# There’s Going to Be a Baby

**Outline:**

From two of the world’s best-loved picture-book creators, an absolute gem for new-siblings-to-be.

When is the baby coming? What will we call it? What will the baby do? We don't really need the baby, do we? As the arrival of a new sibling draws nearer, the questions that stream through a young child's mind are followed with sensitivity and humour in this enchanting book. Exquisitely illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, these pages brim with love, excitement and reassurance as the child in the story imagines all kinds of colourful futures for the brother or sister he is waiting to meet. Full of warmth and promise, this is an instant and timeless classic.

**Author Information:**

John Burningham is widely regarded as one of the world’s finest picture book artists. With over 35 books to his name, he has twice been awarded the Kate Greenaway Medal, for *Borka: The Adventures of a Goose with No Feathers* and *Mr Gumpy’s Outing*. Among his other celebrated books is *Granpa*, for which he was awarded the Kurt Maschler Award, and which was later made into a successful feature film. He lives in London.

**Illustrator Information:**

Helen Oxenbury is among the most popular and critically acclaimed illustrators of her time. Her numerous books for children include Smarties Book Prize-winning *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell; *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen; as well as her classic board books for babies. She won the Kate Greenaway Medal for *Alice in Wonderland*. She lives in London.

**How to use these notes:**

These notes are to be used in conjunction with the text *There’s Going to Be a Baby*. This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.
Classroom Ideas for *There’s Going To Be a Baby*:

**BEFORE READING THERE’S GOING TO BE A BABY:**

- Ask students to view the cover and title. Identify the following:
  - The title of the book
  - The author
  - The illustrator
- Discuss the following with students: What is the role of the author?; What is the role of the illustrator?

**ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- How can you tell when the mother is speaking? How can you tell when the little boy is speaking? What does the mother say about the baby? What does the little boy say about the baby? How do you think each of these characters feel about the baby?
- What are the activities that the little boy and his mother spend time doing? What do you like to do with your parents?
- What are the different occupations the little boy imagines the baby doing? What does the baby do in each of these occupations? How do the pictures tell you these stories? What are the different uniforms or outfits that identify the baby in these occupations? Draw your own pictures of the baby in each of these occupations.
- Can you think of more occupations that are not mentioned in *There’s Going to Be a Baby*? What does a person do in each of these occupations? Are there uniforms or special outfits a person would wear in these occupations? Draw your own pictures of what the baby would do in these occupations.

**A CONVERSATION WITH THE CREATORS ABOUT THEIR FIRST-TIME CREATIVE PAIRING:**

*Please describe your process of working together and what it was like collaborating as a couple to create There’s Going to Be a Baby.*

We now realise that it has taken over ten years to complete *There’s Going to Be a Baby*. We started with a much longer text, and for the sections in which the boy is exploring the baby’s future in his imagination, Helen drew realistic babies in adult clothing, which looked very bizarre and not entirely appealing. We can’t even begin to remember how many times we had another try at getting it right! Finally, Helen had the idea of depicting the baby as a comic-strip character, which removed some of the obstacles, and gradually the whole book came together.

*Were you inspired by your experience as parents to tell this story? What do you hope parents and children will take away from this story?*

Fortunately we didn’t experience (we think) this problem with our own children, but one does see all around how some children never come to terms with their new sister or brother. We hope this book, which is a celebration of there being a new baby in the family, may also help a young child to come to terms with the new arrival.

*Are you planning another team effort in the near future? (We sure hope so!)*

We too hope we will one day manage to do another project together, but of course it has to be the right one.