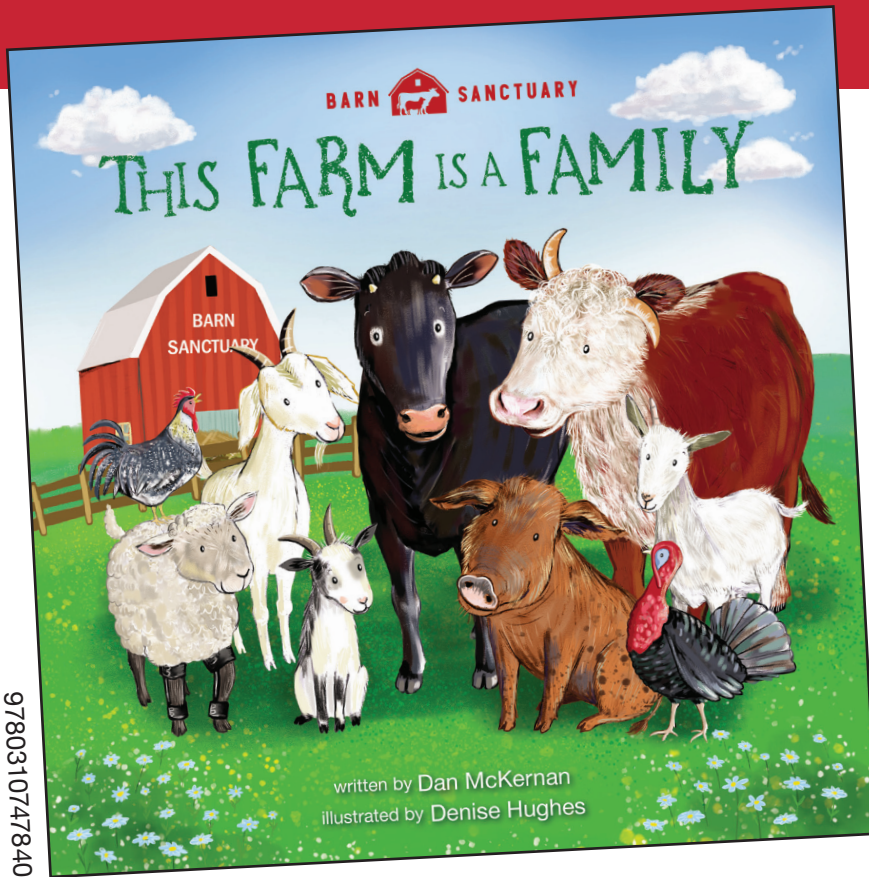


CURRICULUM GUIDE



THIS FARM IS A FAMILY

BY
Dan McKernan
ILLUSTRATED BY
Denise Hughes

IN THIS ADORABLE PICTURE BOOK written by Dan McKernan of the popular TV show *Saved by the Barn*, the rescue farm animals at Barn Sanctuary decide to help a cow who is dealing with fear and anxiety in her new home. Children will learn the importance of friendship and compassion through this charming story, as well as why it's important to support others during hard times.

The book contains information about the real Barn Sanctuary in Michigan and their efforts to rescue and support over 100 farmed animals, including Ginger, Buttercup, Little Dude, and Mike, who are featured in the story.



The Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit corestandards.org.

Discussion Questions











Unless otherwise noted, all discussion questions align with the following Common Core State Standards: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#)

Before Reading

Look carefully at the cover of *This Farm Is a Family*. What is the setting of the story? Brainstorm and record what you know about the setting and what you want to learn about it. After reading the story, add information to a third column on the brainstorming chart to show what you learned about the setting from reading *This Farm Is a Family*.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#)

After Reading

-  Who is Dan and what is his job at Barn Sanctuary?
 -  What exciting news does Dan share with the animals and how do they react to the news?
 -  Compare how Buttercup felt about coming to a new home to how the Barn Sanctuary family of animals felt about Buttercup's arrival. How did Buttercup show her feelings when Dan came to get her?
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#)
-  Why did the animal family's feelings change about Buttercup once they met her?
 -  What strategies did the animal family use to try to connect with Buttercup?
 -  Look at the illustration of the animal family realizing that Buttercup is missing. What does the illustration tell the reader about how Buttercup escaped?
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7](#)
-  What problem did the animal family discover when they went to search for Buttercup?
 -  How did Steve the goat help the animals solve the problem with Buttercup?
 -  What lesson do you think Buttercup learned from her rescue by the animal family? [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2](#)
 -  Think about all of the members of the animal family living at Barn Sanctuary. Which animal reminded you of yourself? Describe the connection you can make between yourself and your selected character.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#)

Activities

Take a STEM Challenge!

