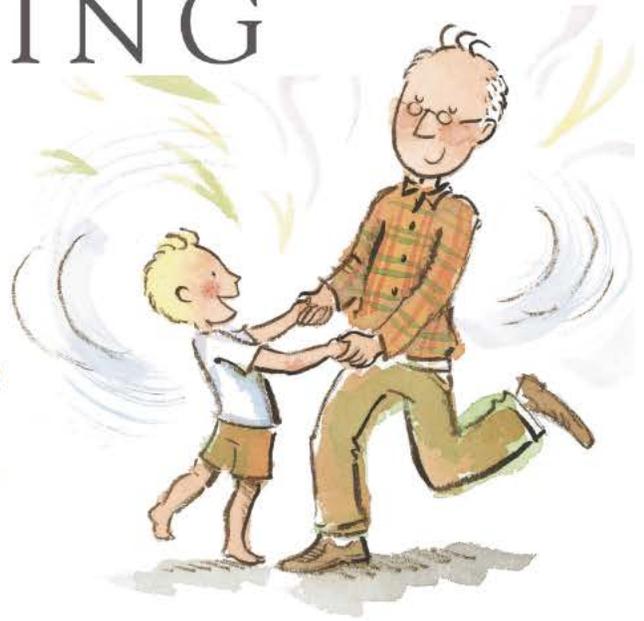


# What a BEAUTIFUL MORNING

*An Event Kit for  
Exploring Dementia  
& Alzheimer's Disease  
with Families through  
Story & Song*



## ABOUT THE KIT

Many in our communities struggle with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. While the disease affects the entire family, children can feel the changes in a loved one most acutely.

How can you be a catalyst for conversation and connection?

The picture book **What a Beautiful Morning** by Arthur A. Levine & illustrated by Katie Kath (Running Press) explores Alzheimer's disease in a gentle, age-appropriate manner. Be prepared to sing and celebrate the bonds of family!

This kit offers resources, activity sheets, and suggested dialogue to:

- **Partner & Advertise** an Alzheimer's event for families
- **Discuss** the book and Alzheimer's disease
- **Share** Alzheimer's Resource sheets
- **Explore Art** with children
- **Sing** book-themed lyrics to *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*



*"The book does a nice job of explaining some of the memory loss and confusion that can be typical of Alzheimer's, and provides age-appropriate explanations...The comprehensive toolkit takes that several steps further by discussing how the illustrator has used color to provide meaning and foreshadowing into the book."*

—Ruth Kolb Drew, Director of Family & Information Services,  
Alzheimer's Association National Office

This kit was created by CuriousCityDPW.com with input from Peter Baker, Program Director of the Alzheimer's Association, Maine Chapter, Ruth Kolb Drew, Director of Family and Information Services at Alzheimer's Association National Office, and Mary Ann Urbashich, Associate Director of the Alzheimer's Association Green-Field Library.

We welcome news and photos of your event and any ideas you have to improve upon this kit!

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### What a Beautiful Morning

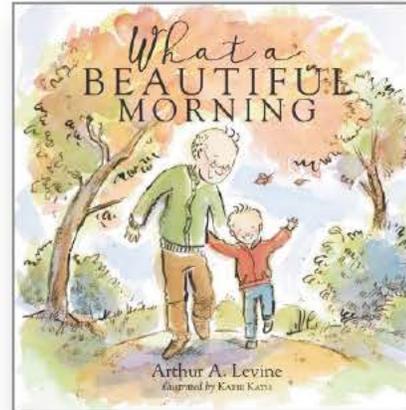
By Arthur A. Levine

Illustrated by Katie Kath

Published by Running Press Kids

Hardcover Picture Book, Ages 4-8

ISBN 9780762459063



Every morning is beautiful when Noah visits his Grandparents. When Grandpa and Noah wake up, they take off singing and hardly stop: walking the dog, splashing through puddles, and eating French toast with cinnamon. But one summer Grandpa seems to have forgotten how to do the things they love. Does he even know who Noah is? Grandma steps in energetically, filling in as best she can. But it is Noah who finds the way back to something he can share with Grandpa. Something musical. Something that makes the morning beautiful again. This is a story about how love helps us find even what we think is lost.

