

# Giraffes Can't Dance

by Giles Andreae

Being different and not following the crowd is a tough thing to be secure in. But with the rhythmic text, water-colored and ink illustrations and confidence building friendships, children learn that being different is a lot less scary than one thinks.



## Read

### Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *What do you think it would be like to see animals dancing?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what the monkey thinks the giraffe is doing?

### During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

### Rare Words in *Giraffes Can't Dance*

- shoots: parts of a tree
- buckled: to bend at the knee
- jungle: tropical forest
- waltzing: a ballroom dance in triple time
- rock n' rolled: a genre of music
- tango: a Latin dance for couples
- Scottish reel: a dance relating to Scotland or its people or culture
- cha-cha: a rhythmic Latin American dance
- roar: growl loudly
- clumsy: moving awkwardly
- clot: sticky thickened lump
- violin: stringed instrument played with a bow
- somersault: acrobatic rolling over of body
- boogied: dance to rock music

### After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What kind of animal was Gerald?
- What happened when he ran around?
- What happens every year in Africa?
- What kind of animals danced?
- What happened when Gerald tried to dance?
- What did the cricket help Gerald do?
- What happened when Gerald started dancing to the violin music?
- How did every animal feel about Gerald after they saw him dancing?

# Do

## Let's Dance

Put on some music and let the children dance. Model some appropriate dance moves and allow the children a chance to model their own dances. Encourage healthy comments and reactions. For example: *I love how you move your arms; I have never seen that kind of dance before, can I try it? I really appreciate you joining us and dancing.*