

The background is a watercolor illustration. The top half shows a light blue sky with a flock of small, grey birds flying in various directions. The bottom half shows a landscape with rolling green hills. A path with a green border leads from the foreground into the distance. The foreground is a yellowish-green field with several pink and orange flowers. A small blue stream flows through the hills in the background.

## Extraordinary Teaching Notes

**Written by Penny Harrison • Illustrated by Katie Wilson • Published by New Frontier Publishing**

### **Synopsis**

A gentle tale about reaching for the stars and being extraordinary . . . but remembering the ordinary too. *Extraordinary* celebrates the best moments in life: the ones we share with friends and family. They may be simple, they may be ordinary, but they are moments we will cherish forever. This beautiful, engaging picture book encourages children to understand and cherish the extraordinary in ordinary, everyday moments. It promotes quiet, contemplative activities like reading as well as outdoor play and games.

### **About the Author**

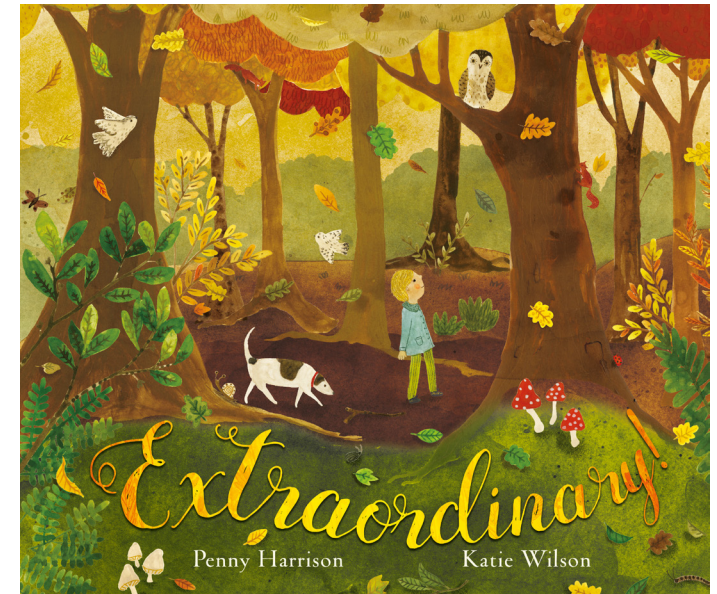
Penny Harrison is a children's author, book reviewer, garden writer and lifestyle journalist. A professional writer for more than 20 years, she has contributed to a variety of leading magazines, newspapers, guides and books, writing about everything from raising toddlers to raising chickens.

Penny grew up on a farm in central-western NSW and spent her days exploring the bush and planning treasure hunts with her four brothers and sisters.

Nowadays, she lives in a rambling old garden in the Yarra Valley with her husband, two young children and an ever-growing menagerie of animals and plants.

### **About the Illustrator**

Katie is an illustrator and designer based in beautiful New Zealand. Creating for both adults and children, her illustrations are sweet and cheerful with a handmade feel. Her work has appeared in magazines, greeting cards and books. Katie's clients include Hallmark, Papyrus, Rotovision, Quartet and Woodmansterne.





# Discussion Topics and Activities

## Discussion Topics

1. Show the children the front cover of the book and ask them if they can read the title. Do they know what 'extraordinary' means?
2. After reading the book, ask them what they thought of the story. Did they like it?
3. Which was their favourite extraordinary moment and why?
4. Do they understand the difference between the 'booming' extraordinary moments and the 'soft quiet' extraordinary moments?
5. Which out of the two would be their favourite kind of extraordinary moment? Or would they prefer a mix of the two?
6. Did they notice that a lot of these extraordinary moments take place outside? Why is that?
7. Do they enjoy playing outside? What are their favourite games?

## Activities

1. Quiet Time Activities
2. Writing Activities
3. Drawing Activity
4. Rock Painting
5. Nature Collage
6. Fire Works in a Jar





# Quiet Time with Kids

*Extraordinary* is all about appreciating the best moments in life, many of which take place outdoors. However, the story also highlights the quiet and contemplative moments which are all the more important in the current situation when outdoor activity is limited and everyone has to stay in-doors for longer periods of time. Quiet time also has numerous benefits for children as it gives them the opportunity to increase their attention span by allowing them to focus on their own task, build up their independence and increase their creativity.

Here are a few classic quiet time activities that children tend to enjoy:

1. Box Play - turning a cardboard box into a plaything gives children the opportunity to really exercise their imagination and creativity.
2. Bead Work - again, creating something like jewelry from pony beads, pipe cleaners and string helps children build up their creativity as well as recognise colours and patterns.
3. Play Dough - children love the sight of brightly coloured play dough and the feel of squishing it in their hands. For an extra sensory experience, you can try Natalie's recipe for making lavender-scented play dough:

<https://www.superhealthykids.com/parenting/calming-lavender-play-dough/>

4. And of course, possibly the most important quiet time activity of all, reading!

Look at the spread below. Ask the children to describe what they see. Look at the children reading, can you guess how they might feel? How do you feel when you're reading a good book? See if you can encourage the children to articulate the experience.



# Writing Activities

What kind of words are used in the story to describe extraordinary moments? List them below.

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Can you think of any other words that have the same meaning as 'extraordinary'?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now that you've had a think about the different words to describe the extraordinary, can you write about one of your own extraordinary moments? Think about why it felt extraordinary, where you were and who was with you.

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# Drawing Activity

In the space below, draw your own extraordinary moment. It could be something that you have already done or something that you would like to do in the future.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing activity. It occupies the majority of the page below the instructions.



# Rock Painting

The extraordinary can be found everywhere but it is particularly obvious in nature. Here are a couple of activities that are both creative and encourage children to explore the natural world.

## What you will need:

- Rocks (if they have a smooth surface they will be easier to paint)
- Acrylic paints
- Paint brush
- Water

## Instructions

This is a relatively simple activity, after you've collected your rocks you can get right on to painting whatever you would like on them. For an added layer of complexity, you could create story rocks and use the characters or scenes painted on the rocks to create a narrative.





## Nature Collage

Using leaves, twigs, petals or anything else you can find outdoors, fill in the flowers and leaves below. Glue your items down in any pattern you like.





# Fireworks in a Jar

The extraordinary can blaze and bloom across the sky in the form of fireworks. Why not try this experiment to see some fireworks inside?

## What you will need:

An empty glass jar

Two/three tablespoons of oil

Various food colourings

Warm water

## Instructions

1. Fill the bottle about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way with warm water.
2. Add a layer of oil on top. Depending on the size of your jar, you may need more or less oil.
3. Carefully drop some of each food colouring into the jar.
4. Now just watch the colours unfurl in the water!

