Luminous illustrations and storytelling portray animals as resourceful architects who build complex structures for homes, food, protection, and even beauty! An engaging book — full of interesting detail — that leaves the reader feeling awe and respect for the natural world and the animals that inhabit it.

**Storytelling Tips**

- **Give the backstory.** Before you begin reading, discuss what an architect is. Mention any friends or family members who are architects and point out interesting buildings in your community. Talk about the planning and research that goes into building a structure.

- **Peruse the illustrations.** From the endpapers printed to resemble blueprints to the gorgeous multi-media illustrations, there’s a lot to look at in this book.

- **Take your time.** *Animal Architects* is a fairly long picture book. It’s okay to read a few pages one day and a few the next. Follow your child’s lead.

**Extend the Learning**

- **Gain perspective.** It’s hard to conceptualize some of the figures in the book. Just how large is 133,000 square miles? How heavy is a ton? Use a measuring tape to find the square feet of your child’s room, or show your child how much a square mile encompasses in your community. Use a scale to weigh common household items and then think bigger. How many shoes, for example, do you need to make a ton? How many of your neighborhoods would fit in 133,000 square miles?

- **Learn more.** Do an internet search or find books at the library to learn more about the animals in the book. Find photos of the Great Barrier Reef or the bowerbird’s nest. Examine an anthill at a local park or watch honeybees at work.

- **Become an architect.** Offer a few materials, inspired by the animals in the book, and challenge your child to create some structures. Try playdough, glue sticks, straws, toothpicks, pine cones, grass, stones, or other materials.
As the sun goes down and the moon rises in an African village, it’s time to go to sleep. But first, Lala must say goodnight to the cat, bird, goat, monkey, and even a rock. Watch for the surprise ending that reinforces the universality of the bedtime experience.

**Storytelling Tips**

- **Inspect each page.** The oil and ink illustrations are gorgeous with small details worth exploring on each page. While probably unfamiliar to most North American children, the scenes of an African landscape are gentle and comforting, and the routines and rituals of family life are completely relatable.

- **Point out your routines.** Talk with your older toddler about your family’s bedtime routines. Maybe your child takes a bath, brushes their teeth, or reads a story with you.

- **Say goodnight.** Encourage your child to say goodnight to the family pets, stuffed animals, or siblings. Rituals like saying goodnight help children wind down and make for more restful sleep.

**Extend the Learning**

- **Read the original.** In the final pages of *I Just Want to Say Goodnight*, Lala says goodnight to her book, Margaret Wise Brown’s bedtime classic, *Goodnight Moon*. If you already own the book, your child will probably be delighted to recognize it. If not, grab a copy.

Don’t miss this month’s riveting video episode of the Growing Readers Book Club! Become Teacher Nate’s co-researchers as you and your child are introduced to high-quality children’s books along with ideas to explore, create, and investigate further!

Join Teacher Nate for this month’s video featuring the book “Animal Architects” and get creative by designing your own nest or other animal habitat.

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A young girl can’t be with her parents, but she finds a loving family in Mama Rose. Author Alice Faye Duncan wrote the story to celebrate all the ways that love binds us together.

**Storytelling Tips**

- **Read the ending first.** The author wrote this story to acknowledge her own mother who raised a sibling, and to inspire readers to think about the many neighbors, family members, teachers, and even strangers who step in to offer love to children. Read Duncan’s letter (to yourself) before you share the book with your child.

- **Make text-to-self connections.** Whatever your family makeup, your child can probably relate to familiar experiences like learning to make a bed, riding bikes to the park, or eating vegetables. Discuss how this family is similar and different from your family.

**Extend the Learning**

- **Take some inspiration from the story.** Whip up some pancakes, make a bed together, go on a bike ride, or bake a cake. The book is full of ideas for simple family time.

- **Point out the feelings.** Subtle illustrations depict the young girl’s feelings. It’s obvious that she misses her parents sometimes and doesn’t always want to do her chores or eat her vegetables. These are normal experiences in any family.

- **Chart your family.** Duncan writes, “I believe it is love that defines relationships. Love is the tie that binds.” Help your child make a list of the people that matter in your life. Your list might include biological family members, neighbors, friends, teachers, caregivers or others.