

Crash Boom Splash

Paul Sutherland

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Crash Boom Splash is an engaging story of family love and friendship that shows what can happen when that love and caring are extended to the wider world.

In Paul Sutherland's beautifully illustrated children's book, *Crash Boom Splash*, two sweet, happy girls with rings on their fingers and bells on their toes—one even has a spot on her nose—learn the concept of tolerance in a warm, gentle way, spiced with adventure and lots of fun.

The girls love playing games, interacting with the plants and animals that surround their African village, and listening to their grandmother's stories of dragons, heroes, and African queens. Each story ends with Grandmother teaching them a new word.

One day, the word is "tolerance," and Grandmother does her best to explain how other people might have customs, habits, and ideas that are different from their own. The girls are polite but quickly grow tired of being indoors for the lesson. Thanking their grandmother, they go out to play.

Soon the girls have an adventure that brings them hands-on experience with children who look different from them: no rings, no bells, no spot on the nose; even their clothing is strange. But a sudden crash, boom, and splash has them all laughing and playing together, their differences forgotten.

This wise, fun book handles a first encounter with diversity in a way that's both honest and graceful. The children move from surprise and discomfort to the realization that, beneath their differences, they all enjoy the same things. It also highlights two distinct ways of learning—the grandmother's more didactic approach and the experiential learning that life has a way of providing. It gives honor and value to each.

The bright, colorful watercolor illustrations perfectly capture the playful spirit of the rhyming text as well as the chaos of the adventure that brings the children together. And, just like the lessons at the end of Grandmother's stories, the book concludes with a brief lesson, this one on hygiene. Helpful suggestions for using the book as a learning tool, and for having a rollicking good time reading aloud, are designed to add to the fun.

Crash Boom Splash is an engaging story of family love and friendship that shows what can happen when that love and caring are extended to the wider world. It also teaches adults how reading aloud to children touches their minds and hearts, enhances their intelligence, and paves the way for success in learning and in life.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January 26, 2018)

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