A guide for grown-ups

Leo Is Going to Be a Big Brother

About the story

Leo has a red scarf that is much too long, a blue chair just his size, and the best seat of all: Mama's lap. When a baby is coming, Leo is not sure there will still be room for him. It is a gentle story about the worry a big brother or sister can feel, and the answer Mama gives: there's always room.

Before you read

- Look at the cover. Who is in Leo's arms? How do you think Leo feels about her?
- If a baby is coming in your family, it can help to read the book a few times before the birth, not only after.

While you read

- Pause when Leo hides his blanket and his boat. Ask: why is Leo saying mine?
- When Bea cries and Leo covers his ears, ask how your child feels when it is loud.
- Say the refrain together: There's room, Leo. There's always room.

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Questions to talk about

- Why did Leo hide his blanket and his boat?
- How did Leo feel when everything was for Bea?
- What could help a big brother or sister feel loved when a new baby comes?
- What is something only a big brother or sister can do?
- Point to Leo's face when he sits alone in his blue chair. How does he feel?
- Leo giggled at Grandma's teapot story. What makes you giggle?
- Look at Leo when Bea holds on to his scarf. How does he feel now?

Ideas for after the book

- Give the big sibling a real job, like singing to the baby or choosing a blanket. The helper-jobs chart in the downloads can help.
- Keep a little time that is only for the older child, even ten minutes. Call it your room time.
- Draw your family in the big chair together, using the share activity sheet.
- Sing the honey song at bedtime, and let the older child sing it to the baby.

A small tip

Big feelings about a new baby are normal. Leo is grumpy, hides things and feels small, and Mama never scolds him for it. Children often notice that.

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