

Read With a Friend

by Karen Antikajian

In my third grade classroom, I scheduled a “Read with a Friend” time once a month. The students could bring a “friend” (such as a stuffed animal) to school for a free choice quiet reading time. If students didn’t bring a friend, they could borrow one of the many stuffed book characters that perched next to books on shelves all around the room. (This was the only time they could take them from their places on the bookcases and shelves.)

If students thought their “friends” could be quiet and not distract anyone, they were invited to join the class during instruction time. Those who couldn’t abide by these rules were banished to owners’ backpacks until the official time.

During the 30-50 minute reading time, students found a favorite book or two, settled in a quiet place, and snuggled down with their friends for an enjoyable time. Often they would read very softly and discuss the story with the quiet bundle of fluff in their arms.

Variations

- Students bring blankets, sleeping bags, etc. and “Snuggle Down and Read.” Older students like this! You may want to do it less often and for a longer period of time. Be prepared! They may need to bring a snack to sustain them during a longer time :-)
- Allow time at the end for all students (or just volunteers) to share a few sentences about the books they have been reading. It may encourage others to read these books, too.

