

# Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle

Adapted from the *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle* books by Betty MacDonald  
Book, Music, and Lyrics by Chad Henry

Recommended for Kindergarten and up

When in doubt call on Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, the magical woman who lives in a chaotic community filled with creatures and challenging children. When the parents of her town have problems with their offspring they all call on Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, who can cure these children of all manner of maladies.



Patsy Popover refuses to bathe. She is grimy and gritty and starting to smell. Her father, deathly afraid of germs and dirt, can't take any more, so Mrs. Popover must go to Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle for help. Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle and her patented radish cure come to the rescue.

Mr. Crackle is at his wits' end by his daughter Evelyn's Answer-Backitis. Luckily Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle and her trusty parrot, Penelope, have just the thing to turn Evelyn back into her father's favorite freckled fairy.

Fraidy-cat Forrest is scared of everything—the dark, dogs, his brothers, the wind. To teach Christopher Brown table manners Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle sends over Lester, the pig. Sharon Rogers is in desperate need of Gracefulness Glitter to stop her heedless breaking. And Harbin's daydreamineritis has turned him into the world's slowest slowpoke. Whatever the problem seems to be, the magic Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle has the answer!

## For Children

### George's Marvelous Medicine

Roald Dahl

### Half-Magic

Edward Eager

### The Trolls

Polly Horvath

### Island of the Aunts

Eva Ibbotson

### Making Make-Believe: Fun props, costumes, and creative play ideas

Mary Ann F. Kohl

### Pippi Longstocking

Astrid Lindgren

### Freaky Friday

Mary Rodgers

### Wayside School is Falling Down

Louis Sachar

## ★ Spotlight

### Mary Poppins

P.L. Travers

Mary Poppins is the wonderful nanny, blown to the Banks children by the East Wind. From the moment she arrives with her parrot-handle umbrella and astonishing carpetbag she turns the children's lives into a magical adventure. With her sweet medicines, magical walks, and very interesting friends she teaches the children about love, generosity, and trust.

## Resource List

### For Adults

#### The Irreducible Needs of Children: What Every Child Must Have to Grow, Learn, and Flourish

T. Berry Brazelton, Stanley I. Greenspan

#### Playful Parenting: A Bold New Way to Nurture Close Connections, Solve Behavior Problems, and Encourage Children's Confidence

Lawrence J. Cohen Ph.D.

## ★ Spotlight

### How to Behave So Your Children Will, Too!

Sal Severe

Solidly putting the responsibility for a child's behavior on the parents, *How to Behave* addresses a wide range of issues, such as how children learn to push their parents' buttons, why children misbehave, and how to motivate kids to behave using simple rules and consequences.

Booklist prepared by Lauren Murphy & Catherine O'Brien, Pierce County Library System

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD LEADERSHIP

What is a good leader? The answer may be subjective, but good leaders and role models, like Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle, are an indispensable part of our lives.

There are numerous published books, forums, studies, and college courses dedicated to nurturing youth leadership skills. The Puget Sound area features several leadership development programs, offered to both children and adults, intended to help build vital, engaged communities populated by passionate and dedicated people.

Programs in local school districts and organizations such as the YMCA, Seattle Youth Involvement Network, City Year, and community initiatives such as Project Lift-Off, which focuses on early-learning and out-of-school activities, promote the development of positive leadership skills in our youth.

“Leadership development is about creating opportunity with and for young people—a chance for them to give to and be involved with their communities,” said David Kelly-Hedrick, Director of the YMCA Institute for Youth Service and Leadership. “Young people have wonderful gifts, assets, and values to share with the rest of us, and by finding ways to plug these gifts into the world, the return is a sense of meaning for them and a sense that we truly value their existence.”

Through programs like these, young people are able to identify their core values and integrate them into all aspects of their lives. Effective leadership programs promote the development of competence, connection, character, and confidence in young people.

EALRs: Communication 1.1-3, 2.3-5, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2



### ACTIVITY: PILOT TO TOWER:

Source: *Theatre for Conflict Resolution* by Patricia Sternberg

First, choose a student to be the tower, the leader who gives directions to the pilot. Then choose a student to be the pilot, who will stand on the opposite side of the room and take directions in order to cross the room safely. The pilot cannot speak and is blindfolded and spun around three times, so he/she depends completely on the directions from the tower. As with any flight, there are obstacles (students, books, bags, etc.) in the way of a clear path. When an obstacle is touched, it is a “crash” and a new pair of students should be chosen to play.

Afterward, ask the students which qualities a good tower, or leader, had and why these qualities were important. What did the tower do or say that helped the pilot make it through? What should the tower have said or done that would have helped even more? Ask the students whether they thought being a leader or a listener was harder, and ask them to describe why.

