Big ideas for little minds

# Bedtime stories with a lesson

10 short stories for ages 6 to 12, each with what it teaches and 3 questions to ask your child tonight.



Retold simply by Power Thoughts.
Read them aloud with Gyaan the owl at powerthoughts.in

# How to use this book

1. Read one story at bedtime. It takes about two minutes.
2. Read "What it teaches" together.
3. Ask one or more of the three questions. There are no wrong answers: the point is to talk.
4. Share your own story too. Children remember ideas best when a parent goes first.

## Stories in this book


1. The Monkey and the Crocodile
2. The Lion and the Clever Rabbit
3. The Talkative Tortoise
4. Birbal's Khichdi
5. The Cat That Hated Milk
6. The Thirsty Crow
7. The Lion and the Mouse
8. The Tortoise and the Hare
9. Mistakes Help Your Brain Grow
10. Waiting Can Win You More


The traditional tales are from the Panchatantra, Jataka tales, Akbar–Birbal and Tenali Raman stories, and Aesop's fables. The big ideas are inspired by books named on their page. All retold in our own words.

1 · Panchatantra



# The Monkey and the Crocodile

A clever monkey lived in a jamun tree by the river. Every day he shared sweet fruit with a crocodile, and they became good friends.

One day the crocodile's wife said she wanted to eat the monkey's heart. The crocodile carried the monkey on his back into the deep river, then told him the plan.

The monkey stayed calm. "Oh no, I left my heart up in the tree! Take me back and I will fetch it." The crocodile swam back, and the monkey leapt to safety.

WHAT IT TEACHES

When you are in trouble, stay calm and think. A calm mind finds a way out.

## Ask tonight

1. Have you ever felt scared and then thought of a clever way out?
2. Was the crocodile a good friend? Why or why not?
3. What would you do if a friend asked you to do something wrong?



**Gyaan asks:** Why didn't the monkey panic when he heard the plan?

2 · Panchatantra



# The Lion and the Clever Rabbit

A greedy lion ate animal after animal in the forest. The animals agreed to send him one animal a day so he would stop hunting all of them.

When it was the little rabbit's turn, he walked very slowly and reached the lion late. "Another lion stopped me on the way," he said. "He says he is the king of this forest!"

Furious, the lion asked to see this rival. The rabbit led him to a deep well. The lion saw his own reflection, roared, jumped in to fight it, and never came out.

WHAT IT TEACHES

**Brains can beat size and strength.**

## Ask tonight

1. What is something small people can do that big people can't?
2. Is it ever okay to trick someone? When?
3. How do you solve a problem when you can't win by being stronger?

**Gyaan asks:** How did the rabbit win without fighting?

3 · Panchatantra



# The Talkative Tortoise

A tortoise had two goose friends. When their lake dried up, the geese planned to fly to a new lake carrying the tortoise on a stick.

"Hold the stick in your mouth and do not speak, no matter what," they warned. Up they went, high over a village.

People below laughed and pointed. The tortoise wanted to answer them. The moment he opened his mouth to speak, he let go of the stick and fell.

WHAT IT TEACHES

**Sometimes the wisest thing is to stay quiet and stick to the plan.**

## Ask tonight

1. When is it better to listen than to talk?
2. Do you ever feel you must reply when someone teases you?
3. What helps you keep a promise when it gets hard?



**Gyaan asks:** Why was it so hard for the tortoise to stay quiet?

4 · Akbar and Birbal



# Birbal's Khichdi

Akbar promised a reward to anyone who stood in a cold lake all night. A poor man did it, staying warm only by looking at a lamp far away.

"You were warmed by that lamp," said Akbar, "so no reward." Birbal said nothing. The next day, he hung a pot of khichdi high above a tiny fire.

"When will it cook?" asked Akbar. "The same way a faraway lamp warms a man," said Birbal. Akbar understood, and gave the poor man his reward.

WHAT IT TEACHES

**A promise should be kept fairly, without silly excuses.**

## Ask tonight

1. Why is it important to keep promises?
2. Have you ever made an excuse to get out of something?
3. How can you point out unfairness politely?