*"The message is beautifully and sensitively communicated in these gentle pages. A comforting, honest resource, ideal for little ones confronted with aging relatives."* —Booklist, **Starred Review**

*"Both lovely and deeply empathetic."* —Kirkus Reviews

*"It's a lovely, bittersweet story, and Levine carefully modulates a challenging emotional arc, offering readers just the right measure of hope."* —Publishers Weekly

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Arthur A. Levine has published poetry and picture books for young readers, including *Monday Is One Day*, illustrated by Julian Hector, and *All the Lights in the Night*, illustrated by James Ransome. He is also the editor and publisher of many well-known and beloved books for young people including J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. He lives in the New York metropolitan area with his family. More at [arthuralevine.wordpress.com](http://arthuralevine.wordpress.com).

This picture book was inspired by the author's own experience with his father's dementia. You can read an interview with Arthur A. Levine at:

<http://www.curiouscity.net/what-a-beautiful-morning-interview/>

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Katie Kath is an award-winning illustrator from the rolling hills of North Carolina and lives with her husband and their cat. She works primarily in watercolor and ink. She cherishes the memory of making music with her own grandparents, sitting at their ancient pianola, and trying to get it to play the torn-up scroll of "Don't Bring Lulu." More at [ktkath.com](http://ktkath.com).

## EXPLORING & PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITIES

You will, of course, create your own grand program or lesson plan! Following are simply suggested ways to create a community event or classroom experience.

\_\_\_ Locate a copy of the picture book **What a Beautiful Morning** by Arthur A. Levine & illustrated by Katie Kath (Running Press).

\_\_\_ If you are in a school or library, consider contacting your regional Alzheimer's Association to partner on the event. If you are an Alzheimer's organization, consider contacting a public library or school that already holds programming around children's books with children and families. We hope the book and this kit can be a bridge to reach more families with messaging about the disease.

**The Alzheimer's Association** offers wonderful resources at [alz.org/kids](http://alz.org/kids) or at 800-272-3900. Use them to make needed connections or to build your background knowledge.

\_\_\_ If you list your events in newsletters and online calendars, here is some text to help with those listings:

Many in our community struggle with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. While the disease affects the entire family, children can feel the changes in a loved one most acutely. With a read aloud and discussion of the acclaimed picture book **What a Beautiful Morning** by Arthur A. Levine & illustrated by Katie Kath (Running Press), we will explore Alzheimer's disease in a gentle, age-appropriate manner. Be prepared to sing and celebrate the bonds of family! All welcome, but best for ages 4-8. Looking for other ways to explore Alzheimer's disease and dementia with children? **Reach out to the Alzheimer's Association at [alz.org/kids](http://alz.org/kids) or call 800-272-3900.**

\_\_\_ If this event is for the public, print out the event poster on page 6; add your date, time, and location; and duplicate it to advertise the event. If you prefer to adapt the poster on your mighty computer, you can find a JPEG of the poster design on [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com). Simply search for "morning" (in the upper right) and navigate to the **What a Beautiful Morning Event Kit** listing. The font on the poster is Goudy Old Style.

In the picture book, we are introduced to Grandpa, Grandma, and their grandson Noah. Noah and Grandpa have a close bond and love to sing together throughout the day. Grandpa starts to show signs of dementia or Alzheimer's disease, and it frightens and worries Noah. Grandma is able to make new routines for everyone and to keep Noah from being too worried. Noah's great discovery is that Grandpa can return to himself when music is played and songs are sung.

The author and illustrator of **What a Beautiful Morning** portray this family's journey gently in both the words and the pictures. The kit offers suggested dialogue to explore the book spread by spread after an initial reading. You can see that Discussion Guide on pages 7-11.

\_\_\_ Explore the Discussion Guide and decide what you will adopt or create to have a conversation with the children in your group.

## EXPLORING & PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITIES (cont.)

This discussion (or one of your own making) is designed to put information into the hands of families. We have prepared a ½ sheet flyer that links families to the Alzheimer's Association for further information. Look for it on page 12.

\_\_\_ Consider printing and cutting out the Alzheimer's Resources sheet for distribution to families.

