Onwards and Upwards
A Book Series and Discussion Guide for PRIME TIME Preschool
PRIME TIME Onwards and Upwards

PRIME TIME Onwards and Upwards was developed in 2003 in partnership with content-area experts who have a deep knowledge of children’s literature, including experienced PRIME TIME Scholars and Storytellers, children’s librarians, and PRIME TIME staff. Onwards and Upwards focuses on the pursuit of truth as a topic within literature, poetry, and discussion. The series includes themes of ingenuity, individuality, sacrifice, and kinship. All PRIME TIME books include content that encourages participants to examine life rationally and to understand that there is always a range of possible responses and perspectives. Together, you and your participating families can explore and discuss significant themes relevant to our human experience with some of PRIME TIME’s most beloved titles.

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The themes of Onward and Upward suggest striving for achievement, overcoming difficulties, and maturing. For young children these are lofty ideas, which may require a more concrete interpretation in order to be grasped. Think literally of what goes forward or goes up— that is where the children’s minds will go with this theme, and luckily it is a place fertile with ideas!

- **Dramatic Play Center**- Let’s play school! A toy chalk board, lap desk or clipboards and a pointer, or any other props that suggest classroom will work. Add some pairs of eye glasses (without lenses) for a teacher look, and of course books and writing materials! Dolls or soft animals can be the pupils. There is always room for team-teaching in this classroom!

- **Block/Construction Center**- Toy airplanes make a nice addition for the block center for this theme. Any machines that fly correspond with the “upward” theme. Helicopters, miniature hot air balloons, toy gliders, any of these kinds of items will add a new dimension to the construction area and encourage imaginative use of the materials.

- **Book Center**- Have all of the *Onward and Upward* series titles available to the children each week. Additional books about flight or birds, or about high places like mountains, clouds, or tall buildings will correspond with the theme. Add some soft toy birds or airplanes. Add pillows and make a “tower” to sit on while reading.

- **Art/ Writing Center**- Try adding some washable molding material to the art center this session. There are several kinds of clay or dough that are non-toxic and do not stick to carpet available. Suggest that the children build mountains, airplanes, or birds out of their clay. Have them talk about where the highest place they have ever been was and have them draw or write about it. Ask them to draw or write about things that go up in the air. On another note, offer blue paper and cotton balls. Have them tear and glue the balls on the paper to make cloud formations. They can add their own drawings of things that are in the sky to their pictures.

- **Science Center**- Why do things go up? Simple machines like pulleys and levers will help answer this question for the children. Many toys use these types of mechanisms. Also look for toys with simple cause and effect action like those where you push a button or flip a switch. Flashlights also offer a cause and effect option that may interest the children. Have them explore how we make things work in the world around us.

- **Puzzle Area**- Mountain or air scenes will add interest to the puzzles this session. Picture puzzles of airplanes, hot air balloons, clouds, kites- or anything that flies in the air- will connect to Onwards and Upwards.
PRIME TIME Onwards and Upwards
Session 1: Oral Tradition

Book: *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone

*The Three Billy Goats Gruff* is an example of a folk tale that has been passed down through time and different cultures while remaining relatively the same. You can tell the children it is an old story that is still around because people remembered it and shared it with each other. Try varying the voices for the three Billy goats according to their size. You can also have the children help you make louder and louder footsteps as the goats that come to the bridge get bigger and bigger.

- Which of the three goats would you like to be in this story- why?
- What would you say to the troll on the bridge to make him let you pass?
- Do you have a big brother or sister like the Billy goats? What do they do for you?
- What if instead of goats they were the Three Rabbits Gruff- how would the story change?
**Book:** *The Little Red Hen* by Byron Barton
The story of *The Little Red Hen* will be familiar to most of the children and the parents. There is repetition in the lines “Who will help me ____”, or “Not I said the ___”, where they can chime in with you as you tell the story.

- Which animal in the story would you like to be? Why?
- Do you think the Little Red Hen should share the bread? Why or why not?
- What do you like to share at your house? What do you not like to share?
- Who does the chores at your house? Do you have chores? Which chores do you do?
Book: *Whistle for Willie* by Ezra Jack Keats

*Whistle for Willie* is a classic story about persevering. The adults in your group will probably be familiar with the book, and the children may be too. You can begin by all trying to whistle together. Each time Peter tries to whistle, have the group try to. If they can really whistle, have them pretend they can’t until Peter lets out a real whistle.

- What would you like to learn to do more than anything else?
- Why was Peter finally able to whistle?
- What kind of pet would you like to have?
- How do you, or would you, call your pet to come to you?
Book: *The Orange Splot* by Daniel Manus Pinkwater
In this story about expressing oneself, Mr. Plumbean redecorates his whole house to look like his dreams. Emphasize the many ways the neighbors express their exasperation with Mr. Plumbean. The dramatics and the sounds of the words will delight the children.

- Which house from the story would you like to live in? (show the illustrations)
- Would you like to live on Mr. Plumbean’s street? Why or why not?
- If you could build a house of your own what would it look like?
- Where would you put your house? What color would you make it?
Book: *Tacky the Penguin* by Helen Lester

In *Tacky the Penguin*, Tacky stands out amongst his peers, who do not include him in their activities because of his differences. When his differences and odd behavior become helpful, the other penguins learn to embrace his unique personality. This story highlights the advantages of being different and celebrating uniqueness.

