

# The Magical Cake



A story for children and grown-ups  
to explore the five senses together

# CURIOUS TOTS



Working in partnership with



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This booklet is designed as a storybook that can be enjoyed by a child and adult together, with a playful narrative for the little one and tips and suggestions for the adult.

The booklet uses the senses as a way into exploring the world around us, tapping into the importance of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing to young children developing their understanding of their environments and experience of the world. The characters are intended to bring these senses to life in the way of superheroes to emphasise to children just how amazing they are.

Throughout the booklet, there are suggestions and tips to open up conversations between the adult and the child as they follow the journey along with the characters. The suggestions encourage asking questions and letting conversations go down playful tangents.

This modelling of curiosity and fascination with the world by adults is important to encourage children to develop their own confidence in being curious. Open questions are great to help create conversations where there's no wrong answer, letting loose the child's imagination and giving them space to learn to articulate their experiences.

From here it's over to you - we hope you can use this booklet as a jumping off point from which you can have lots of curious conversations about how we experience the world through our senses!

We'd like to thank Radu Secăreanu for his hard work and creative flair in writing and illustrating this booklet as well as Elaine Winter, the Creative Practitioner for the Curious Tots project, for her insightful guidance, application of theory and generosity in editing the booklet along the way.

# The Magical Cake

Once upon a time, there was a small house surrounded by tall trees and green bushes. It was warm and cosy. You could hear laughter coming from inside!



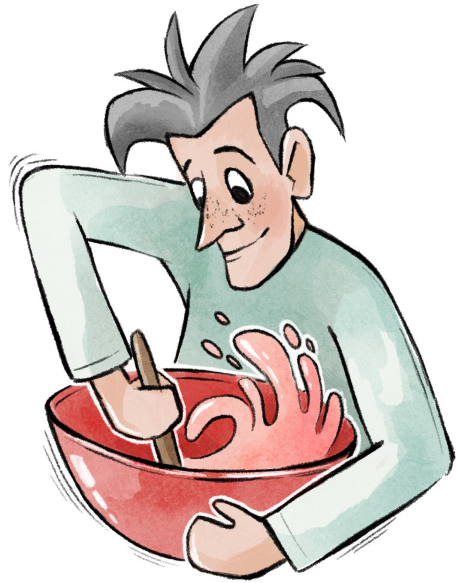
In this house lived five happy children: Celia, Honey, Lavender, Echo and Filbert. They all had special powers that made their sense of sight, taste, smell, hearing and touch better than anyone else's!



**Talk together:**

**Would you like to explore the five senses? I bet we'll have a lot of fun!**

The children had a Daddy, who really liked to bake. One day, he wanted to make something extra special, he wanted to bake them a cake!



**Talk together:**

**Look at this cake! What are some of our favourite things about cakes?**



Daddy had a brilliant idea, why not ask the children to help? Their powers will help him make the best cake in the world.



First, he called Celia, who can see you better than anyone else.

“Celia, would you look for the last ingredient for me? It’s in a big, red, square box in the cupboard. There are many things in there, so better look around carefully!”



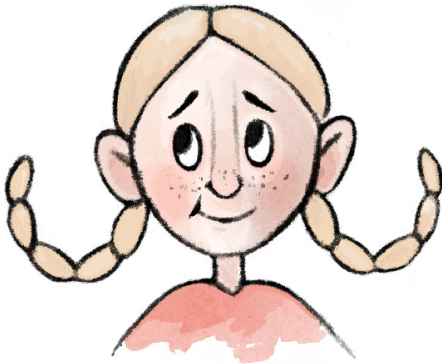
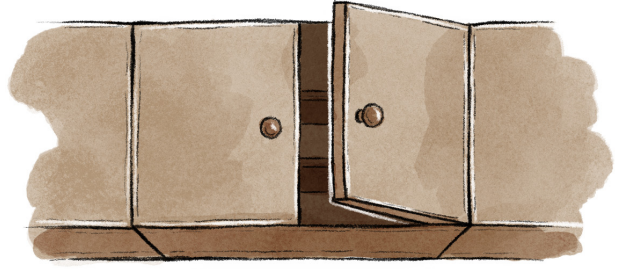
**Talk together:**

**What can our eyes do? What things can you see right now?**

Celia quickly ran to the cupboard and stood in front of it.

“Have I forgotten something?” she asked herself. After thinking for a little bit, she realised, “My warm-up, I need to do my warm-up!

How else will I be able to look around carefully like Daddy asked me?”