**Gyaan asks:** What was Birbal trying to show the emperor?

5 · Tenali Raman



# The Cat That Hated Milk

The king gave every courtier a cat and a cow, so the cats could keep away mice. Tenali's cat grew thin while the others grew fat.

Before giving his cat milk the first time, Tenali had served it very hot. The cat burned its tongue and would never touch milk again. It caught mice instead.

At the palace, the king's men offered all the cats milk. Tenali's cat ran away from the bowl but was the best mouse catcher of all.

WHAT IT TEACHES

**Things are not always what they look like. Look closer before you judge.**

## Ask tonight

1. Have you ever judged someone too quickly?
2. How can we find out the full story?
3. What did the cat learn from one bad experience?

**Gyaan asks:** Why did Tenali's cat look thin?

6 · Aesop's fables



# The Thirsty Crow

On a hot day, a thirsty crow found a pitcher with a little water at the very bottom. His beak could not reach it.

He tried tipping the pitcher, but it was too heavy. Then he had an idea. He picked up a pebble and dropped it in.

One pebble, then another, and another. Slowly the water rose to the top. The crow drank happily.

WHAT IT TEACHES

**Patience and small steps can solve big problems.**

## Ask tonight

1. What is a big task you could break into small steps?
2. When did you try again after something didn't work?
3. What other ideas could the crow have tried?

**Gyaan asks:** What would have happened if the crow had given up?

7 · Aesop's fables





# The Lion and the Mouse

A lion caught a tiny mouse under his paw. "Please let me go," squeaked the mouse. "One day I may help you." The lion laughed, but let him go.

Some days later, the lion was trapped in a hunter's net. He roared and roared but could not get free.

The little mouse heard him, came running, and nibbled through the ropes until the lion was free. "You see," said the mouse, "even small friends matter."

WHAT IT TEACHES

**No act of kindness is ever wasted.**

## Ask tonight

1. Has someone you helped ever helped you back?
2. Why did the lion laugh at first?
3. How can you be kind to someone younger than you?



**Gyaan asks:** Why did the mouse come back to help?

8 · Aesop's fables



# The Tortoise and the Hare

A speedy hare laughed at a slow tortoise. "Let's race," said the tortoise calmly. Everyone thought the hare would win easily.

The hare dashed ahead, so far ahead that he lay down under a tree for a nap. The tortoise kept walking, step by step, without stopping.

When the hare woke up, the tortoise was almost at the finish line. The hare ran as fast as he could, but it was too late. Slow and steady won.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Keep going, steadily. Showing up every day beats being fast once.

## Ask tonight

1. What is something you get better at by practising every day?
2. Have you ever felt like the tortoise? Or the hare?
3. What helps you keep going when something is slow?

**Gyaan asks:** Why did the hare lose even though he was faster?

9 · Big idea from Mindset



# Mistakes Help Your Brain Grow

Your brain is a little like a muscle. When you practise something hard, it gets stronger.

Mistakes are not a sign that you are bad at something. They are a sign that you are learning. Every mistake teaches your brain something new.

Instead of "I can't do it," try saying "I can't do it yet." That one small word, yet, keeps the door open.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Mistakes are part of learning. Say 'not yet' instead of 'can't'.

## Ask tonight

1. Tell your child about a mistake you learned from.
2. What is something hard you're practising right now?
3. How does it feel to finally get something right?



**Gyaan asks:** What is something you can't do... yet?

10 · Big idea from studies on patience



# Waiting Can Win You More

Imagine someone gives you one sweet and says, "If you wait ten minutes without eating it, you'll get two." What would you do?

Waiting is hard! Some children sing songs, look away or play a game in their heads to help the time pass.

Learning to wait for something better is a superpower. It helps with homework, saving money and lots of grown-up things too.

WHAT IT TEACHES

**Patience is a superpower you can practise.**

## Ask tonight

1. What is something you waited for that was worth it?
2. What helps you be patient?
3. Could we practise waiting for a treat this week?

**Gyaan asks:** What tricks would you use to help yourself wait?

# 15 more stories, read aloud

Kids corner in Power Thoughts has 25 stories narrated with Gyaan the owl, stars for every story finished, and tonight's questions for you. Free, no ads, and your child's name and stars stay on your phone.

**powerthoughts.in → Kids corner**