- How would you march—as Tacky or as the other penguins? Why?
- Why do you think Tacky was different from the other penguins?
- How do you think Tacky felt being different from the others?
- How did Tacky save himself and the rest of the penguins from the hunters?
Book: *Peter’s Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats

*Peter’s Chair* is another story about a child with a new sibling. Peter passes down his traditional seat to the baby. Point out objects in the illustrations that would be familiar to the children. Help them relate Peter’s home and family to their own.

- Peter has a mother, a father, and a baby living in his house. Who lives in your house?
- What color do you think Peter should paint his chair? What color would your chair be?
- Do you have something that is your favorite? What is it? Why is it your favorite?
- If you were Peter what would you give to the new baby?
PRIME TIME Onwards and Upwards
Picture Graph Questionnaires

The Picture-Graph Questionnaires (PGQs) were created to encourage the adults participating in the PRIME TIME Preschool program to interact with participating children. PGQs serve as conversation-starters, with the adult participant acting as a curious interviewer and reporter, asking child participants for their opinions, recording them, and later sharing the group’s responses as a way of celebrating the diverse thinking and ideas of the children. Having a task to perform gives the adults a specific task through which to engage with children, although no adult should ever be forced to participate. The illustrations on the graphs are a key component of PGQs, as the children are not yet readers (and the adults participating may be low-level readers, as well). Each PGQ should be presented at the close of the story-sharing session to the whole group. The questions and possible responses should be read aloud to the group, and then adults who are interested in “manning” one of the three clip boards should be allowed to do so. The finished questionnaires should be placed in the Group Book. Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp state that “Children need relationships with caring adults who engage in many one-on-one, face-to-face interactions with them to support their oral language development and lay the foundation for later literacy learning.”

The Picture-Graph Questionnaires serve the purpose of creating meaningful interactions between the adults and children attending PRIME TIME Preschool, thus supporting literacy acquisition through yet another flexible and approachable mode.

How to Use Picture-Graph Questionnaires for an In-Person PRIME TIME Program

The following pages contain a set of Picture-Graph Questionnaires for PRIME TIME Onwards and Upwards. Each book will have 3 Picture-Graph Questionnaires (PGQs).

1. Print the questionnaires ahead of the session and place them on clipboards with pens.
2. Have the adults in the preschool session take the clipboards around to the children during center time.
3. Ask the children the questions.
4. Write the child’s name in the column that matches their response:
   a. If they choose one of the choices that are offered, write their name under that choice. Record any other information they offer, such as why they made that choice.
   b. If they have their own idea, write their name under that column. Write down whatever their idea is in as much detail as possible.
5. Put the finished pages into the Group Language Experience Book each week.

How to Use Picture-Graph Questionnaires for a PRIME TIME Online program?

PGQs can be approached in a few different ways. Preschool Facilitators may want to select one PGQ to use during the session, and ask families to respond using the chatbox or the reaction feature. The remaining PGQs can be a suggested activity for caregivers to do with their child after or during the session. Caregivers can interview their child about their responses and then shares the PGQ “result” in the chat box or after the story session. The Program Coordinator can print copies of the PGQs and include it with family’s books for their reference.

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2 Picture-Graph Questionnaires have been prepared by Melissa Gemeinhardt, M.Ed. and updated by Christina Lott.
How would you get up to the meadow? Why?

- Walk a path
- My Own Idea is...
- Ride a lift
Who would you play with? Why?

A goat

My Own Idea is...

A troll
Where would you go on a bridge? Why?

- Over a stream
- My Own Idea is...
- Up a mountain
What would you make with flour? Why?

- Bread
- My Own Idea is...
- Playdough
What would you do with a seed? Why?

- Plant it
- My Own Idea is...
- Give it to a squirrel
Who was a good friend? Why?

My Own Idea is...

The Little Red Hen

The Pig
What kind of chair do you like to sit in? Why?

A throne

My Own Idea is...

A beanbag chair
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Where would you hide? Why?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Own Idea is...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind a curtain</td>
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</table>
Where would you put a baby to sleep? Why?

In a crib

My Own Idea is...

In a baby box
What kind of house would you like to build? Why?

A castle

My Own Idea is...

A tree house
What would you do about an orange splot? Why?

- Clean it up
- My Own Idea is...
- Paint a mural
What kind of pet would you like in a garden? Why?

An alligator

My Own Idea is...

A kitten
What kind of pet would you pick? Why?

A dog

My Own Idea is...

A fish
Where would you hide? Why?

- In a box
- My Own Idea is...
- In the laundry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A drawing</th>
<th>My Own Idea is…</th>
<th>A game</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Who would you draw with chalk? Why?**
How would you march in a parade? Why?

Dancing

My Own Idea is...

In a line
How do you say hi to your friends? Why?

- Polite and quiet
- My Own Idea is...
- Loud and cheerful
What do you like about Tacky that is different from the other penguins? Why?

His clothes

My Own Idea is...

His singing
My Own Idea is...