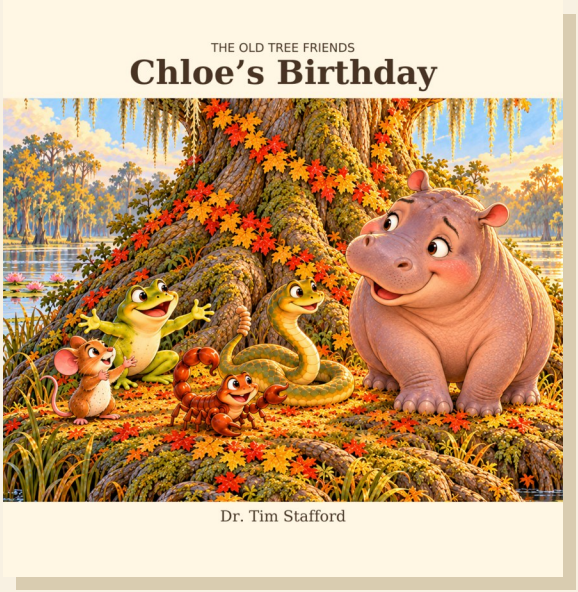
A FAMILY & CLASSROOM READING GUIDE

Read Together: Chloe’s Birthday

The Old Tree Friends · by Dr. Tim Stafford



Fall preparations keep the swamp friends busy. Tomorrow is Chloe’s birthday — has anyone remembered? Timothy the mouse pauses to listen, and soon Fred the frog, Ralph the scorpion, Simon the snake and Timothy create a celebration built on care and time together.

This guide offers suggested conversation starters for grown-ups reading with children in kindergarten through third grade. There are no right answers — follow your reader’s curiosity.

Before you read

- Look at the cover together. Who do you see? Where do you think they live?
- Talk about birthdays. What makes a day feel special to you?
- The book opens with a short note for grown-ups and ends with a conversation with Timothy. Read those pages together, too.

Book details

Series: The Old Tree Friends · Publisher: RUI Press for Kids
34-page full-color hardcover · 8.5 x 8.5 inches
ISBN 979-8-9933441-9-5 · For kindergarten–third grade and grown-ups reading along

Let’s talk about it

Suggested prompts for after reading. Choose one or two — short and real is plenty.

1. When did someone make time to listen to you? How did it feel?
2. Timothy notices something the others might have missed. What helps you notice how a friend is feeling?
3. How can you help someone feel included?
4. The friends bring unusual gifts. What is a gift you could give that doesn’t come from a store?
5. Being busy is normal. How can we still make room for the people we care about?
6. What kind of friend do you want to be?

Activity: A birthday-kindness card

Think of someone — a classmate, neighbor or family member — whose day you could brighten.

1. Fold a sheet of paper in half to make a card.
2. On the front, draw something that person enjoys.
3. Inside, finish this sentence: “I noticed that you…”
4. Choose a time to give it — and stay a little while to listen.

Classrooms: try making cards for a school helper, or start a “noticing” jar of kind moments.

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