Illustrator Katie Kath uses color and the absence of color to indicate Grandpa's "good days" and "bad days." The Book Discussion explores those color choices. You can reinforce the imagery and its meaning with a simple art activity. You will need crayons or colored pencils for this coloring project. Watercolors could be used in a more adventurous setting! Check your inventory of yellow art supplies, as Katie Kath uses yellow to indicate happiness or a "good day."

\_\_\_ Consider printing and preparing for the art activity *The Color of Memory and Music* on page 13.

The Alzheimer's Association recommends that families "listen to or sing old songs" as one of the "10 Activities Kids Can Share with a Person with Dementia." Noah and Grandpa maintain a connection through song. Can you model families singing together by leading a sing-a-long?

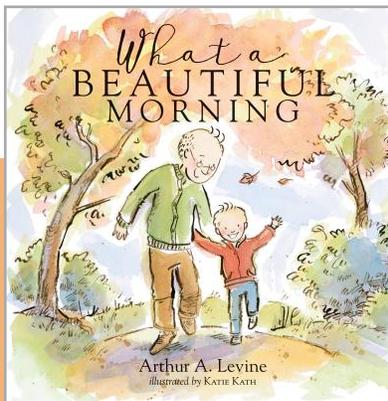
\_\_\_ Consider printing and using the song sheets on page 14. The song lyrics follow the book's plot and themes. It is sung to the familiar tune of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*.

From all of us whose families have been touched by dementia and Alzheimer's disease, thank you for holding an event to create conversation and connection through children's literature.



# What a BEAUTIFUL MORNING

*A Family Story Time  
Exploring Dementia &  
Alzheimer's Disease*



Best for children ages 4-8, but all welcome!

Looking for other ways to explore Alzheimer's disease and dementia with children?  
Reach out to the Alzheimer's Association at [alz.org/kids](http://alz.org/kids) or call 800-272-3900.

# What a BEAUTIFUL MORNING



## BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

*Appropriate for children ages 4-8*

This book discussion guide for Alzheimer's groups, librarians, educators, and families helps children think more deeply about the book **What a Beautiful Morning** by Arthur A. Levine, illustrated by Katie Kath, and published by Running Press.

By exploring clues in the text and illustrations, the children you work with and care about can build a deeper understanding of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. While the guide offers suggested questions and dialogue, the guide does not intend to prescribe how the conversation should go. You will explore the book in your own way. May this guide (and this book) help!

After an initial read aloud of the book, take children back through the book spread by spread to discuss how the use of color and words tells us what is happening to Grandpa and Noah. Leave time after questions to elicit answers from children.

### **Book Cover**

Let's look at the book together again. The author, Arthur A. Levine, and the illustrator, Katie Kath, have a lot to show, tell, and teach us about Noah, Grandpa, and something called Alzheimer's disease. Let's see what we can discover.

### **Spread 1**

What is coming out of the top of the house? What colors do you see?

### **Spread 2**

Do you see those same splashes of color in the kitchen? What do you think those colors coming from Grandpa and Noah mean? Are they happy colors or sad colors?

Grandpa and Noah are singing. Do you think the colors and the singing go together?

### **Spread 3**

Look how Grandpa and Noah bring those rays of yellow and color to a sleepy Grandma! How does Grandma feel when she sees them? [Note Grandma's smile.]

#### **Spread 4**

Illustrator Katie Kath used paint called watercolors to make these pictures. When an artist like Katie uses watercolors, she can make some colors very quiet. Some colors can even hide. It took me a long time, but I think I see some of Grandpa's yellow hiding in the clouds. Can you see it? Even a rainy day cannot change Grandpa's happiness. He is happy to be with his grandson. Just like your grandparents would be happy to be with you.

#### **Spread 5**

Hmmm. What is this between Grandpa's happy colors? [point to line of smoke] Is that smoke? What color is that smoke? I wonder what that gray means? It is smoke, but maybe the illustrator is giving us a hint of something about to happen. A hint of something that is about to happen is called "foreshadowing."

Foreshadow is a big and interesting word. Let's break it apart. "Fore" means before. And what is the second part of the word? Yes, shadow. Is the illustrator telling us that what is next has a shadow? What color are shadows? Yes, gray.

