

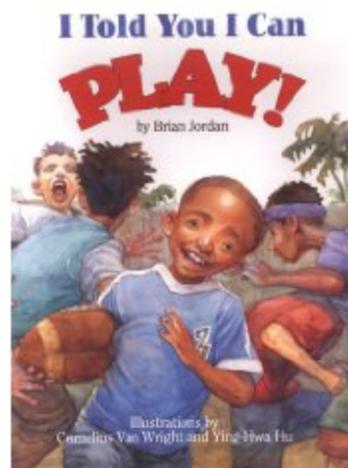
Teacher's Guide

I Told You I Can Play!

Written by Brian Jordan

Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and
Ying-Hwa Hu

Published by Just Us Books



Book Description

Six year old Brian loves to play ball. But his big brother and sister think he is too young and too little to play with them. The older boys in the neighborhood think Brian is too small too. But given the opportunity, Brian shows them all that he is not too little and that he “can play.” Drawing from his own experiences as a youngster, former Major League Baseball player Brian Jordan has written a heartwarming story about an empowered little boy who exudes confidence, self assurance and a sense of humor.

Target ages: 4-8

Themes

sportsmanship, sibling relationships, determination, overcoming obstacles

Pre-Reading Questions

Look at the cover. What do you think the story is about?

Judging from the title, can you guess what happens in the story?

What games or sports do you like to play? What games or sports do you think the boy on the cover likes to play?

Discussion Questions

Who does Brian want to play with? Why?

Why don't Brian's brother and sister want him to play with them?

What do Brian's sister and brother do to keep Brian from playing with them?

Where do you think this story takes place?

If the player hadn't gotten called home, do you think Brian would have had a chance to play in the football game?

At the end of the book, Brian scores a touchdown. Do you think that was important to the story? Why or why not. How do you think the story would have ended if Brian hadn't scored a touchdown.

Is there anything Brian could have done differently to achieve his goal?

Why do you think the author wrote the book?

Is there a moral to this story? If so, what is it?

Define the following words/phrases:

twin

tackle

touchdown

determination

eager

insist

disappointed

suddenly

WRITING/LANGUAGE ARTS

A. What adjectives would you use to describe Brian? List them. Then list the adjectives you would use to describe Brian's sister and brother.

B. Brian was able to reach his goal of playing in the football game because he was determined. Write about a time when determination helped you achieve a goal. What was your goal? What obstacles did you face? How did you overcome those obstacles?

C. This book was inspired by things that happened to the author in real life. What kind of book or story could you write based on your life? Who would be the main characters? What would you name the book? What would be the moral of the story?

D. The author of this book turned two childhood hobbies—playing baseball and football—into careers. What are your hobbies? Develop a list of careers that your hobbies might lead to.

E. Read about the author's non-profit organization The Brian Jordan Foundation (last page of the book). What are the foundation's goals? What is the foundation's motto? Why are those goals important? Think about ways you would like to make your neighborhood, school or community better and come up with an organization or group that will help you

achieve those goals. Give your organization a name and a motto.

ART

A. Illustrate a cover for the book of story you created in activity C of the Language Arts section.

B. Develop a brochure or flyer to promote the organization you created in activity E of the Language Arts section.

C. Think of one dream or goal you have. Draw a picture or make a collage that shows you achieving that goal. Write your name at the bottom of the picture or collage. Then have classmates take turns guessing what that dream is.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

A. Use the Internet or library to research other professional athletes who have written children's books. Read one of those books at school, home or the library.

B. Use the Internet or library to research other athletes who have started non-profit organizations for children.

About the Author

A native of Baltimore, **Brian Jordan** excelled in football and baseball during high school and college, and went on to become one of a few athletes to play both sports on the professional level. He played for the NFL's Atlanta Falcons for several years and made his Major League Baseball debut in 1992, playing most recently for the Atlanta Braves. In 1998, he founded the Brian Jordan Foundation, a non-profit youth organization that is committed to creating and supporting programs that improve the quality of life of underprivileged children and their families. *I Told You I Can Play!*, based on Jordan's own childhood experience, is the author's first picture book for children.

About the Illustrators

The collaborative efforts of husband and wife team **Cornelius Van Wright** and **Ying-Hwa Hu** have produced many wonderful books for children, including *An Angel Just Like Me*, *Coming Home: A Story of Josh Gibson*, *Baseball's Greatest Homerun Hitter*, and *Zora Neale Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree*. Wright is a native of New York and Hu was born in Taiwan. They reside with their daughter and son in New York City. *I Told You I Can Play!* is their first title with Just Us Books.



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