



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Pre-school/ Lower primary
(ages 2+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Early numeracy
- Early literacy
- Creativity, imagination, reflexivity & connection.
- Resilience, autonomy and interdependence

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To discuss new vocabulary and respond to texts
- To learn to identify numbers and colours
- A counting resource
- To use the text as a springboard for cross curricular teaching, such as the visual artworks and design.

THEMES

- Christmas
- Counting
- Colours
- Celebrations/traditions

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 978 0 14377 722 9 (hardback)

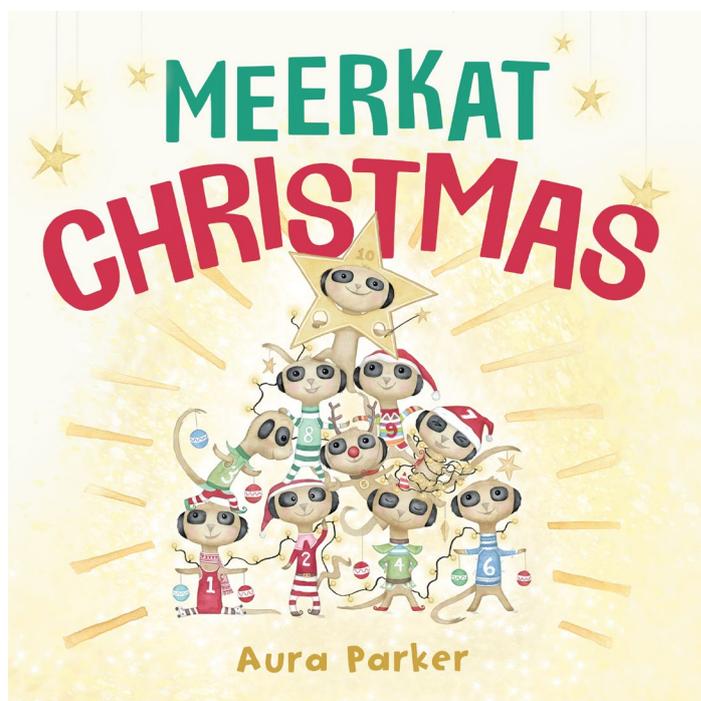
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Meerkat Christmas

Aura Parker



PLOT SUMMARY

From the award-winning author-illustrator of the delightful *Meerkat Splash*, *Goodnight, Glow Worms* and *The Silly Seabed Song*, comes a bright, fun Christmas book for the very young, brimming with bouncing rhyme.

*Hip hooray! It's Christmas Day!
Come on, Meerkats, let's all play.
Jumping, leaping, up, up up!
Meerkat pup on pup on pup.*

Join our ten Meerkat friends as they play a wobbly Christmas game. But who makes them CRASH?!

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Aura Parker is an illustrator, writer and designer who creates delightful picture books, prints and textiles. Her work is joyful, imaginative and brimming with details to explore. Aura Parker's storytelling through words and pictures inspires imagination, courage and confidence in young readers.

Aura works with watercolour, gouache, pen and coloured pencil, both by hand and using a mix of digital drawing techniques. She works from a studio in Sydney. *Meerkat Christmas* is her fourth picture book with Penguin Random House, following the delightful companion book *Meerkat Splash* and the equally fun and playful *Goodnight Glow Worms* and *The Silly Seabed Song*.

CREATOR'S INSPIRATION

Meerkat Christmas is my second meerkat book, a sister book to *Meerkat Splash*. As you can probably guess, I really LOVE meerkats. They are adorable, fluffy cuteness and the way they stand and move has so much personality – perfect for illustrating!

I very much enjoy writing in rhyme and illustrating – and try to fill the pictures with as much movement, fun and joy as I can.

As this is the second meerkat adventure, I was already familiar with my meerkat characters and knew how to draw them so the book was quicker to make than my other books where I had to invent the whole imaginary world from scratch.

I have painted an underpainting in watercolour on watercolour paper and worked over it in Photoshop, so it is both by hand and digital illustration. I want my meerkats to be expressive, clear and bright so it is easy for my young reader to engage with the story. I hope you enjoy it, the ending makes me smile every time!

