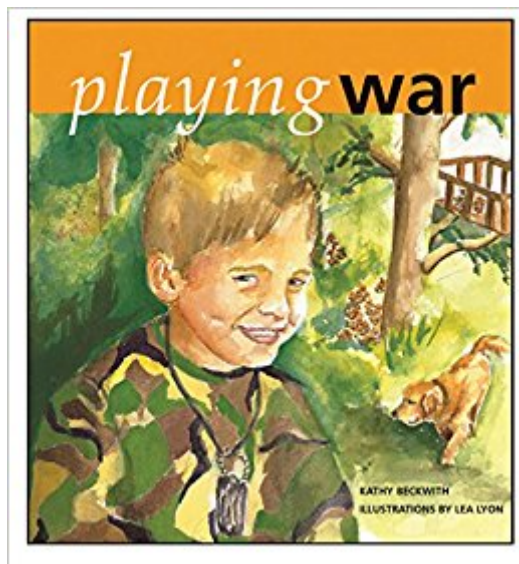


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# Playing War



## Synopsis

\* Winner, Skipping Stones Book Award \*\* Children's Pick of the List, New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association \*One summer day Luke and his friends decide to play their favorite game of war, but Sameer, who is new to the neighborhood, hesitates to join in. When Sameer tells them that he has been in a real war, they don't believe him. As he tells what happened to his family, the others start to see their game in a new light. Topics: Middle East conflict resolution immigration

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 530L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Tilbury House Publishers; 1 edition (July 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0884482677

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Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.4 x 10.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #444,608 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #297 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars

Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

## Customer Reviews

Grade 2-5 It's too hot for basketball, so Luke and his friends decide to play war. As the sides separate to prepare for battle, newcomer Sameer is reluctant to play and leaves the game. The following day, he explains that he was in a real war before he moved to the United States. His house was blown up and his family was killed. The children, saddened by his story, go back to basketball. Beckwith's mission is to show children that war is bad and hurts people. It overpowers the story. The strength here is Lyon's watercolor illustrations in summer greens, golden yellows, and coppery browns that evoke the heat of warm days spent with friends. A supplemental purchase. Rebecca Sheridan, Easttown Library & Information Center, Berwyn, PA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

~ No elementary classroom should be without this book! ~ Children's Literature ~ "...Here's a timely look at war in a thoughtful format accessible to youngsters. ~ Yellow Brick Road Newsletter ~ "... good conversation starter for parents who want to talk about war and violence with their children. ~ New Pages Children and Young Adult Book Reviews ~ "In these times, when violence and war are constantly in the news, children need our help sorting out the fantasy of war play from the painful realities of war. By bringing up the impact of war on one child, who gets upset when his friends engage in war play, and showing us his friends' caring responses, 'Playing War' does what no other children's book before it has done. It provides the forum adults and children need to feel safe talking about the real human impact of war. ~ Diane Levin, Ph.D., Professor of Education and author of Teaching Young Children in Violent Times and The War Play Dilemma ~ "...excellent book ...start a discussion...about the Peace Testimony...illustrations are lovely and support the story beautifully. ~ Friends Journal

This quiet book leads 2nd / 3rd graders to believe that war is not good...whether it is a game and definitely if it is for real. The children are used to picking sides for US vs THEM and play war w/o thinking until one day a newcomer decides to leave without playing. The children stop to question his actions. He relates the story of his homeland and the death of family. War is not good. The kids quickly opt for a game of basketball. Good book for reading aloud and discussing the images of war as a game. Reminds me of ~ Bang Bang You're Dead ~ by Louise Fitzhugh

I bought this book for my son as he is reaching the age when kids start playing these kinds of games (we are Quaker and pacifist). It handles the subject very directly, but sensitively. He asked me to purchase a copy for his school library.

When I was young, I often played war in the back yard with my cousins. We made forts out of cardboard and collected hard, pea-sized berries from the Chinaball tree in our yard. Each side pelted the other until our supply of berries ran out. Then we called a truce, collected the ammunition that had fallen between forts, and started again. I was reminded of my old pastime when I read *Playing War*, written by Kathy Beckwith and illustrated by Lea Lyon. It's summer and the children in the book are bored with playing basketball, lobbing water balloons and riding bikes. They decide to play war and divide into soldiers and enemies, then collect pinecones and sticks to use for

ammunition. But their game changes when one of the friends, Sameer, talks about the real war that kids find in his homeland, and how it affects their lives. *Playing War* is a picture book intended for elementary school readers. It exposes young readers to current events in an age-appropriate way, and it provides an entrance to talk about some of the issues going on in many parts of the world where children are enlisted as soldiers, or their families are affected by fighting. *Playing War* is a good read-aloud book appropriate for younger girls in mother-daughter book clubs.

A group of five children (four boys and a girl) decide, one summer day, to play "war" with pine cones for bombs, and sticks for guns. One boy, who has recently come to the United States from another (unnamed) country, starts to play but decides to go home when his friend Luke declares, "I'm going to blow their heads off." The next day, Luke suggests playing war again, and wishes he could be in a real war. Sameer reveals that, in his home country, he lived in the middle of a war, during which a bomb destroyed his house and killed his parents and brother. The friends are shocked at Sameer's story of the tragedy of war. Luke decides that they ought to play basketball instead. This picture book reveals the horrors of war in a gentle, sympathetic way. It would be a good book to get elementary-school kids talking about issues of war and peace. I have included this book in my online Gender Equality Bookstore.

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