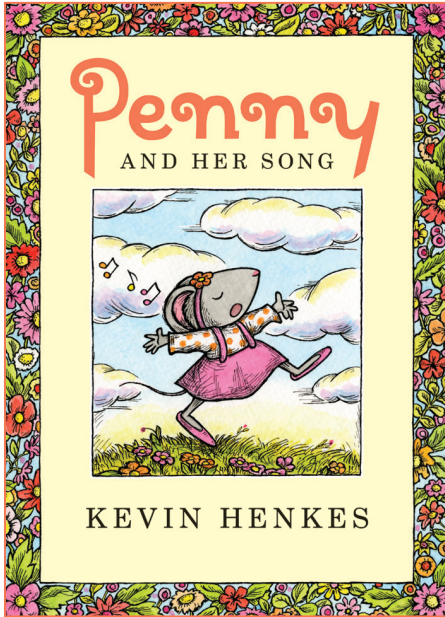


## About the Book



Penny arrives home from school bursting with excitement. She has made up a song, and she can't wait to share it with her family! Unfortunately it never seems to be the right time for her to sing it. But when the time finally comes, the whole family enjoys a festive celebration of music, love, and family fun.

## About Kevin Henkes



Photo © 2010 by Michelle Corpora

**KEVIN HENKES** is the creator of many books for children. He has written both picture books and novels, including *Olive's Ocean* (for which he received a Newbery Honor), *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, and *Kitten's First Full Moon* (winner of the Caldecott Medal). *Penny and Her Song* is his 44<sup>th</sup> book for children. He lives with his family in Madison, Wisconsin.

## Before Reading

Ask students to share anecdotes about siblings. Ask them to talk about the joys and frustrations of having brothers and sisters or being an only child. Students can share with the whole group, or they can “turn-and-talk” with a partner so that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Then tell students that in *Penny and Her Song*, Penny experiences both the joy and frustration of having siblings. After reading the story, have students describe Penny's experiences.

[www.kevinhenkes.com](http://www.kevinhenkes.com)

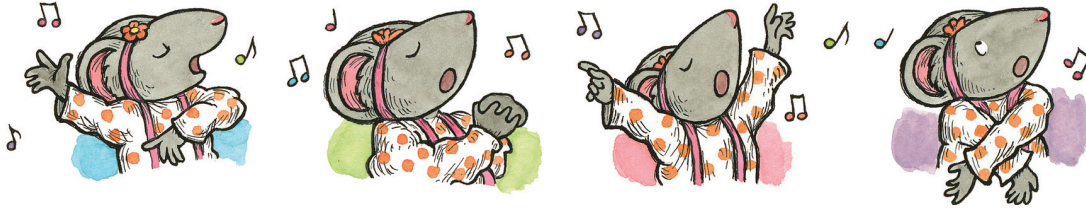


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# Discussion Questions



1. Have a discussion about what Penny's family did before bedtime and how singing and playing together made the family tired. Ask students what their families do before bed, and what helps them get ready to fall asleep. Do they like to sing? Do they have a favorite bedtime story? You can also discuss what time students go to sleep. You can practice telling time by modeling the bedtimes with a large clock.
2. Penny and her family had a wonderful time singing together and dressing up in costumes. Ask students what they enjoy doing with their families and why these experiences are so special.
3. On page 12, Penny makes funny faces in the mirror. Give students the opportunity to giggle and share their "funny faces" with the rest of the class.
4. As you read the story, stop at various points to ask students about Penny's feelings. How does she feel when she comes home from school (page 5)? How does she feel while the babies are napping (pages 8–13)? Is she feeling impatient, frustrated, or bored? How do Penny's feelings change when the family finally listens to her song (page 20), and then when they all sing together (pages 22–25)? Have students share what makes them feel excited, impatient, proud, or frustrated.
5. Ask students to name their favorite songs. Then, with a partner or in small groups, students can sing to one another and share the songs.
6. Penny feels proud because she has made up a song, and she is eager to share it with her family. Ask students to describe skills they possess that make them feel proud. What are they experts in? Soccer? Shoe tying? Dancing? Bed making? Drawing? Tooth brushing? Ask students to talk about their own talents and expertise.

