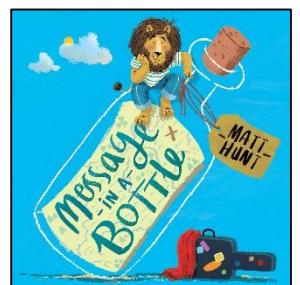




***Message in a Bottle***  
**Written and illustrated by**  
**Matt Hunt**

1 – Introducing the book

- Start with the picture of the lion on the introductory page, and ask the children to tell you how they think he is feeling. Why might that be? From his expression, what do you think the crab is thinking? What do you think would cheer the lion up? Talk as a class about the things that make you feel better when you're fed up, emphasising the importance of friendship and laughter. Suggest you could make the lion laugh by telling some jokes, and perhaps share some together.
- Now turn the page to look at the illustration of the newspaper pages in the gutter. Ask children which part of the picture really stands out. Look closely at the picture of the beach house, and talk about how its bright colour contrasts with all the grey puddles and rain. Read the headlines aloud. Would it make you feel happy or sad to read those?

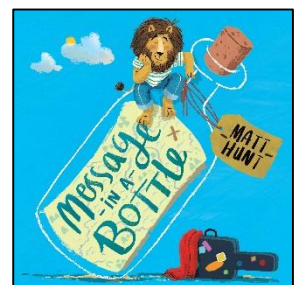




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1 – Introducing the book

- Look at the first page of the story where everyone is queuing for the bus. Talk about how you could use body percussion to represent these sounds, for example tapping on your leg or drumming your fingers to show the dripping of the rain or running the flat of your hand up and down your arm to make the shuffle sound. Talk about the other sounds you might hear on this busy street, such as the duck on his phone or someone splashing their feet in the puddles. Once you have read to the end of the story, contrast this first soundscape with the one on the beach – there is still hustle and bustle, bump and shuffle, honk and beep, but this time it's much more joyful! Why not create another soundscape together, this time using musical instruments or different clapping rhythms to convey the happy atmosphere.
- Draw a vertical line on the board with 'happy' at the top and 'sad' at the bottom. For each page in the story, make a dot to show where on the scale you would rate lion's mood. Then join the dots to give a very visual representation of how lion's mood changes through the story. Agree that sometimes you need a bit of quiet time to yourself, but having fun with friends always makes you feel better. Sometimes your friends might make you try activities or games you don't think you will like, but if you give them a try, you'll often find you enjoy them in the end.

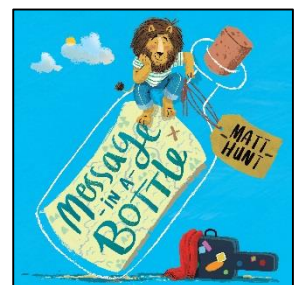




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2 – Beach Life

- Lion packs his bag ready to head off to his beach house. He takes his guitar and lots of strawberry smoothies. What would you put in your bag if you were going to a desert island? Play a memory game with children sitting in a circle. Taking it in turns, each child says: 'I packed my bag for the island, and in it I put a guitar, some strawberry smoothies and...' adding one item to the list. However, before they can add their own item on, they must first remember and list all the other items that have previously been said.
- Lion has to travel a long way to get to his beach house, taking planes, trains and automobiles. Set up your role play area as a travel agency, with lots of holiday catalogues available for children to flick through. They could design posters to advertise their favourite holiday destinations, and make passports that have to be stamped with the places they have visited. Include a large world map and use it to help them identify different holiday locations.
- Provide sand trays in which children can create their own dream island. They might choose to include seashells, bits of driftwood, a sea made from glittery cellophane, palm trees from lolly sticks and green paper, or use LEGO® bricks for build a beach house.





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3 – Message in a Bottle

- Children could draw and write their own messages in bottles, explaining why the person finding their message should come and visit their island. You could also use this as an opportunity to investigate concepts of floating and sinking, by putting the lid on an empty water bottle and showing how that floats well, but when the lid is left off and water gets into the bottle, it starts to sink.
- Lion's favourite drink is strawberry smoothie. Children could make their own smoothies, investigating different fruit flavours and making labels for the bottles.
- You could also number a series of empty bottles to sing 'ten green bottles', and encourage children to order them, practise counting forwards or backwards, or write down a missing number. This can easily be differentiated with different number sequences, depending on the child's ability.