#### **Spread 6**

Oh no. What has appeared over Grandpa's head? And what is missing from around grandpa? The yellow! If the yellow light has gone away and the gray is there, what does it tell us about Grandpa?

This page says, "One morning he couldn't remember how to cut his French toast." Look at the French toast on the plate. What color is it? Why do you think it is that color?

I think gray might mean Grandpa is forgetting, but let's turn the page to find out.

#### **Spread 7**

What color is the whole picture? Why do you think it is all gray?

Grandpa asks, "'Who are you? What are you doing here?'" Has Grandpa forgotten who Noah is? How is that possible?

Grandpa has a sickness called dementia or Alzheimer's disease. This is a sickness or disease that affects many, many people. It sometimes affects our own grandfathers and grandmothers.

For this moment, Grandpa has forgotten who Noah is. Changes are happening deep inside Grandpa's brain. Those changes are causing Grandpa to forget and to be confused.

#### **Spread 8**

Poor Noah. What is he feeling? See how he is gray when he comes from the house, but as he crosses the lawn, he gets more and more color?

The illustrator is showing us that Alzheimer's, Grandpa's confusion, has touched Noah. The gray that Grandpa feels touches Noah and makes him sad. Noah is sad because he does not want his grandfather to change.

Noah being gray does NOT mean that Noah can catch Alzheimer's disease like you catch a cold. Being around someone with Alzheimer's cannot make you sick.

### **Spread 9**

Thankfully, Noah has a Grandma who can explain to him what is happening. She says, "Grandpa knows you. He just gets confused, that's all. So we have to appreciate what he still has, not focus on what he's lost."

This is a hard thing for Noah to feel. He thinks, "That was like trying to feel good about the toys you still had, when your favorite one got left behind at the beach." Have you ever lost a favorite toy? That is what Noah feels like.

The author of this book, Arthur A. Levine, is very smart. He is giving us an analogy. An analogy is when the author helps us understand something new by comparing it to something old that we already know. The author is telling us that being patient when someone has Alzheimer's is like missing a lost toy. It is sad, but we cannot change it.

### **Spread 10**

Noah is spending some time alone while Grandpa is in his gray space, while Grandpa is confused and forgetful.

After playing alone, Noah goes to the piano. The piano makes music, and Noah and Grandpa like to make music together. They like to sing together. Do you remember what happens on the next page?

### **Spread 11**

Wow! Grandpa is back! And what is around him? Yes, yellow and happiness. What brought Grandpa back? Yes, music!

I'll tell you something about the man who wrote this book, Arthur A. Levine. His father had the same disease as Grandpa. Arthur's father started to forget things and then more and more things. It was very sad. But Arthur's father did not forget music. He knew all the words to all the songs he had ever sung. So can you guess what Arthur and his father did together? Yes, they sang! And they stayed connected and happy when they sang songs. Arthur wrote this book because he had the same experience as Noah.

### **Spread 12**

Here we see Noah singing to keep his Grandpa from forgetting and sinking into the gray place.

### Spread 13

But taking care of someone with Alzheimer's, the gray disease, can really make you tired!

### Spread 14

Grandma knows that it is good to stay busy with other things when Grandpa is having a "bad day." Noah and Grandma put happy things on their docket. Can you see any yellow on these pages? What does that yellow say?

### Spread 15

Later, when Noah and Grandma come home, we see Grandpa is still lost in his gray forgetting space. But wait, Grandma asks if anyone remembers a song about supptime. What might happen when Grandpa tries to think about a song?

### Spread 16

Tell me about this picture.

The text says, "He smiled just like he used to. It was like the sun breaking through clouds." The author is using another analogy. What analogy does he use?

What color is the sun? What color are the clouds? Can you see how the author and the illustrator have been leaving us clues with these two colors?

### Spread 17

Tell me about this picture. There is a *little* yellow and a *little* gray. What do you think that means?

### Spread 18

Grandma gets Grandpa and Noah ready for a walk.

### Spread 19

Is the color around Grandpa and Noah as bright as it was in the beginning of the book? [Show kitchen on spread 2.] Maybe it isn't as bright, but the color is still there!

The text says, "And they took off down the road together, planning to go for as long as the song would last."