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Meerkats in Nature

Meerkats are organised creatures, native to Africa and part of the mongoose family. Aura has always been fascinated by their social structure, and how they live in cooperative groups called a 'mob'.

One of the group will act as a 'sentry' meerkat and stand guard to watch over the younger ones. The sentry will be watching out for danger and warn everybody so they can run and hide if a predator like a snake or an eagle is near.

So Aura's meerkats are also always looking after each other.

Early Literacy

Cover

Read the writing on the back of the book (sometimes called the 'blurb').

- What do you think the book will be about? Do you have any questions? Are those questions answered in the story?
- Who will be the main characters?

Anthropomorphism

Aura thinks of her characters as being like little children, which is something called **anthropomorphism** (that's a very big word!!) This is when an animal is given human characteristics.

Aura's meerkats are wearing clothes and playing a super fun game on Christmas Day with their family.

- Can you think of other favourite stories, TV shows or movies that have animal characters doing human things? [e.g. Bluey, Peppa Pig, Giraffe in the Bath, Where is the Green Sheep, Zootopia, Sing]
- Draw your favourite animal and include something to give it human characteristics or have it doing something that a human would do (like driving a car or sitting at a table).

Rhyme

The book is written in rhyming couplets, which are sets of two lines where the last word of the first line rhymes with the last word of the second line. It gives the story pace and rhythm.

- Can you make up a rhyming couplet about a meerkat?

Early Numeracy

Read the story again, asking the children to try to remember as much as they can about each numbered meerkat. Then ask some of these questions:

- Which number meerkats jump out of the parcels?
- Which one has its number on its hat?
- Which number meerkat is wearing roller skates?
- What number is the meerkat dressed as a reindeer?
- How does meerkat four first appear?
- What is meerkat eight doing when we first see it



- Which meerkat puts the lights in the Christmas tree?
- Which meerkat loves Christmas puddings?
- Find each meerkat in order in their tower – counting from 1 to 10, and you could even try counting backwards from 10 to 1!
- Which meerkat sneezes (and what happens when it does)?
- Which number meerkat is being tickled at the end?

Visual Literacy Discussion

- Take a look at the colours Aura has used throughout the story. As this is a Christmas story, what are the colours used in the book that are often associated with Christmas?
- What colours does 'rainbow elf' have in its costume?
- What are the meerkats trying to build by climbing on top of each other? (Hint: what has a star on top at Christmas time?!)
- Apart from the numbers on the meerkats, how else can we tell each one apart?
[Hint: Write 1 to 10 down on the board and ask the class to name some of the distinguishing characteristics of each character.]
- See if you can name all the meerkats by number on the 'CRASH' spread. [Some don't have their numbers showing, so you'll have to use your other clues to work it out!]

Creativity & Imagination

Aura Parker often illustrates elaborate endpapers with lots of details to explore. The endpapers are used to bind the cover to the internal printed pages when the book is being printed. Aura often uses the extra pages the endpapers offer to extend the imaginary world of the book, and to set the scene.

- What is happening in these endpapers? How are the endpapers at the front different to the back?
- Try to find all the different number meerkats in both the front and back endpapers? These might be even harder to figure out!
- Apart from this book (of course!), what is your favourite Christmas story? Describe to your classmates what it's about. Why is it special to you?

