holding answer and an opening one.
3. The class votes, hands up, hold or open. The class decides, not you.
4. Open: every bird stays close. Hold: one bird moves away and does not come back.
5. After the third situation, ask the class who the wren has left to sing to.
6. At the end, take the wren out of the box and ask where she would choose to sit.

Do not let this become about a real friendship in the room, and do not ask who has ever felt like the snake. Every child has, which is why the answer must stay on the paper birds.

Plenary

4 minutes

“The snake never once hurt the wren. So why did she fly away?”



Play it together

Put the game on the board. At every choice, stop, let the class vote, then press the card they chose.



Scan to play

OPEN IT

singmeafable.com/arcade/sly-the-jealous-snake

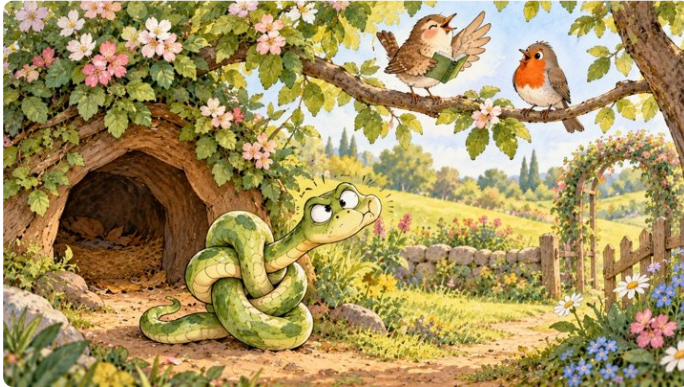
UNLOCK WORDS

WAITING FOR

CHOICES

6, about 2 minutes of play

Level 1 · The Cozy Den



The New Singer

- A Hiss and snap your tail to chase the robin away.
- B Unknot yourself and hum along with both birds. ✓



Chasing Friends Away

- A Wiggle out of the twigs and say sorry for it. ✓
- B Coil around her bush and refuse to share her.

Level 2 · The Lonely Coil



The Empty Branch

- A Slam your tail down and pout at the empty sky.
- B Sigh, slither down, and feel how lonely this is. ✓



The Meadow Gate

- A Bow your head and hold out a berry for everyone. ✓
- B Grab Willa's tail feathers and pull her away.



The last level, and what to ask

The tick marks the choice that earns the stars. Keep this page to yourself while the class votes.

Level 3 · The Open Circle



Welcoming New Friends

A Block their duet with your tail and demand attention.

B Tap a steady beat on the hollow log with your tail. ✓



The Sunlit Harmony

A Lie in a gentle loop and let Willa land on you. ✓

B Coil into a tight ball and hiss at every bird.

Ask at every choice

Before pressing: “Which card would you press, and why?”

After it plays out: “What changed because of that choice? What would the other card have done?”

How it joins the lesson

The main activity, **The open box**, takes the same lesson off the screen and into the room. Play the game first, so the class has already watched both kinds of choice play out before they make one themselves.

Every choice plays out and nothing is timed, so a wrong vote is something to talk about, not a failure. Stars at the end of each level show how many right choices the class made.



Six situations to vote on

Read the left column aloud only. The right column is what opening up sounds like.

THE SITUATION, AS THE CLASS HEARS IT	WHAT TRUST SOUNDS LIKE
Your best friend is playing with somebody else today.	"Can I play too?"
A new child wants to join you and your friend.	"Come on. We are doing this."
Your friend was invited somewhere and you were not.	"Have a good time. Tell me about it."
Somebody else made your friend laugh.	"What was funny? Tell me it again."
Your friend sat next to somebody else at lunch.	"I will sit here. See you after."
You want your friend to say you are their best friend.	"I like playing with you."

The last one is the hardest and the most useful. Wanting to be chosen is normal. Demanding to be chosen is the snake.

The line, in one sentence

A friend is not a thing you can hold. The tighter the grip, the sooner the flight.

Give the class that sentence at the end, never at the beginning.

Adapting for your class

Age 4 · Pre-K. Three situations, and use a toy bird a child can actually hold and then let go of.

Ages 5–7 · K to Year 2. Run it as written.

Ages 7–8 · Year 3. Add the hard case: is it ever fair to feel jealous? It is, and naming the feeling without acting on it is the thing worth practising at eight.

Mixed ages: pair an older child with a younger one and give the older one the job of asking, not answering.

What children take away

- **The snake loved her.** Jealousy grows out of caring, not out of hate, and that is why it fools people.
- **The box had no lid.** She was never trapped, so she was always going to leave.
- **Chasing others off empties the room.** Then the friend has nobody to stay for.
- **Space keeps people.** The last two lines of the fable say it better than any lesson can.

If you have more time

- **Colour the poster.** While they work, ask what the snake could have said the first time the wren made a new friend.
- **Sing it.** The fable's song with on-screen words runs about 90 seconds.
- **Play it.** In the browser game the child chooses whether the snake hisses at the birds or makes room.

Where this fits

One of twenty-six lessons, one for each letter and one character trait each. A week at a time, the set covers a school year. All twenty-six songs and the printable posters are free at singmeafable.com.

Curriculum links. PSHE and SEL: friendship, jealousy, trust, sharing people. Speaking and listening: justifying a choice, naming feelings. Literacy: letter recognition, traditional tales, cause and effect.