Star in the Jar by Sam Hay is about a girl and her little brother who loves to collect little treasures wherever he goes. One day he found an extra special treasure – a star. The star was not claimed by anyone he and his sister knew. So he decided to put it in a jar and take care of it. He took it everywhere. But when the sky called out for the lost star, the little boy and his sister had to find a way to return the star to the sky.

This sweet and charming story highlights and cheers the true friendship, love and bond between a sister and a brother. A love which outshines even the dazzling star in the jar.

You can help children develop essential literacy skills by reading, talking, singing and playing with them everyday. Use the following suggestions as you share Star in the Jar.

Ask Open-Ended Questions Before and After Story

Before the Story
- Introduce the story: A little boy stumbles across a lost star. Together with his sister, they have to figure out how to return the star to the sky.
- What do the little boy and girl have in the jar?
- Do you like to look for and collect little treasures?
- Where is your favorite place to look for treasures?
- Is there something that you take care of? Like a pet, for example.
- At night, what lights up the night sky?
- Have you ever wished upon a star? If you had one wish, what would it be?

After the Story
- What treasures did the little boy collect?
- Where did he find his treasures?
- Do you help a brother or sister? How?
- When do the stars come out in the sky? What else comes out when the stars are out?
- Have you seen a “falling star?”
- Have you written or drawn someone a message? What did you write?
- What makes a forever friend? Tell me about yours.

Introduce New Vocabulary and Concepts

Explaining unfamiliar words and concepts will help expand children’s vocabulary, develop their background knowledge and enhance future read alouds.

- chain: connected together
- crackle: cracking noises
- forever: never ending
- fizz: hissing sound
- glow stick: a stick that shines
- jar: glass container
- message: a note
- sparkly: shiny and glittery
- treasure: something valuable
- twinkle: shine on and off
- wizards: magicians

This book provides a way to talk to children about sister and brother love, helping, stars and forever friends.
Engage Preschoolers in Early Literacy Book Extension Activities

Using Star in the Jar

- Collect star stickers, light crayons and letter-sized black paper. Using crayons, write the child’s name on the paper. Invite them to trace their name with their finger and call out the letters. Invite them to place the stickers on the letters. After adding the stickers, ask them to trace their name with their finger again.

- Play “Hot and Cold” with the children. Hide a star in your classroom. Give children clues as to where it is hidden. As they go around the room, call out “Hot!” as they near the star, and “Cold!” as they move away from it. Repeat this until they find the star.

- Visit the library and look for other books about stars. The Sun is My Favorite Star by Frank Asch and Stars! Stars! Stars! by Elizabeth Wallace are good books to start. Read them aloud in a group or individually.

- Set up a Writing Center. Include (but not limit to) index-sized paper, different writing instruments, stickers, magazines for cutting pictures, scissors, glue, tape, stapler and envelopes. Encourage children to write or draw messages to each other. Set up a place to “mail” the messages. Assign a “Weekly Messenger” whose job is to collect the messages at the end of the day to distribute to their friends.

- Make a class-chart with 100 empty “spaces”. Whenever a child helps another, put a star sticker on one of the empty spaces. At the end of the day, children can share how their friends helped them.

Sing Songs and Chant Rhymes About Stars, the Sun and Moon

Counting Stars
(Tune: “One Little, Two Little, Three Little Indians“)
One little, two little, three little stars,
Four little, five little, six little stars.
Seven little, eight little, nine little stars.
Ten stars in the sky.
(Cut out 10 felt stars and point as you recite the rhyme)

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.

Zoom ... Zoom ... Zoom
Zoom, zoom, zoom, we’re going to the moon!
Zoom, zoom, zoom, we’re going to the moon!
If you want to take a trip,
Climb aboard my rocket ship.
Zoom, zoom, zoom, we’re going to the moon.
In 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, blast off!

Other verses:
Far, far, far, we’re going to the stars!
Fun, fun, fun, we’re going to the sun!

Tuning Up for Outer Space
(Tune: “The Farmer in the Dell“)
The sun is in the sky,
The sun is in the sky.
Hot and bright, it gives us light.
The sun is in the sky.

The moon is in the sky,
The moon is in the sky.
Around and 'round the earth it goes.
The moon is in the sky.

The stars are in the sky,
The stars are in the sky.
Twinkly bright, they shine at night.
The stars are in the sky.