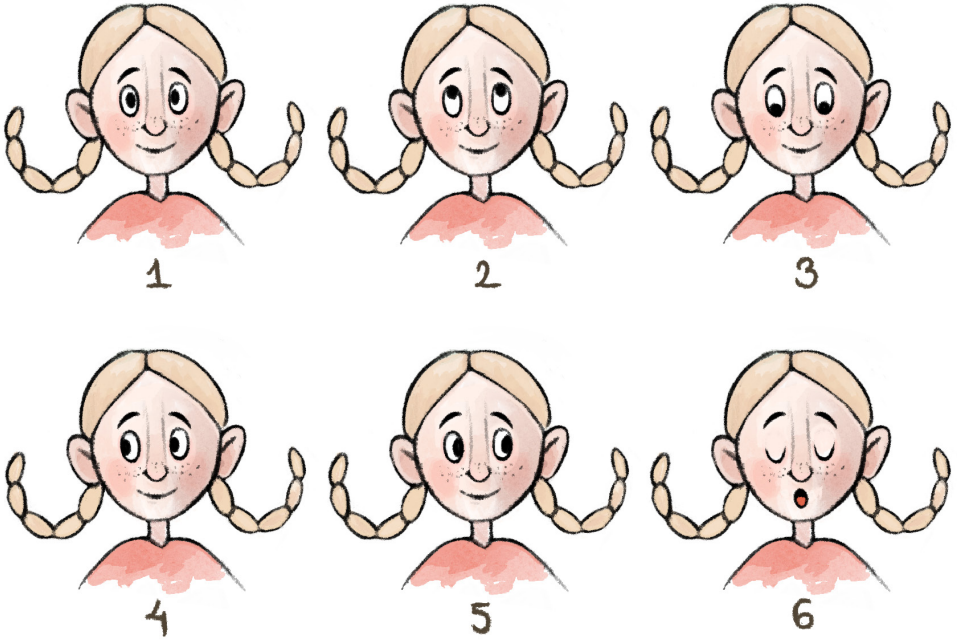


**Talk together:**

**Should we join Celia for her warm-up? Let's have some fun!**



# Warming Up

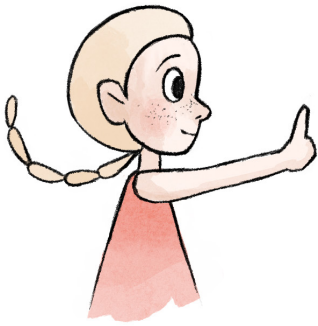


Celia kept her head still and looked up into the sky so only her eyes moved. Keeping her head still again, she looked down to the ground, then all the way to the left and all the way to the right. Celia then blinked a few times!



**Talk together:**

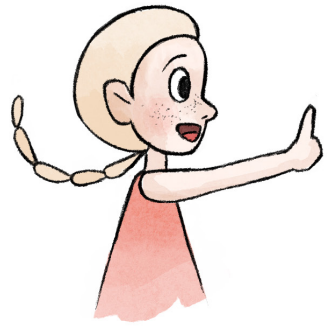
**Did we notice anything? How did it feel? Why did you think that?**



1



2



3

For the next exercise, Celia held one arm straight out in front of her and pointed one of her fingers on that hand up to the ceiling.

She then slowly brought her finger closer to herself in one steady movement without taking her eyes off it.

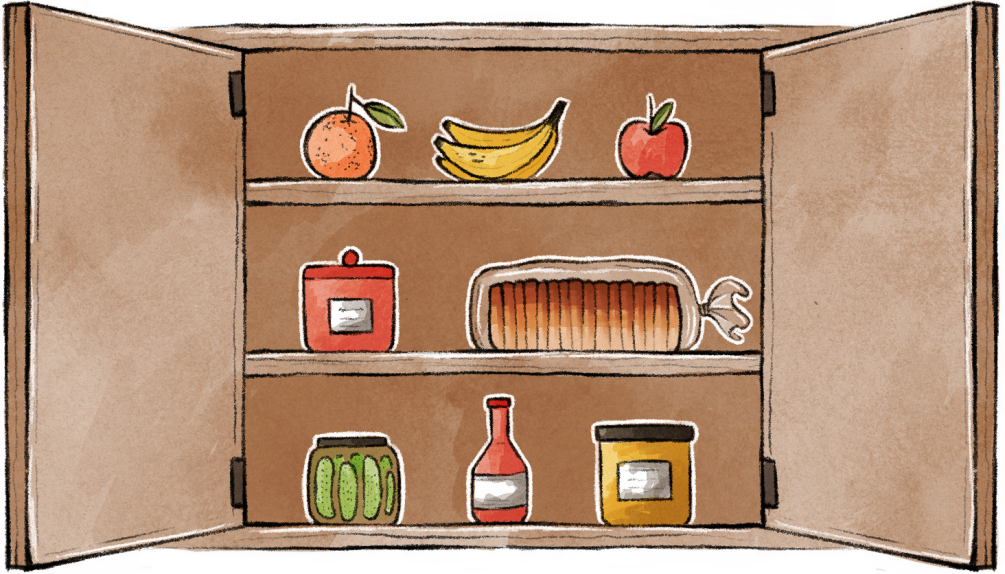
Surely now after the warm-up it will be easy to find what Daddy asked for!