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## Extension Activities



**1. Jump on It.** Discuss the rhythm and rhyme of Penny's counting song. Then ask students to recite the traditional nursery rhyme "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe":

One, two, buckle my shoe/Three, four, open the door  
Five, six, pick up sticks/ Seven, eight, lay them straight  
Nine, ten, a good fat hen.

Have students clap out the rhythm, and then use jump ropes so students can jump to the rhythm while chanting the nursery rhyme. The class can also create their own version of the poem ("One, two, don't spill the glue," etc.) and then clap and jump to the rhythm of their own counting rhyme.

**2. Crazy Counting.** Penny loves to sing and count. Challenge your students to count as high as they can. Then have them practice skip-counting, first by tens, then by twos, and finally by fives. You can use a hundred chart to show the patterns made when skip-counting.

**3. Penny Play.** Discuss the fact that Penny's name is also the name of a coin. Use pennies to practice addition with students by telling number stories. For example, "You earned 5 cents for walking the neighbor's dog, and you found 2 cents on the sidewalk. How much money do you have all together?"

**4. Name That President.** Bring in pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters to pass around the class. Discuss the name of each coin as well as the name of the president whose face is on the coin. Children can then learn about coins and play interactive games on the United States Mint website: <http://www.usmint.gov/kids/>.

**5. Costume Creations.** Penny's family creates costumes using a hat, a feather boa, and sunglasses. Have the students create simple costumes using ordinary classroom supplies (e.g., tissue paper, oaktag, yarn). Students might choose to design their own silly sunglasses, funny hats, armbands, or jewelry.

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## Extension Activities (Continued)



**6. Picture Perfect.** Ask students to bring in a collection of family photographs. (Remember to inform the parents that these photos will not be returned.) Have students create a collage of family photos. Photos can be cut, overlapped, angled, and embellished. Students can share their collages and describe their favorite experience depicted in the collage.

**7. Sing Out Loud.** Play some counting songs for the students, such as “Five Little Monkeys” or “1-2-3-4-5/I Caught a Fish Alive.” Websites such as [www.kiboomu.com](http://www.kiboomu.com) have a good selection. After singing, have students work with a partner to compose their own counting song. Then these can be performed for the class. Students might enjoy using a microphone (real or pretend) for their performances.

**8. Penny's Adventures.** Brainstorm ideas for adventures that Penny and her family might experience. Ask students to write another story about Penny and her family, either independently or with a partner. Discuss Penny's character traits (e.g., creative, energetic, loving, theatrical) so that the story reflects Penny's character.

**9. Clay Creatures.** Have students identify the little glass animals that Penny plays with on page 13. Tell students that as a class they will be designing a collection of little clay animals. Brainstorm a list of animals and ask each student to choose one to create. Distribute clay. (Crayola's *Model Magic* is especially easy for kids to manipulate, and it's easy for teachers to clean up, too!) When the clay collection is complete, students can play gently with the animals as Penny did and use them to make up imaginative animal stories.

**10. Share a Story.** Since Penny loves to sing and count, share books with the class about other characters who love to sing (e.g., *Ruby Sings the Blues*, by Niki Daly; *Igor, the Bird Who Couldn't Sing*, by Satoshi Kitamura; or *Opera Cat*, by Tess Weaver). Students will also enjoy counting books (e.g. *Ten, Nine, Eight*, by Molly Bang; *Chicka Chicka 1,2,3*, by Bill Martin Jr. & Michael Sampson; or *Moja Means One*, by Muriel Feelings).

Guide created by Sue Ornstein, a first-grade teacher in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York.

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