Furthermore, the National Education Association states that students involved in leadership programs show an increased sense of civic responsibility, better multicultural awareness, and more community orientation and involvement. These children want to be involved and to make personal connections with adults who respect them.

For this reason, positive role models play an important role in young lives, offering support, guidance, and encouragement. Good role models also have good leadership traits, like Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle. She is understanding, unconditional in her respect for each individual child, and knows how to make mundane tasks fun. Parents appreciate her resourcefulness, knowledge, and ability to teach important lessons to their misbehaving children.

Young people find their role models in literature, and other media, but most of all in their daily lives. Many children feel that their mothers or fathers, and often teachers, are their most important leaders, and learn their earliest lessons by watching these adults in action.



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was widely regarded as a skillful leader for his strength, commitment, and passion for the civil rights movement.

“The number one reason young people volunteer is because they see their parents doing it,” said Kelly-Hedrick. “Kids learn from what adults do rather than what they say. We need to lead by example and by having lives that include serving in our own communities.”

Encouraging the development of leadership qualities within young people helps them to be self-confident, successful, and an inspiration to others.

## NATURAL CURES - SPANNING CENTURIES AND CULTURES

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle has a cure for everything. Her clever and fanciful antidotes take care of girls who won't bathe and boys who have no table manners, all the while making parents happy and teaching children important lessons in responsibility. Ailments and cures are very much a part of our daily lives, spanning the centuries and the world's cultures.

Chances are a friend or member of your family has given you advice on a remedy. For the pesky hiccups, pinch your nose and drink water upside down, eat a spoonful of peanut butter, or hold your breath as long as possible. For a bee sting, use baking soda and water, mud, or a wet tea bag. Burns abate if you apply the substance from a broken aloe plant leaf to the burnt area. If you have to sneeze, but can't, look up toward the sun.

Most of us don't even think twice about trying out these natural cures. At the John Stanford International School in Seattle, kids tell us about some of the therapies they have tried, some of which are specific to their ethnic heritage. One student from Southeast Asia tells us that you can tell if someone is ill if a red mark appears after rubbing a coin on the back of their neck. Another student, from China, says that those down on their luck should paint their door red to let luck inside. Although some cultures are better known for their use of natural, herbal remedies to cure ailments, most cultures have long folk medicine histories that include the use of plants. The first written records detailing the

use of herbs came from Mesopotamia in 2000 B.C.E and Egypt in 1500 B.C.E. The ancient Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Indians, Chinese, and Native Americans were also herbalists.

Native American herbal medicine may be 40,000 years old, but there was no documentation until the Europeans arrived at the end of the fifteenth century. These herbalists used things such as boiled roots and teas of crushed leaves for treating pain, asthma, coughing, fever, bites, or stings. There is still a strong

practice of herbal medicine in some tribes. While specific procedures vary among tribes, all traditional native medicine is based on the understanding that man is part of nature and health is a matter of balance.

As modern medicine started to evolve in the United States, plants continued to be a mainstay in

rural practices—professionally trained physicians remained beyond the reach, geographically and financially, of most of the population in the frontier days.

Although from the 1940s on, significant technological advances led many Americans away from their herbal heritage, about one-quarter of the prescription drugs in the United States today contain at least one active ingredient derived from plant material: wild cherry bark in cough medicine, menthol in cough drops, or eucalyptus in pain-relieving creams. And the World Health Organization estimates that 4 billion people—80 percent of the world's population—use herbal medicine for some aspect of primary health care.

Herbal remedies and folklore are passed down from healer to healer and family to family. These remedies are an interesting and time-honored way of dealing with ailments.

Source: Information from [www.naturalhealthvillage.com/reports/rpt2oam.htm](http://www.naturalhealthvillage.com/reports/rpt2oam.htm).

Above: In SCT's 1995 production of *The Magic of Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle cures Sharon's clumsiness with a "Headless Breaker Powder." Left to right: Hugh Hastings, Tracy Bryce, M.J. King, Peggy O'Connell, and Leslie Law. Photo by Chris Bennion.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What cures have you used in your family? What cures have you heard about from your friends? Are there any cures that are specific to your culture? Have you found that any of these cures work?
- What is your favorite Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle cure and why?
- What if your best friend had a severe case of giggling-too-much—think of a creative and effective cure to help stop this ailment.

EALRs: Communication 1.1-3, 2.2-4



# *Spotlight on Character*

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle likes to be around kids with good character. Having **good character** means you act, or behave, in a positive way. Draw a picture, or share a story, of you doing the things listed in these sentences.

**I am brave.**

**I am sharing.**

**I am responsible.**

**I respect others.**