Resilience, Autonomy & Interdependence

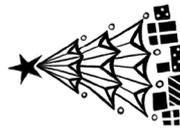
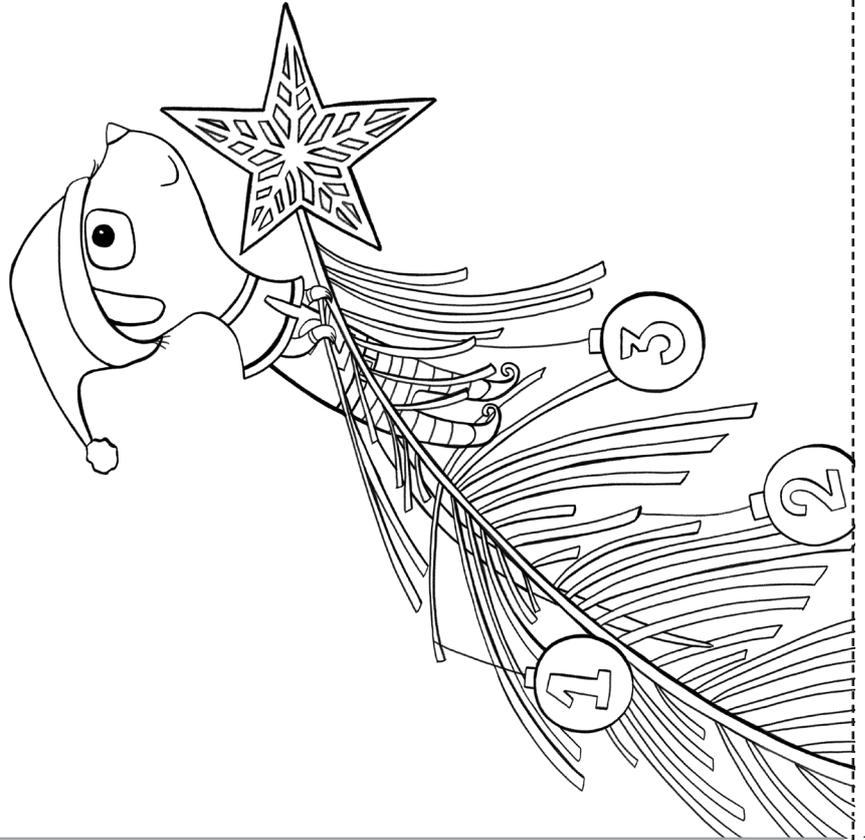
- Look at the way the meerkats build their tower (with a wide base). Using blocks or similar items, build a tower as high as you can.
- The meerkats work as a team to build their tower. What are some of the things you can only do with the help of others? [play sport, play a team game, carry something that's heavy or big etc]
- What do you notice about all the meerkats after they fall?
- How do you feel when you make a mistake, have an accident or break something?
- What are some of the things that can help you to feel better?



Meerkat Christmas Card

Colour me in and cut me out!

