

Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide

Title: *If You Were Born a Kitten*

Author: Marion Dane Bauer

Illustrator: JoEllen McAllister Stammen

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Simon & Schuster, 1997

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota author

Summary: This is a book that in simple terms describes how various baby animals come into the world and what happens when a human baby is born.

Suggested ages: 0-3, 4-6

Tips for Reading:

- Take extra time to show each double page, as the book features double pages of 12 animal babies.
- Emphasize the phrase “If you were ...” on every double page so the children can get a clear image of each type of baby animal, and help the children learn the “pattern” of the book.
- Read the book in a soft, gentle tone as it can be used for a bedtime or before nap book.

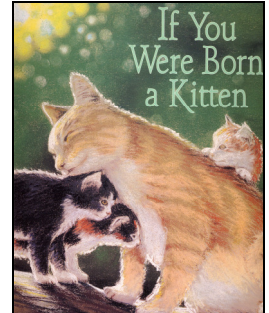
**Questions
before reading:**

- Have you ever seen any baby animals? Where?
- Have you ever seen a baby animal born? What was it like?
- Do you have any younger sisters or brothers? Do you remember when they were born?

**To Introduce
this story say:** We’re going to read a book about baby animals being born.

**Questions
After Reading:**

- Have you seen any of the animals shown in the book? If so, which ones?
- What would a baby animal need from its mother or father?
- Have you ever talked with your parents about the day you were born? What do you remember being told? (Note: For children not living their natural parents, the question can be changed to “Have you ever talked with your family about the day you came to live with them?”)



RELATED ACTIVITIES

Culture:

- Take a trip to a zoo – most zoos have a petting zoo where the children can get very close to animals (sometimes baby animals).
- Take a walk in the neighborhood which could lead to seeing puppies, baby ducks, etc.

Language:

- Play a game with the children by naming an animal and have them provide the name of the young or baby animal (e.g. cat – kitten, dog – puppy).
- Distribute a stuffed animal to each child in your group and then ask each child to talk about the animal they have and describe all the things they know about their particular animal.

Suggestions for English Language Learners:

- Ask each child to state the name of several of the 12 animals in the book in their native language, and ask the rest of the group to repeat the name (so everyone can learn how to pronounce animal names in multiple languages).
- Ask the group of children to repeat each animal's name and make the sounds that each animal makes.

Related Books:

- ***Time for Bed*** by Mem Fox, illustrated by Jane Dyer (Harcourt, 1993)
- ***Animals Born Alive and Well*** by Ruth Heller (Penguin Putnam, 1982)
- ***On the Day You Were Born*** by Debra Frasier (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991)
- ***The Carrot Seed*** by Ruth Krauss, illustrated by Crockett Johnson (HarperCollins, 1945)

