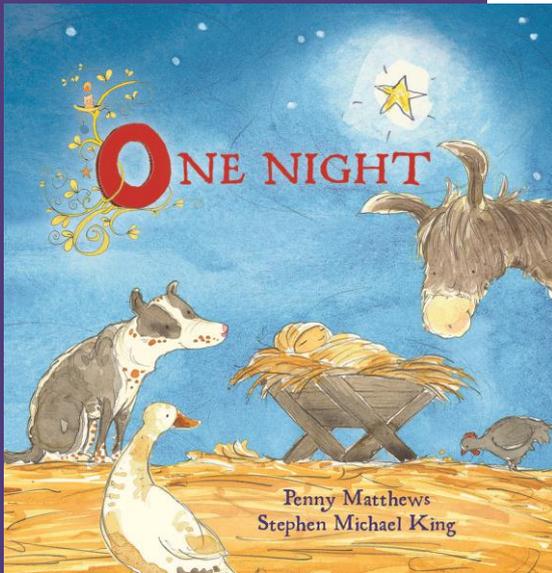


# Teachers' Notes

## One Night

Written by Penny Matthews  
Illustrated by Stephen Michael King

Teachers' Notes by Rae Carlyle



### OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Picture Book
Title	One Night
Author	Penny Matthews
Illustrator	Stephen Michael King
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#### Previous Publications

##### Penny Matthews

*Show Day* (Omnibus Books, 2012)  
*The Gift* (Omnibus Books, 2012)  
*Zizzy* (Omnibus Books, 2010)  
*Something about Water*  
(Omnibus Books, 2009)  
*The Little Red Bear* (Scholastic Press, 2003)  
*A Year on Our Farm* (Omnibus Books, 2002)  
*Jack's Owl* (Omnibus Books, 2001)  
*The Sea Dog* (Omnibus Books, 1998)  
*The Best Pet* (Omnibus Books, 1997)

##### Stephen Michael King

*I Love You Too* (Scholastic Press, 2013)  
*Leaf* (Scholastic Press, 2008)  
*Mutt Dog* (Scholastic Press, 2004)  
*Where Does Thursday Go?*  
(Scholastic Press, 2001)  
*Jack's Owl* (Omnibus Books, 2001)  
*The Pocket Dogs* (Omnibus Books, 2000)  
*Emily Loves to Bounce*  
*Amelia Ellicott's Garden*  
(Scholastic Press, 2000)  
*Henry and Amy* (Scholastic Press, 1998)  
*The Man Who Loved Boxes*  
(Scholastic Press, 1995)



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## Introduction

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*One Night* is set in a modern farmyard on Christmas Eve, and the story relates how in a farmyard long ago on the very first Christmas Eve, the animals watched and waited and were there for the birth of the baby Jesus. At the time of the birth, according to ancient legend, they were given the power of human speech. It is said that farm animals still remember that night, and on Christmas Eve they speak again to share their knowledge of what happened, knowledge that has been passed down among them through the years. If you are very lucky, then you too might hear them talking in the farmyard in that moment of magic just before midnight ... and *One Night* tells the story that you would hear.

## About the Author

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Penny Matthews is the author of the award-winning *A Year on Our Farm* and many other picture books and beginner reader titles for children. Her more recent books for Omnibus Books are *Zizzy*, *Something about Water*, *Show Day* and *The Gift*. Read more about her books at [www.pennymatthews.com.au](http://www.pennymatthews.com.au).

## About the Illustrator

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Stephen Michael King's first picture book was *The Man Who Loved Boxes*, which he also wrote. Since then he has written and/or illustrated more than 50 children's books including *Patricia*, *Henry and Amy* and *Leaf*. His books for Omnibus Books include *The Pocket Dogs* and *The Pocket Dogs Go on Holiday* by Margaret Wild. He also illustrated *Jack's Owl* by Penny Matthews. His work has been recognised in many professional and readers' awards.

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

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# Activities

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## Creative Activities

- 1) Look at the illustrations in *One Night*. What techniques and materials do you think the illustrator has used to create them? Create your own Christmas farmyard painting.
- 2) At Christmas time, you can often see nativity scenes set up as decorative displays in people's houses, or in shopping centres or other public places. 'Nativity' means 'related to birth' – and the scene is meant to be of the newborn baby Jesus. Think about displays you have seen.
  - There is always a baby in a nativity scene. What are some of the other figures that you might see?
  - Which figures do you need to have for it to count as a Christmas nativity scene? Which are optional?
  - As a class, or in small groups, create your own nativity scene to display in your classroom. You can make it a diorama, or display it on a table. You can make your own figures from plasticine, cardboard or clay, or you might want to use cloth and paper to dress dolls as the characters in the scene.
- 3) Look at the picture on the last page, where you can see the farmyard and surrounding countryside, and also into the barn. Paint a night time farmyard scene of your own. Sprinkle glitter on to the sky while the paint is still wet to represent the stars.
- 4) The Christmas story tells how a star that was brighter than all the other stars appeared in the sky above the place where Jesus was born. Stars are one of the symbols often used in Christmas decorations.
  - What other symbols can you think of that are commonly associated with Christmas?
  - What Christmas symbols can you see in the illustrations?Go for a walk and collect twigs, leaves, pine cones, and other natural materials. Use your found materials to make Christmas decorations like some of the ones in the illustrations.

