

Let's talk about Stellaluna

By Janell Cannon

Stellaluna is about a baby bat that gets separated from its mother and lands in a bird's nest. She makes some new friends and learns that they can be both similar and different.



At first glance, this book may seem intimidating because it is longer and has a lot of action to describe, but don't panic. If you don't remember some of the signs in the moment, use gestures or refer to the pictures. Sometimes you may even find yourself describing more on one page or explaining something that isn't in the story because your child has asked a question. And this is just what is recommended. One of the principles for reading with your deaf child offered by the Le Clerc Centre's Shared Reading Project is to **"elaborate on the text"**. You can see an example of this on the DVD where Stellaluna is clumsily practicing to sit like a bird on a branch. The text just says, "How embarrassing!", but Kathy expands on the words to show how it is embarrassing. She describes how Stellaluna clammers this way and that over the branch struggling to stay on it. This is similar to how the author/illustrator uses four pictures to depict Stellaluna's attempts. So if you feel it is necessary to describe more than what the text actually says follow that instinct!

Once you and your child are familiar with the story of *Stellaluna*, look at the small black and white pictures above the words to see what mama bat does when she loses Stellaluna.

Let's Be Together

Same or Different

Learning to identify what things are alike and what things are different is an important early learning skill. This book lends itself to talking about the similarities and differences between bats and birds. To get you started, here is a little ASL rhyme that uses variations of the 1-handshape or index finger.

Bird, Bird
Bat, Bat
Same
Bird, Bird
Bat, Bat
Different



Different



Same

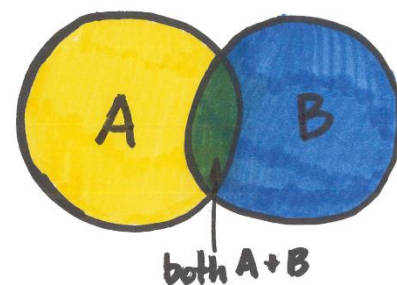


Comparing Bats and Birds

Now you can learn about the similarities and differences of bats and birds using a Venn diagram. The Venn diagram in this tipsheet has a circle for each animal's characteristics—bats and birds. Where the circles overlap is for the things that bats and birds have in common.

Print the Venn diagram and the page of characteristics.

There is also a page of questions and signs that you could use to do this activity with your child. Ask your child, for example, "Eat what?" Then look at the characteristics and find what birds eat and what bats eat. Glue the pictures in the part of the circle with only that animal. If it is something both bats and birds do, put it in the middle where the circles overlap. When you are finished, look at your diagram and you can see some things bats and birds do that are the same and some that are different!



Venn Diagram Comparing Bats and Birds

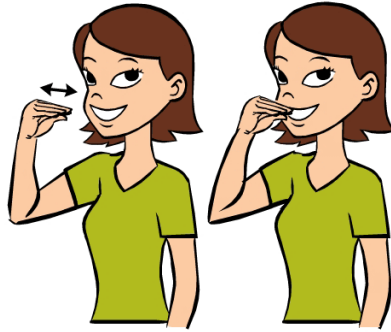


Both

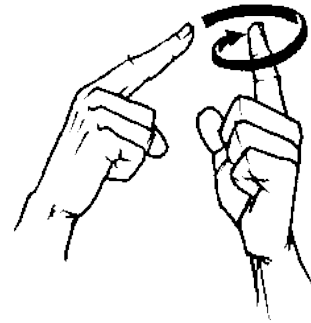


ASL Signs for Comparing Bats and Birds

Eat What?



Sleep When?



Sit Where?



Fly How?



Characteristics to Compare Bats and Birds

Insects



Fruit



Day



Night



Hang from branch



Sit on branch



Wings



Can you think of any other things that you learned about bats and birds that are the same or different? Maybe which animal can see in the dark? Add them to the Venn diagram.

Let's Play Together

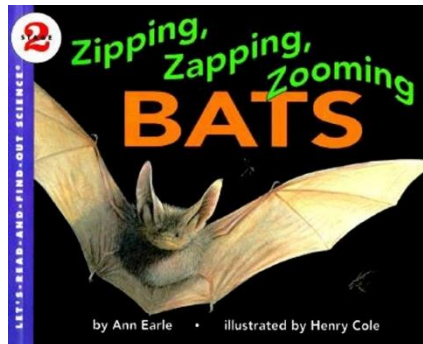
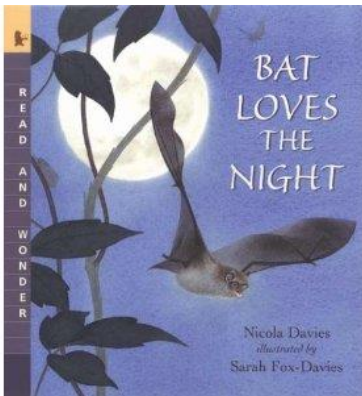
(Inspired by: ourcraftsnthings.com)

How did Stلالuna's mother know it was her baby when she found her among all the other bats? Mother bats use their sense of smell and their hearing to identify their own babies. You can play a little game with your child to practice using their sense of smell. Dip cotton balls in different things like vanilla, vinegar, coffee, etc. and place each scented cotton ball in a different cup. Have your child pick one to be their 'baby bat'. Then blindfold them and give them the cups with the cotton balls again and see if they can find their 'baby bat' by smelling it!



Read More About It!

At the back of the book, there is a section called "Bat Notes" where the author gives more facts about bats. If your child is still eager for more information, the following books are good choices.



If you liked *Stlaluna*, you may also enjoy these other books by Janell Cannon.

