

## Illinois Reads Activity for “Mama Built a Little Nest” Grades

Author: Jennifer Ward <http://www.jenniferwardbooks.com/>

Jennifer Ward was born in California, was raised in Illinois, and went to college and taught in Arizona. She has recently moved back to Illinois. Ms. Ward loves science and literacy. She writes picture non-fiction books for children. She has an informative web site.

Illustrator: Steve Jenkins <http://www.stevejenkinsbooks.com/>

Steve Jenkins is an author and illustrator. Most of his books are non-fiction science books. He was born in North Carolina, but moved around a lot when he was a child. He learned to love science from his father. He thought he would be a scientist, but instead studied art and graphic design. Both his love for science and art has influenced his work. He now lives in Colorado. His web site is very informative.

### Activity and Lesson Plan Websites

- Mama Built A Little Nest Classroom and Activity Guide – This pdf document has a series of lessons to accompany the book. <http://cfmedia.btsb.com/TitleLessonPlans/359.pdf>
- Green Acorns: What Makes a Bird a Bird? Activities for Exploring nest building.

### Activity

List of birds featured in *Mama Built a Little Nest*: woodpecker, hummingbird, cowbird, whydah, cuckoo, emperor penguin, falcon, cactus wren, weaverbirds, burrowing owl, Grebes, shorebirds, swiftlet, hornbill, bald eagle, and flamingo.

Materials: Pictures and information about the birds mentioned in the book; Materials to use to make a model of a nest: Paper to make the correct sized eggs and number of eggs to include in the nest.

1. Today we are going to read a book written by Jennifer Ward and illustrated by Steve Jenkins. Both the author and the illustrator are interested in science and have written several books for children. The title is “Mama Built a Little Nest”.
2. Let’s look at the cover of the book. What do you see? Look at the two birds, how are they alike? How are they different? What are they doing? What do you think the large green object is? What do you think it is made of?
3. You may want to read through the prose part of the book the first time through. Then go back and read the informational text. Examine each nest that is described.
4. Questions for students to think about:
  - a. Where were some of the places that the various birds build their nests?
  - b. Why do you think they built their nests in those locations?
  - c. What materials did they use? Why do you think they selected those materials?
5. Watch the YouTube video of Floating Nest of Little Grebe  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3iPoTtSKtU>
  - a. What did you notice about the Grebes nest?
  - b. Why did they attach it to water plants?
  - c. Why do you think they build nests in the water instead of on the shore?
6. Each small group of children will research more information about one of the birds mentioned in the book.
7. Then they will create a model of the nest including the number of eggs the mother bird will lay.
8. The groups will make a presentation showing what they learned about their bird.