

Email: bridget@paperdragonreads.com Phone: (407) 212-7759

Family Reading Guide for "The Great Dinosaur Sleepover"

Conversation starters for parents and children

Getting Started

What This Book Is About

"The Great Dinosaur Sleepover" follows Jake, a passionate dinosaur fan who plans the perfect dino-themed birthday sleepover—only to have all his friends come down with the flu. Heartbroken and alone, Jake discovers in the middle of the night that some very special prehistoric guests have arrived to make sure his birthday is one he'll never forget.

Key Themes Your Child Will Encounter:

- **Disappointment and resilience:** Jake's party falls apart before it begins, but the story shows that sometimes unexpected surprises are even better than our original plans
- **Imagination and wonder:** Jake's love of dinosaurs transforms a lonely night into a magical adventure, celebrating what can happen when we open our hearts to possibility
- **Joy in unexpected places:** The best birthday Jake could have imagined turns out to be nothing like what he planned—and everything he needed
- **Celebrating what you love:** Jake's dinosaur enthusiasm is treated as wonderful and worthwhile, validating deep interests in young readers

Tip for Parents: This is a wonderful book for sharing with any child who has experienced disappointment—a cancelled playdate, a rained-out outing, or a birthday that didn't go as planned. Let Jake's story open a conversation about how to hold disappointment and still stay open to joy.

Discussion Questions

About Jake and His Party

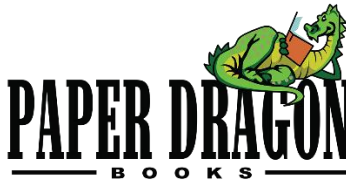
- How do you think Jake feels when all his friends get sick?
- What would YOU do if your birthday party got cancelled?
- What noise do you think Jake heard in the middle of the night?
- How do you think Jake feels when he sees the dinosaurs?

About Surprises and Making the Best of Things

- Can you think of a time when something didn't go as planned but turned out okay anyway?
- Why do you think the dinosaurs decided to come to Jake's party?
- What's the best surprise you've ever had?
- If dinosaurs were real and came to YOUR birthday, which one would you most want there?

Fun Conversation Starters

- If you could have any animal—real or prehistoric—at your birthday party, what would it be?
- What's the most fun thing you've ever done at a sleepover?
- If you were Jake, would you tell the T-Rex about the party? Why or why not?
- What dinosaur do you think would be the best guest at a sleepover?



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Discussion Activities

Dinosaur Fun

- Look up your favorite dinosaur together and learn three facts about it
- Watch a short dinosaur documentary clip or nature video together
- Visit a natural history museum to see dinosaur fossils in person
- Create a dinosaur-themed snack together (dino nuggets, "fossil" cookies)

Planning a Celebration

- Plan a mini "dinosaur party" at home with your child—even a simple one
 - Ask your child to design their dream birthday party—draw it or describe it
 - Talk about your favorite birthday memory and invite your child to share theirs
 - Make a list of fun things to do when plans get cancelled
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Conversation Tips for Parents

Holding Disappointment With Kindness

- When your child is disappointed, resist the urge to rush to silver linings—name the feeling first: "It makes sense that you're sad about this."
- Jake's story shows that good things can still happen after disappointment. Let that message land naturally, without forcing it.
- Ask: "What's one thing you can do when you're feeling disappointed to help yourself feel a little better?"
- Share your own story of a time something didn't go as planned and turned out differently—maybe even better

Stoking Curiosity and Wonder

- Celebrate your child's enthusiasms, however specific or unusual—Jake's dinosaur love is the key to his magical night
 - Ask what your child loves most about their favorite topic and let them teach you
 - Read together to find out more about things your child is excited about
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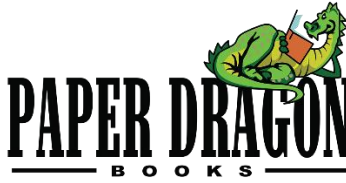
Questions by Age Group

For Younger Readers (Ages 4–6)

- What did Jake want for his birthday?
- Why couldn't his friends come to the party?
- What happened in the middle of the night?
- Did Jake have a good birthday in the end?

For Older Readers (Ages 6–8)

- Why do you think this story has a happy ending even though it started sadly?
- What does the story tell us about what makes a celebration special?
- How does Jake's love of dinosaurs connect to what happens in the story?



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- If you were writing the story, what would happen after the last page?
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Activity Ideas

Creative and Pretend Play

- Act out a dinosaur sleepover scene together—who comes, what do they eat, what games do they play?
- Draw Jake's living room with the dinosaur guests—what does it look like?
- Write or dictate a short "sequel"—what happens the morning after?
- Build a dinosaur habitat out of blocks, pillows, or cardboard boxes

Science and Discovery

- Research one dinosaur together: What did it eat? Where did it live? How big was it?
 - Make a dinosaur timeline—put different species in order from oldest to most recent
 - Visit or virtually tour a natural history museum
 - Make "fossils" with air-dry clay and plastic dinosaur toys
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"The Great Dinosaur Sleepover" is a joyful reminder that the best celebrations aren't always the ones we plan—they're the ones that happen when we stay open to wonder. Jake's birthday is unforgettable not because it went according to plan, but because something extraordinary arrived when he least expected it. Let this book be an invitation to talk with your child about what makes a celebration feel magical, and about how the things we love most have a way of finding us when we need them most.