**MEERKAT
CHRISTMAS**

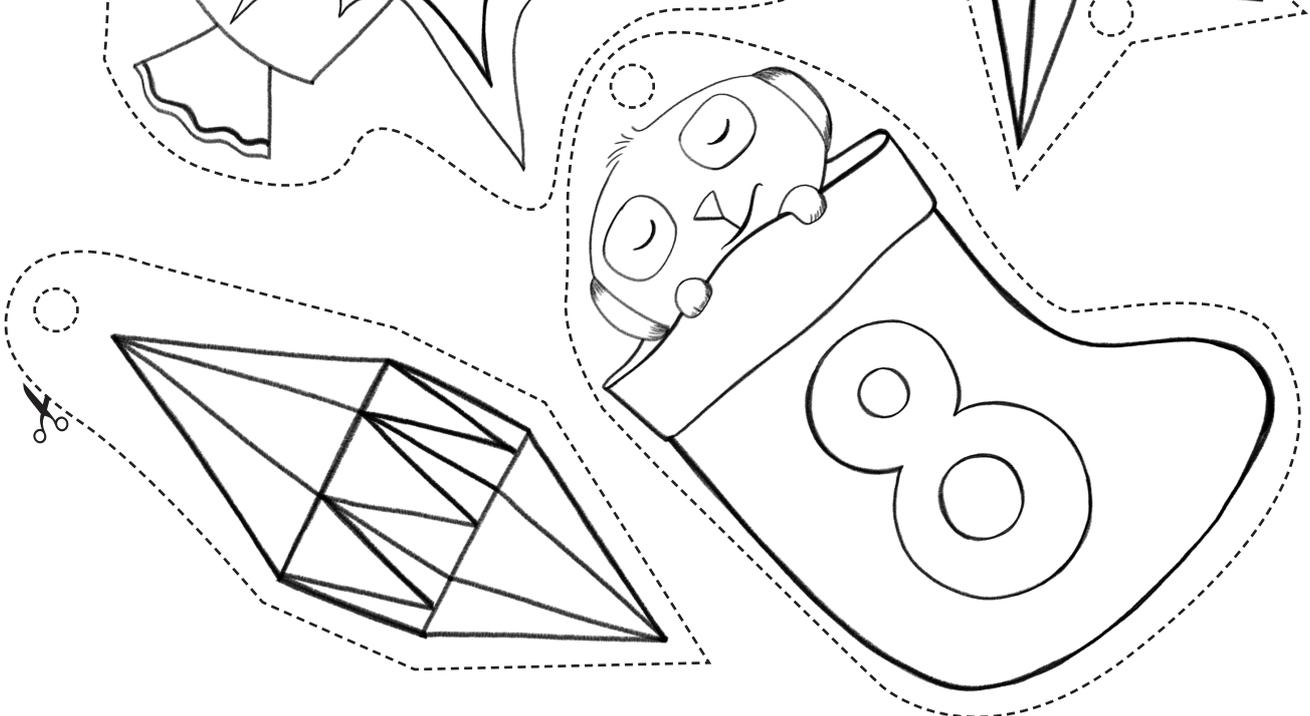
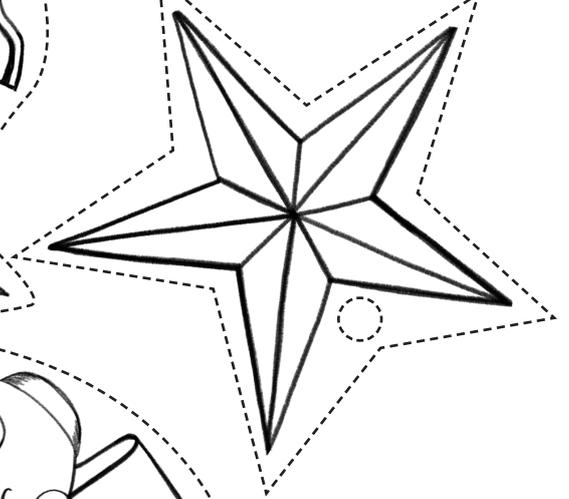
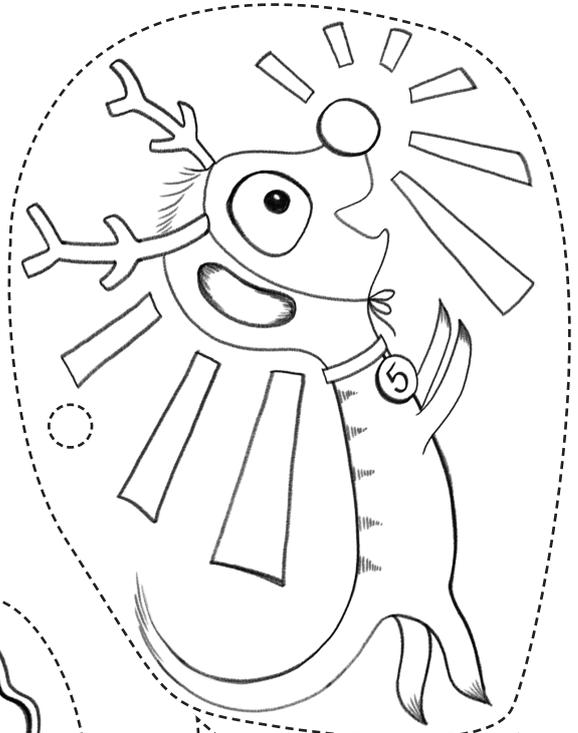
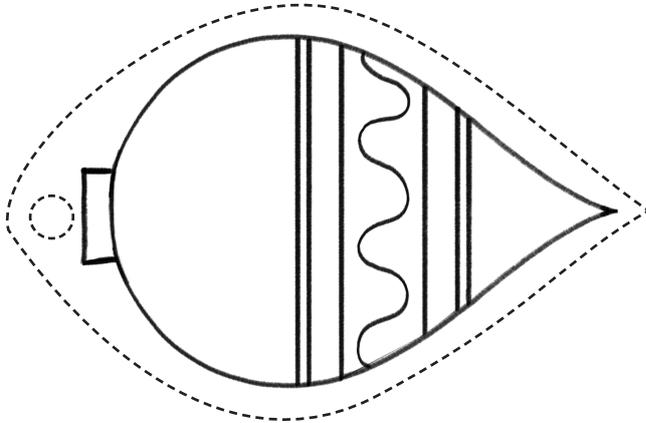


