



# Swimmy

*Leo Lionni*

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**Swimmy** Leo Lionni

**The gorgeous, Caldecott Honor-winning tale of a very clever fish by beloved picture book creator Leo Lionni.**

Deep in the sea lives a happy school of fish. Their watery world is full of wonders, but there is also danger, and the little fish are afraid to come out of hiding . . . until *Swimmy* comes along. *Swimmy* shows his friends how--with ingenuity and team work--they can overcome any danger.

Winner of the 1964 Caldecott Honor, this beloved tale of a brave little fish has been a favorite to generations of readers. To celebrate *Swimmy*'s fiftieth anniversary, we are issuing a handsome special edition hardcover that includes a bonus poster.

## Swimmy Details

Date : Published January 17th 2017 by Dragonfly Books (first published 1963)

ISBN : 9780399555503

Author : Leo Lionni

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Animals

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## From Reader Review *Swimmy* for online ebook

### **Kyle says**

I used this book to teach finding theme to my high school students. Some of them thought it was dumb, but a lot of them (who thought that it was dumb before we started) ended up actually liking it a lot.

It's a good book, and a good one to read with kids. It's a simple story, but told very well and it really does show the wonders of broadening your mind and being yourself and working together to get things done. It's a good book. It's worth reading, even if you only skim it in the book store.

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### **Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says**

A classic book on the theme of cooperation. Pairs nicely with Marcus Pfister's *The Rainbow Fish* and Al Clements' *Big Al*.

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### **Ronyell says**

I have heard works from Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak, Marc Brown and David Wiesner, but I have finally stumbled upon some works that came from my childhood a long time ago and those works consist of Leo Lionni! “Swimmy” is a Caldecott Honor book by Leo Lionni and it is about how an unusual little fish named Swimmy, who survives a giant fish attack, tries to find another family to live with. “Swimmy” may have an intense scene with the big fish that might frighten small children, but I am pretty sure that most children will easily enjoy this book!

Once there lived a happy school of small fish who were all red except for one fish was black and his name was Swimmy. One terrible day however, a huge tuna fish came by and swallowed up all of the red fish except for Swimmy who had escape from the huge tuna. Swimmy, now the sole survivor of a tuna attack, then swims around in the deep watery world by himself in order to find a new family to be in.

***Will Swimmy find a new family?***

***Read this book to find out!***

Never have I read a children's book that has both effective drawings and a heartwarming story at the same time as Leo Lionni has made this book! Leo Lionni has done an excellent job at both illustrating and writing this book as it details the adventures of a unique black fish named Swimmy. Leo Lionni's illustrations might look a little bit simplistic, however, they are extremely effective and colorful, especially of the images of the underwater world where it seems that Leo Lionni took a piece of sponge and patted the background with the painted sponge, which really brings out the creativity of the images of the underwater world. The image that truly stood out the most for me was the image of Swimmy himself as he is shown to be the only black fish among a group of red fishes, who merely look like red outlines of fish. Leo Lionni has certainly made this

book extremely intense yet heartwarming at the same time as I have felt sympathy for Swimmy after he lost his family to a tuna fish and I can understand how many children and adults will also sympathize with Swimmy's predicament, especially if they lost loved ones to an accident.

Parents should know that at the beginning of this book, Swimmy's family is eaten by a giant tuna fish and that might be too upsetting for smaller children to handle. On a side note, this scene strongly reminds me of a scene in "Finding Nemo" where Marlon's family except Nemo is also eaten by a huge fish and how Marlon has to cope with protecting his only son from anymore danger. Parents might want to discuss about death of a family member with their children before they read them this book.

Overall, "Swimmy" is a highly emotional and heartwarming book for children who have also lost their family members and how they can still find love among friends and other family members. I personally would recommend this book to anyone who loves Leo Lionni's works and learning about what it takes to be a true family. I would recommend this book to children ages five and up since the scene where the big fish eats all the other fish might scare smaller children.

**Review is also on: Rabbit Ears Book Blog**

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**Melissa says**

The illustration of this book is amazing and eye catching. I love the story of a little fish with his big idea. I also like the description of the ocean life that Swimmy sees. This is a great engaging book for the little people in our lives. The pictures can be discussed in detail and the lessons can go anyway the reader wants it to go.

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**Leigh Triplett says**

A cute book with watercolor pictures. It would be great for a sea unit since it covers different sea animals. This book also encourages problem solving.

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**Kassidy Pine says**

Swimmy by Leo Lionni is a creative book that demonstrates the story of a young fish named Swimmy who is a lone black fish with red brothers and sisters. Swimmy's sibling reach an unfortunate fate, causing him to be on his own. He goes on to discover the beauty of the sea, from the rainbow jelly, to the forest of seaweeds. He comes upon another school of red fish hidden away in the away in the shadows and he soon realizes he must find a way for these fish to swim freely in the open without being harmed. Swimmy's uniqueness help him solve the mystery of how to get his new school swimming freely once again.

The pictures demonstrated in the in this book all have calming colors. The artist used sponge colors as well as water color. He successfully uses stamps to his advantage with the red fish showing how uniform and identical they are while making the black fish colored in solid and different. He also uses lace for the sea weed and stamps over them with paint to add a soft dimension. The author successfully uses a circular plot structure by having Swimmy be apart of a school of fish in the beginning of the story, then he loses his group through the book, and finally at the end of the book with him reconnecting and becoming apart of a school of fish once again.