Design a pen that is safe and secure enough to house Buttercup. What would Buttercup need to be housed safely? Draw a diagram of your plan and label the different parts of the pen. Gather building materials such as popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, straws, clay, snap cubes, and Legos to build a model of your design. Take a gallery walk of all of the different models of pens for Buttercup in your class. Discuss the advantages of each design.

Animal Research

Several types of animals comprise the family of creatures at Barn Sanctuary. Select one animal represented in the story and research that animal's life cycle, what it eats, and its adaptations. Compile the information from your research into a report about your selected animal. Include a labeled diagram of your chosen animal.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#)

Sentence Building

Use 3 x 5-inch notecards to make a set of word cards on based on *This Farm Is a Family*. First, make a card for each character in the story. Then, make sets of word cards of action words in the story, such as “fed,” “ran,” “jumped,” and “rolled.” Then, make a set of word cards for places in the story, such as “in the pigpen,” “behind the barn,” and “in the field.” Last, make cards for common connecting words such as “with” and “and.” Use these word cards to build sentences in a pocket chart. Build your sentences in this order: Who? Did what? To or with whom? Where? Example: “Farmer Dan fed Little Dude in the pigpen.” Take turns reading the sentences aloud once the word cards are organized in the pocket chart.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.1](#)

Portrait Math

Choose a favorite character from *This Farm Is a Family* and draw his or her portrait. Display all the character portraits in your classroom. Tally the number of portraits of each character and use this data to create a bar graph of favorite characters from the story. Discuss the results of the data shown on the bar graph. Which animal from the story did most students choose? Were there any characters who had an equal number of fans? What is the difference between the animal most students drew and the animal with the fewest portraits?

[CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.B.3](#); [CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.MD.B.3](#); [CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.B.3](#)

Save the Animals!

Barn Sanctuary's mission is to spread compassion for farmed animals everywhere and to provide a safe haven for the animals they've rescued. Design a poster to support their cause. Think of your own slogan for the sanctuary to include on your poster. Make the lettering on your poster big and colorful and include pictures or drawings of animals as part of your message. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1](#)