**Talk together:**

**What did you notice? How did it make you feel?**

# The Cupboard



Celia took a good look around. There were so many colours, so many shapes and sizes! The one she was looking for was big, red and square!



1



2



3



Talk together:

What colours do you see? Which one do you think the sugar is in? What can you find in your cupboard?



“That’s it! That’s the one Daddy was looking for!”

Celia brought it to her Daddy, who was very grateful.

Next, Daddy needed to ask someone else for help.

He called Honey, who loved tasting food! Daddy knew she could help pick the ingredients.

“Honey, will you taste some ingredients for me? I can’t seem to make up my mind which one to use!”



**Talk together:**

**What are your favourite foods?**

**What do they taste like?**



1



2



3



4



5



6

Daddy laid out all the ingredients in front of Honey. “They are all so different! I wonder which one would be best in a cake...” said Honey. The first one was a lemon. Her lips puckered. “Lemons are great for lemonade, but they’re too sour for a cake!”



**Talk together:**

**Should we try some food together?**

**What does it taste like? How does it make you feel?**





Next, she took a crisp out of the bag. “Yummy! They’re crunchy and salty, but I don’t think that’s right for cake!” Honey then took a bite of the banana. “It’s so sweet and mushy! It’s nice on its own, but this won’t do for cake.”

A piece of cheese was next. “Cheese is lovely. So creamy and tasty. But on a cake... that wouldn’t be great!” Honey then saw a bright red chilli pepper and said: “I’m not tasting that! It makes my mouth feel like it’s on fire!”



**Talk together:**

What is your favourite taste? How about your least favourite? Why is that?



The last ingredient was the big, red, square box with white sparkles inside. When Honey tasted it, her face lit up.



“It’s sugar! So nice and sweet! Perfect for the best cake in the world!”



Next, Daddy asked Lavender for help. You see, Lavender loved new smells!

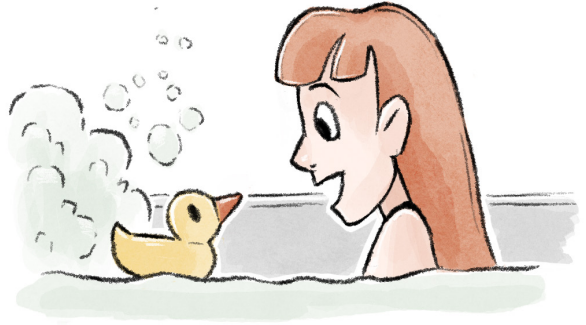
One of her favorite smells was her bath-time shampoo. It smelled like vanilla, which made her very happy.



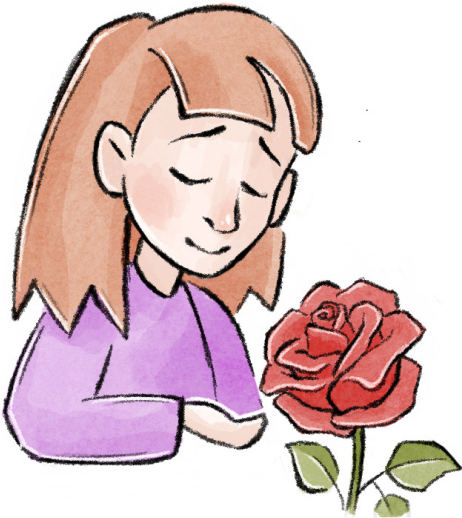
**Talk together:**

**Let’s go in the kitchen and use our noses to find some smells together!**

She would use it while taking hot baths with her friend, Mr. Ducky.



Her other favourite smell was roses. She would always try looking for them when they'd go to the park at the weekend.