Will Noah and Grandpa keep singing? Yes, as long as the song will last. How long will the love last between Noah and his Grandpa? Forever. Their love will last forever.

Families can learn more about this disease and how they can stay connected with the people they love from the Alzheimer's Association.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

### Alzheimer's Resources for Families

Consider handing out the Alzheimer's Resource sheet, available as a free PDF download at [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com). Search "morning" in the top right of the website to find the page with **What a Beautiful Morning** activities.

### The Color of Music and Music: An Art Activity

Consider using the art activity "The Color of Memory & Music," available as a free PDF download at [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com). Search "morning" in the top right of the website to find the page with **What a Beautiful Morning** activities.

The coloring sheet asks children to look at the three images of Grandpa below and add color to the version of Grandpa that has remembered a song! This activity reinforces the visual literacy skills that this discussion guide hopes to introduce.



# What a BEAUTIFUL MORNING

## ALZHEIMER'S RESOURCES

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, and over 15 million are serving as their caregivers. The disease can have a big impact on every member of the family, including children.

**The Alzheimer's Association** offers 24/7 support and resources for families at 800-272-3900 and provides child-friendly materials at [alz.org/kids](http://alz.org/kids).

Among other useful information, **The Alzheimer's Association** suggests these activities to help families stay connected:

### *10 Activities Kids Can Share with a Person with Dementia*

1. Bake cookies.
2. Take a walk around the neighborhood.
3. Put a puzzle together.
4. Weed a garden or plant flowers.
5. Color or draw pictures.
6. Create a scrapbook or memory box with mementos.
7. Read a favorite book or story.
8. Eat a picnic lunch outside.
9. Watch your favorite TV show together.
10. Listen to or sing old songs.



Experience the power of song with the picture book by Arthur A. Levine & illustrated by Katie Kath.

# What a BEAUTIFUL MORNING

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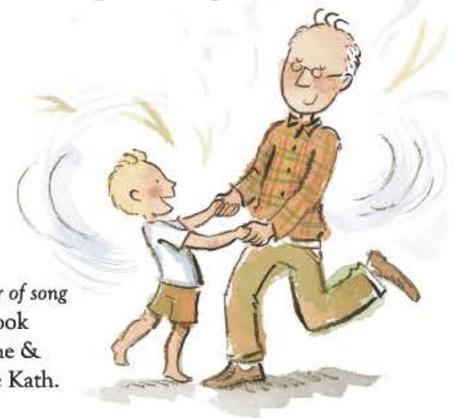
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# The Color of Memory and Music

Have you read the picture book, **What a Beautiful Morning** by Arthur A. Levine and illustrated by Katie Kath (Running Press)? When Grandpa's Alzheimer's disease is affecting his memory, he is painted by the illustrator all in gray. But when Grandpa remembers a song, the illustrator paints Grandpa in bright colors and fills the air around him with color.

Look at the three Grandpas. Use crayons, colored pencils, or watercolors to add color where Grandpa has remembered music. Hum a tune while you color!



Illustration © Katie Kath

Looking for ways to explore Alzheimer's disease and dementia with children? Visit [alz.org/kids](http://alz.org/kids).  
For other activities related to this book, search "morning" at [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com).



## Sing, Sing, Sing a Song

This song can be sung to the tune of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* after a reading of the picture book, **What a Beautiful Morning** by Arthur A. Levine & illustrated by Katie Kath (Running Press).

Sing, sing, sing a song,  
with the rising sun.  
If you wake your grandma up,  
Say, "It's all in fun!"

Sing, sing, sing a song,  
Help me make a plan.  
Slip a docket in your pocket!  
Oh this day is grand!

Sing, sing, sing a song,  
In the pouring rain.  
Let's all shout a sailor song,  
Splashing down the lane.

Sing, sing, sing a song,  
As we make our toast.  
If it burns, we'll take turns.  
Perfect? Well, almost.

Sing, sing, sing a song,  
When the day feels wrong.  
If you raise your voice to sing,  
It won't be wrong for long.

Sing, sing, sing a song,  
Even when you're sad.  
Grab a hand, start a band,  
We will all be glad.

*The Alzheimer's Association recommends singing old songs with family members with dementia. Explore more ideas & information at [alz.org/kids](http://alz.org/kids).*



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