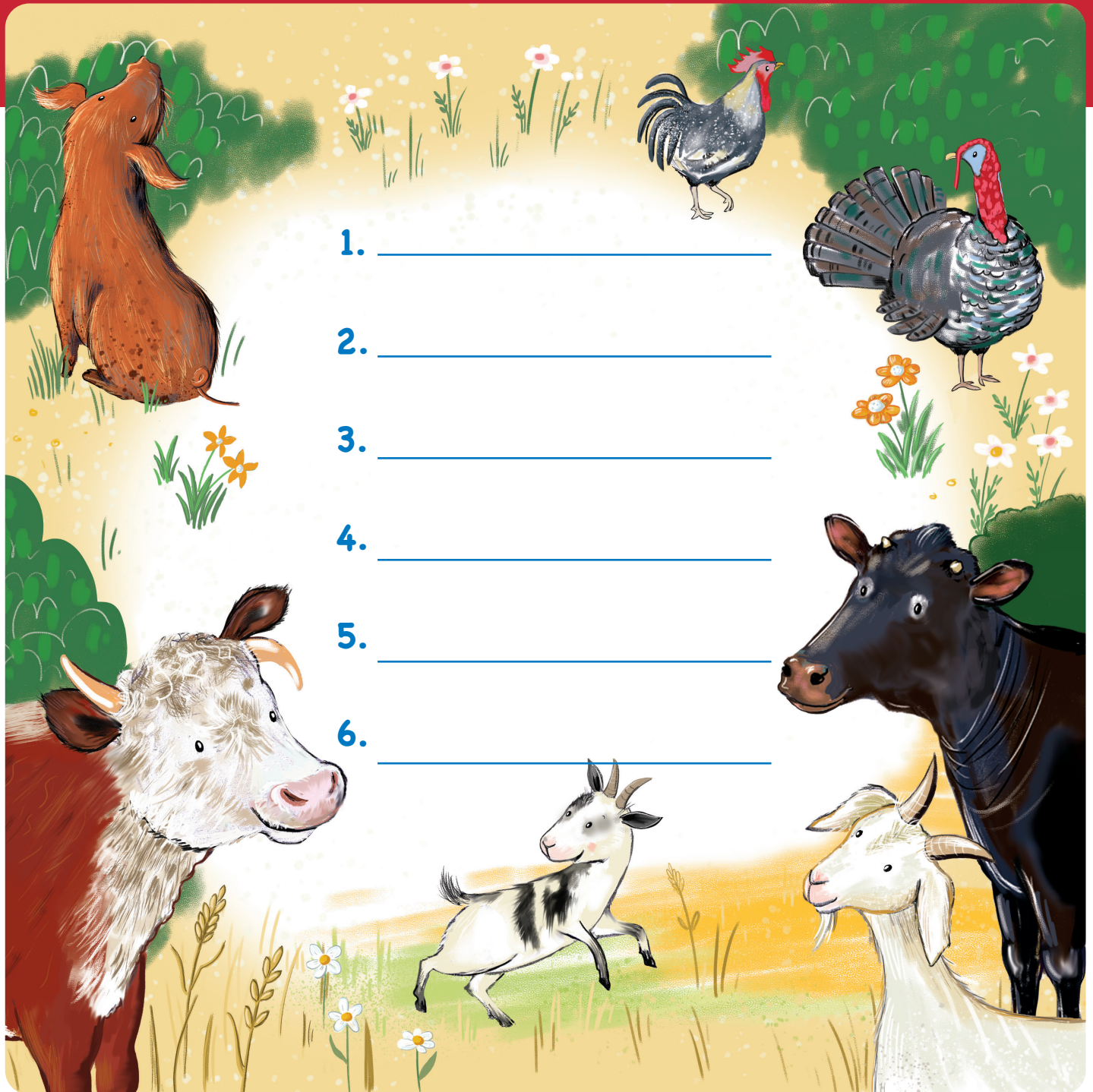
The discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

Name: _____

Animal ABCs

List the animals in *This Farm Is a Family* in alphabetical order.

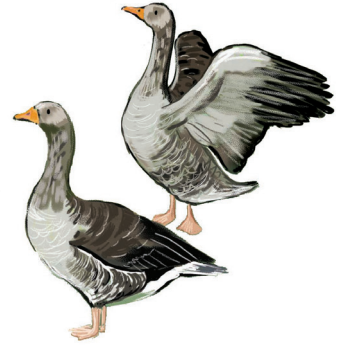
Pig • Turkey • Rooster • Goats • Cows • Sheep



Name: _____

What's in a Name?

The Barn Sanctuary animals assume that Buttercup will be gentle and sweet based upon her name. The other animals on the farm have great names, like Little Dude and Stanley. If you were in charge of naming new animals arriving at Barn Sanctuary, what names would you give to these different types of animals?



TYPE OF ANIMAL

NAME

Turkey

Pig

Goat

Chicken

Donkey

Sheep

Goose

Name: _____

Sequencing Story Events

Number the following story events in the order in which they happened in *This Farm Is a Family*. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5](#)

- Buttercup got her head stuck in the fence.
- The animals and Buttercup had a group hug once Buttercup was free of the fence.
- The animals started planning activities to welcome Buttercup to the barn.
- The animals discovered that Buttercup had escaped.
- Steve the goat startled Buttercup, which helped her get free of the fence.
- Buttercup had a temper tantrum when Farmer Dan arrived to pick her up.
- Buttercup destroyed all of the gifts the animals offered her when she arrived at Barn Sanctuary.
- Farmer Dan told the animals that a new cow named Buttercup was coming to the farm.