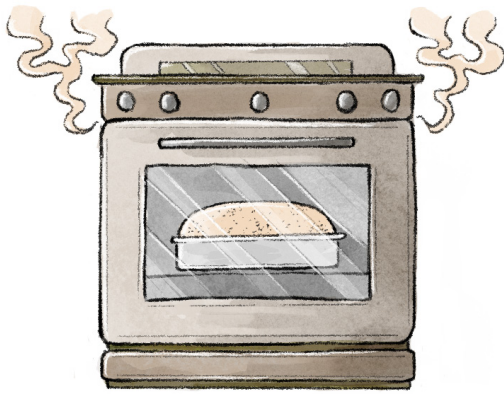


“Lavender, I’ll need you to tell me when the cake is ready. I know your nose will be able to tell when it’s done!” said Daddy.



**Talk together:**

**What is your favourite smell? How about your least favourite?**



As the cake was slowly cooking, it released a sweet scent into the air!

Lavender's nose caught the scent wafting through the air and said, "Daddy, Daddy! I think our cake

is finished!", so they ran into the kitchen to see if the cake was ready.

As they came in, the smell of freshly baked cake got even stronger, almost like they were in a bakery!

Meanwhile, Echo was upstairs in his room, lying on his bed playing a game.



**Talk together:**

What kinds of cake do you like?

What other smells are nice?

With his eyes closed, he was using his ears to listen to the sounds around him.

Outside the house, he could hear the gentle humming of the wind and dogs barking.

Inside, he could hear the ticking of the clock and... what's this? There's noise coming from the kitchen!



Echo ran into the kitchen just as Daddy was taking the cake out of the oven. Echo noticed the cake was sizzling in the pan. It sounded almost like a balloon slowly losing air.

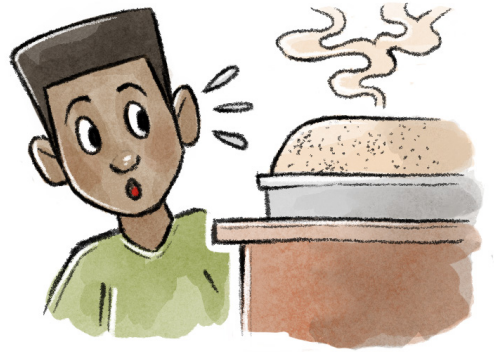


**Talk together:**

Let's close our eyes for a moment and listen! What can you hear far away? What can you hear close-up?

Daddy was once again amazed with Echo's sense of hearing.

"That's wonderful, Echo! If you stop and listen, you can hear all sorts of interesting sounds!"



While this was happening, Filbert came running from the living room to join them.

He was barefoot, so when he walked from the living room carpet to the kitchen floor he said:



**Talk together:**

What things are soft? How about scratchy? What is smooth and what is hairy?





“The floor is so cold here. The carpet in the living room is soft and warm.” Just as Daddy was about to take the cake out of the oven, Filbert said: “Don’t forget about the oven mitts, if you touch the cake now it will burn!” Filbert

always loved feeling different objects, so he knew what to do when something was hot or cold.

Once the cake was ready, Daddy put icing and sprinkles on top and cut everyone a piece.



Filbert touched it with his hands. It was spongy and soft, it felt almost bouncy!



**Talk together:**

**Do things feel differently when you touch them with your feet instead of your hands?**



Now that they were all done helping Daddy, the children managed to create one of the most delicious cakes in the world.

It looked beautiful, smelled amazing and it tasted incredible! There was no other way to celebrate this victory than having a slice with your family!



**Talk together:**

**Did you enjoy the story? What were the five senses we learned about?**





Curious Tots is a programme from Nottingham-based education charity Ignite!, which supports the development of children's language and communication skills through creative activities that stimulate their innate curiosity.

The project has been running since 2018, and the current iteration, where the project takes the form of weekly nursery sessions led by a creative practitioner as well as training for early years staff and sessions where parents/carers can join too, is funded by Small Steps Big Changes until 2024.

You can find out more about Curious Tots, and other Ignite! programmes at [www.ignitefutures.org.uk](http://www.ignitefutures.org.uk)



The Magical Cake is a story that celebrates the power of our senses.

Join in together to use your own sense of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste as Celia, Lavender, Echo, Filbert and Honey use their special powers to help Daddy bake a cake.

With playful illustrations and tips for opening up curious conversations with young children, this booklet aims to inspire many more opportunities for children's curiosity to guide the development of their language and communication skills.