

# Owen

by Kevin Henkes

Caldecott Winner (1993). Effortless humor and vibrantly hued watercolor-and-ink pictures tells the story of a smart little mouse as he foils the plans of his parents' attempts to dispose of his favorite blanket before he starts school.



## Read

### Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *What is something that you have that you don't want to throw away?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what he is looking for?

### During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

### Rare Words in Owen

- fuzzy: covered with a mass of short fine hairs or fibers
- positively: used to emphasize that the truth of a statement or response is beyond any doubt
- terrific: very great
- ratty: a messy and generally unkempt appearance
- plunger: tool for clearing drains
- invisible: impossible to see with the eyes
- vinegar: sour-tasting liquid
- handkerchiefs: cloth for wiping nose, a small square of fabric

### After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What did Owen have that his parents wanted him to throw away?
- Who did they say would come visit him and take his blanket?
- What did he do with the blanket?
- What else did his parents do to the blanket?
- How did Owen get rid of the vinegar smell?
- What did his mother finally do to the blanket to make it go away?

**Do**

## Make Your Own Handkerchief

Cut up a white sheet into small squares (enough for each child). Give each child fabric markers and let them decorate their handkerchief. Follow the instructions on the markers for handling and for special instructions about the markers.