- What symbols are associated with other celebrations that you know of, both religious (e.g. Ramadan, Chanukkah, Easter, Eid, Pasech), and non-religious (birthdays, New Year's Eve, Australia Day etc.)?

As a class, create a series of artworks featuring some of the symbols from all the different celebrations that you have discussed. Use your artworks to make a display. You might want to arrange them in the form of a patchwork quilt on the wall, or hang them as a celebratory banner across the room.

- 5) Create a wordsearch of Christmas words, and of the animals featured in the story.
- 6) *One Night* contains a number of different animal characters, each with something to say. As a class, perform the story as a play for another class or at a school assembly.
- 7) Make a Christmas ornament out of salt dough\* using the pictures in the book to give you inspiration – you might want to make one of the animals, or a miniature stable or cradle, or a shining star. Remember to make a hole in your piece for string to go through! Once your salt dough is dry you can paint it in festive colours, and thread some Christmas ribbon through the hole to hang it by.
- 8) Learn a Christmas song that features animals and sing it as a class.
- 9) Write a short story from the point of view of one of the animals in the farmyard, telling the story of Joseph and Mary arriving late one evening on their tired donkey.

\*Salt dough can be made by mixing 1 cup flour, ½ cup salt, and ½ cup cold water. It needs to dry thoroughly before being painted. This mix can be baked in the oven on low (120°C) for approximately 3 hours, or microwaved for 3 minutes.

## Science and Geography

Different parts of the world have different climates, native animals, and plants. This means that the types of animals and crops that farms have will be different depending on where they are in the world. Even in the same country, the crops and livestock will vary according to region.

As a class, discuss

- What are some of the things that might influence a farmer's choice of crop or livestock? Think about things such as rainfall, how much grass grows in an area and the average temperature.

- What are some of the animals and crops that might be on the farms near where you live?
- Look at a map of Australia. In pairs choose a region of Australia and research the main crops and/or livestock carried by farms in that region. Draw a picture to represent your findings, and as a class have each pair share the information they have researched and pin the pictures to the appropriate place on the map. Can you see any patterns in what is grown or what livestock is carried?
- Some animals can be commonly found on farms in many different parts of the world, from the equator to the Arctic Circle. As a class discuss which animals are common to all areas and why this might be so. (Hint: think about animals that help farmers with their work or provide food for the farmer's family.)
- The farm animals in the story all had different roles to play on that first Christmas Eve. They also have different roles to play on a farm. As a class, discuss what their roles in the daily life of a farm might be.

## Social Sciences

*One Night* tells the story of the very first Christmas Eve, and Christmas is an important celebration for many people. Australians come from a huge variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, and Christmas is just one of the many celebrations that Australians participate in.

- As a class discuss all the different celebrations that class members participate in, remembering to include celebrations that are not religious – think about things such as birthdays, family gatherings and reunions, end of season sporting presentations, New Year celebrations etc. The celebrations can be as big as the Australia Day fireworks, as ancient as a corroboree, or as small as having Sunday lunch with grandparents.
- Make a wall chart listing as many different celebrations as the class can think of.
- In pairs or individually, choose one of the celebrations from the list and make a poster celebrating it. Use lots of colour and make the poster as celebratory as possible. Research all the different things that you might find at your celebratory event and include them in your artwork.

## Technology

It has been more than 2000 years since that first Christmas Eve. In some ways farms now are very different from the farms that existed back then, and in other ways they are still very similar.

- As a class discuss what some of these similarities and differences might be. Brainstorm three lists. A list of things that are completely different, a list of things that are similar, and a list of things that are essentially the same.
  - Discuss some of the reasons for the changes there have been in farming, and what the increasing use of technology has meant for farms and farmers since that first Christmas Eve.
  - Make a wall display with pictures to represent various daily farming activities 2000 years ago, and then today. For example, you could have a picture of a donkey, horse or ox pulling a plough, and next to it a picture of a tractor. You could also have two pictures of a child gathering eggs from a chook shed with a basket!
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