THIS CARD WAS MADE BY _____



Meerkat Christmas Decorations

Colour me in and cut me out!

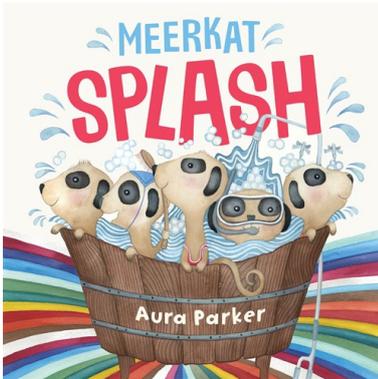


Meerkat Christmas



Coloured by _____

FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

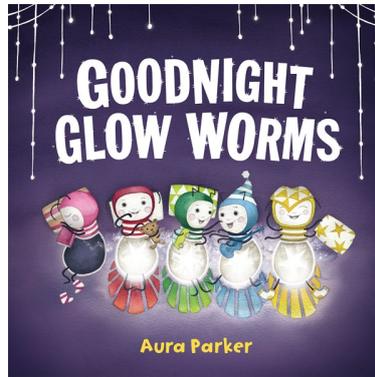


Meerkat Splash
by Aura Parker

*Meerkats cleaning, washing.
Woooo! Slipping, sliding,
swimming too.*

Follow Meerkat Red into the burrow and join all the colourful meerkat friends for one big crazy bath time! But who makes the biggest MEERKAT SPLASH?

Aura Parker's playful rhyme and energetic illustrations combine to create the perfect picture book for the very young about colours and bath time.

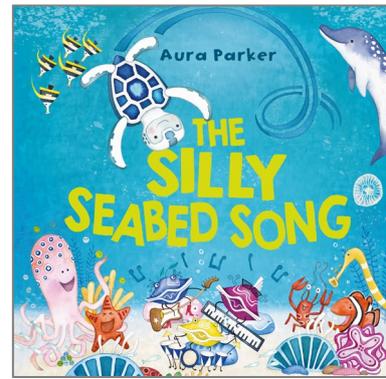


Goodnight Glow Worms
by Aura Parker

*Goodnight, Glow Worms, shining
bright,
Time to dim your Glow Worm
light.
Glow Worms gleaming, beaming
round,
Can't switch off and can't wind
down.*

From the creator of the delightful *Meerkat Splash* comes a cuddly, snuggly bedtime book for the very young, full of joyous, playful illustrations and bouncing rhyme - with a perfect ending to send little ones happily off to sleep.

Teachers' resources available.



The Silly Seabed Song
by Aura Parker

*Way down deep, under the sea,
Can you hear it? Can it be?
Jelly flubber! Wobbly gong!
It's the Silly Seabed Song!*

The Rock Oysters sing the Silly Seabed Song to help send the sea creatures to sleep, but the crazy words are too much fun and it just makes them all laugh instead! Little Turtle Hatchling Fred just wants to rest his head, but how will he ever get to sleep?

Aura Parker's playful rhyme and energetic illustrations combine to create the perfect picture book for the very young about the sea and bedtime.

Teachers' resources available.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	AGE	RRP	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Meerkat Christmas (hardcover)	Aura Parker	9780143777229	2+	\$19.99		
Meerkat Splash (hardcover)	Aura Parker	9780143792895	2+	\$19.99		
Goodnight Glow Worms (hardcover)	Aura Parker	9780143792918	2+	\$24.99		
The Silly Seabed Song (hardcover)	Aura Parker	9781760899394	2+	\$19.99		
TOTAL						

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