



# BEAR IS A BEAR

WRITTEN BY  
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By Jonathan Stutzman · Illustrated by Dan Santat

## About the Book

Do you remember your favorite stuffed animal from childhood? In this story, a little girl shares all her childhood experiences, both the good and the bad, with her best friend, Bear. But what happens to Bear when the little girl grows up? This poignant story pays tribute to imagination, emotion, friendship, and love. And, of course, to teddy bears everywhere!

## Discussion Questions

- When the mother gives the baby girl her new bear, how does the girl feel? How do you know?
- Did the mother give the baby a real, live bear? If not, why do the pictures show a real bear?
- How does the baby interact with Bear?
- When she becomes a little older, does she interact with Bear in the same way? If not, how does it differ?
- When is Bear a protector? An artist? An explorer?
- What happens as the girl grows up?
- Where is Bear when the author writes that “Bear is a memory”?
- How much time do you think has passed when “Bear is remembered”?
- What happens to Bear when the little girl is an adult?

## Extension Activities

**Life Is a Picnic.** Invite the children to bring their favorite teddy bear, doll, or stuffed animal to school for a picnic. First, have the children introduce their fluffy friend to their classmates. The children can design a name plate or a placemat for their stuffed animal, and then everyone can enjoy a treat together. At the picnic, read aloud books about teddy bears, including this one!

**Build a Bear.** Have the children make their own stuffed bear. First, give them a large piece of paper (at least 12”x18”) and have them fold it in half. They should outline the shape of their bear and then color and draw in details such as the ears, snout, mouth, fur, and paws. Then have them cut out the animal. Since the paper is folded, the children will be cutting two pieces of paper. Then they should take the bottom piece of paper and turn it over. Have the children draw the details that are on the back of a bear (e.g., fur, tail, back of the ears), and then flip it back over so it lines up with the front side. Help the children begin stapling the two pieces together around the edge. When they are more than half of the way around, they should tear small pieces of newspaper, tissue paper, cotton, or other material and stuff it between the two pieces. Once their bear is filled and puffy, they should finish stapling around the edge. The children can now enjoy their new stuffed friend!

**Good Times.** This story spans many years and includes milestones in the little girl’s life, such as getting her favorite stuffed animal as a baby, developing a love of art, science, and reading, going to school, and becoming a mother herself. Explain what a timeline is and how it shows milestones or important events in a person’s life. Tell the children that they will be creating a timeline of their own by including milestones such as when they were born, when they learned to walk and talk, when they started school, when they got their first pet, or when their siblings were born. (The children might need to prepare for this project by asking their parents about when their milestones occurred.) There are many ways to create a timeline, but one suggestion is to give the children several index cards and have them illustrate a milestone on each card and label it. Then string, clip, or staple the cards together to create the timeline.

**A Beary Good Story.** Ask the children to think about an anecdote that includes one of their favorite teddy bears, dolls, or stuffed animals. Discuss the structure of a personal narrative story (opening sentence, details, temporal words to indicate the order of events, closing sentence) and model writing a narrative with the children. Then have the children write their own personal narratives about their stuffed animal. Young children can dictate their story to an adult and then illustrate it; older children can write and illustrate the story independently. Have the children share their stories with each other.