It is easy to identify the theme of the book of accepting the idea of working as a community. The book specifically highlights the advantages of cooperation with one and other in complete coherence, just as the fish do with little Swimmy. The plot of the book is specifically directed with accepting ones individuality and not being afraid to be the only black fish in a school of red.

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### **Michele says**

Great book for little ones!

- 1). Kids have fun trying to find the little black fish "swimmy" on each page. It reminds me of Where's Waldo.
- 2). The lesson of the story is uplifting. It doesn't matter how small you are, you can over come size objections, think about solutions, and be just as advantageous as the big.
- 3). Another lesson of the story is that life is not all about staying safe. Sometimes it's about having to take risks to live a little.

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### **Dolly says**

Cute story and fascinating, gorgeous illustrations. Again, Leo Lionni delves into the matter-of-factness of life and shows that one little fish can make a difference. We really enjoyed reading this book together.

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### **Kathryn says**

What an odd little book! It recounts the adventures of Swimmy after his school of fish is eaten and he seeks out to find a new one. Along the way, he meets other sea creatures. Some of the phrases are quite good, "and eel whose tail was almost too far away to remember" and some are quite dull, "a strange fish pulled by an invisible thread." The illustrations interesting but not altogether my cup of tea, though I appreciate their merits. Overall, not a favorite, but I'm glad I was able to read this classic.

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### **Jennifer Honahnie says**

Swimmy is a fish who lives in the sea where all the little fished were red except for him he was black and

swam faster than his brothers and sister. One day a big fish ate all the little red fish but not Swimmy. All alone he swam among the other creatures at the bottom of the sea, even strange fish pulled by invisible thread. He then came upon fish that looked just like his brothers and sisters and wanted to play. These fish did not want to play they were too afraid of getting eaten. Swimmy then tries to think of a way him and the other fish can swim in the sea without being eaten. This is a contemporary realistic book with a problem centered story, Swimmy saw how a fish ate his brothers and sister and he wanted to protect his new friends so he came up with a plan to keep them safe. He is the protagonist who helps his friends so that they do not have to hide in the seaweed and the shadows of the rocks.

The visual elements in this book begins on the cover and extend to the back of the book, it continues to the frontispiece and then on to the first page. The illustrations that cover this space are images from under the sea, it really makes you feel like you are there. I think the author incorporated this at the beginning to make you feel that you are swimming at the bottom of the ocean and to spark the reader's imagination. The illustrations are painted using a medium that shows texture, the colors that are being used are all earth tone colors which distinguishes the red fish from Swimmy. A stamping method is used to create the illustrations which also brings out the texture in the paint that can be seen on a flat picture book.

The plot of the book takes on a person to person conflict even though they are fishes. Swimmy has to find a way for the little fish to avoid being eaten by the big fish. He uses what he knows about the sea and the many types of sea creatures he had seen while swimming on the bottom of the ocean. The theme of the book is about conquering fears, the fish live in fear of being swallowed by the big fish so they hide in the shadows. Swimmy comes up with a plan for them to be able to swim during the day and chase the big fish away, he solves the problem and the fish are no longer afraid. I loved the story because it showed character growth, Swimmy learns from his experience and adventure to be able to think of a plan to fool the big fish. He didn't have to help the little red fish but he may have wanted to help them because of what happened to his brothers and sisters.

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### **Alexis Caudill says**

#### **1. Book summary, in your own words (3 pts)**

Swimmy is a Caldecott Honor Book. It is about a school of red fish and one black fish named Swimmy. When a dangerous fish comes, Swimmy gets away. He travels through the water noticing all kinds of different fish. He then gets a great idea to keep him and his school of fish safe.

#### **2. Grade level, interest level, lexile (1 pt)**

This would be a great book for children in Kindergarten to the 2nd grade. It would be very interesting for them and the words are easy to read.

#### **3. Appropriate classroom use (subject area) (1 pt)**

This would be a good book to read aloud to the class at story time. It could also give ideas for art projects.

#### **4. Individual students who might benefit from reading (1 pt)**

Any students who love fish would love this book.

#### **5. Small group use (literature circles) (1 pt)**

The students could definitely read this book aloud to each other in small groups.

#### **6. Whole class use (read aloud) (1 pt)**

This would definitely be a book that I would read aloud to my students. I think it would be a fun interactive book.

#### **7. Related books in genre/subject or content area (1 pt)**

Frederick by Leo Lionni  
A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni  
Fish is Fish by Leo Lionni

8. Multimedia connections (audio books, movie) available (1 pt)  
I found an ebook for this story.

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### **Mathew says**

Well, I clearly need to read more Leo Lionni. I really enjoyed *Swimmy* for its beautiful, Carle-like, painting style which young children will particularly love, but also for our plucky little hero! There is some lovely language in here to describe the various creatures *Swimmy* encounters and I can see children wanting to mimic and play with these similes and metaphors but for me, it was *Swimmy*'s cunning against the huge adversaries that won me over. A nice, simple story with a strong message. It might feel dated to us but I think children would love the huge double-page spreads of a world under the sea.

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### **Mahsa says**

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### **Kalley the Chipmunk says**

I liked the jellyfish

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### **Lauren Waters says**

I love the message of teamwork and the aquatic illustrations.

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