






Parent reading guide for "A Bargain for Frances" by Russell Hoban

 Ages 6+



Welcome

This guide will help you teach your child money management skills while reading “A Bargain for Frances” by Russell Hoban. It will do this by:

-  Helping you explain the key ideas covered in the book, and then providing you with signs your child understands the key ideas and can use them in daily life.
-  Giving you things to think about before reading the book with your child. These can help you spot key points in the book or spark ideas to discuss later.
-  Helping you prepare for an enjoyable reading time with your child.
-  Providing questions to talk about with your child.
-  Suggesting activities that help your child put ideas and lessons into action.

The story

Frances saves and saves for a china tea set. Her friend Thelma tricks her into buying an old plastic tea set. Thelma says there are no “backsies” on the bargain. Frances finds a way to get what she really wants.



Key ideas

By the time you finish this discussion guide, your child will be able to **point to examples** of these key ideas in the book you read and **discuss real-life examples, too**. Use these definitions to explain the ideas. We've also included ways children can show they are ready to use them in their daily lives.

1. Making decisions

Many times there are different ways to use money. Taking the time to ask questions, learn about different choices, and compare what's good and bad about each one helps you reach good decisions.

How kids show it: They can look at a few choices and select one that will bring the best results.

2. Setting goals

A goal is something you want to do or to have. When you set a goal, you make a plan to reach it by a certain time. You then follow the plan until you succeed. Reaching a goal feels good. Celebrate your success and the successes of others.

How kids show it: They can follow a multi-step plan to reach a goal (with a little help and encouragement).

3. Staying true to yourself

Sometimes we might feel left out if we don't have what other people have. Knowing what's important to you and not comparing yourself to others can help you feel good about your decisions.

How kids show it: They can name one special thing they like about themselves and one thing that makes each family member special too. **(Ages 7+)** They can discuss why it's okay that different people use their money for different things.

4. Flexibility

It's important to learn from mistakes. We can change our plans and try something new if our first idea isn't working.

How kids show it: They can talk about a time when their plans didn't turn out how they wanted and what they did instead.

Something to think about

First, read the book yourself and think about these ideas:

- Frances had a friend named Thelma. Thelma often tricked Frances when they played together. Like Frances' mom, parents sometimes worry about their children getting the "worst of it" when they play with certain friends.
- Frances had a plan for her allowance. She was saving this money to buy a china tea set.
- Thelma tricked Frances into giving up her goal of a china tea set. When Frances learned she had been tricked into buying the plastic tea set, she found a way to change the bargain she made with Thelma. Frances teaches Thelma it's sometimes better to lose a bargain than to lose a friend.



Before you read

Read the book first yourself. Knowing the story will help you know what comes next. It is important to ask your child questions about the story as you read. Ask what might happen next in the story.

- Choose a quiet time for stories and make it part of your daily routine.
- Find a cozy, quiet place to read.
- Make sure your child can see the pictures.
- Talk about the pictures and characters in the book.
- Read with expression in your voice. Give each character in the story his or her own voice.
- Keep the story time short enough to leave them wanting more.
- Look for ways during the day to bring up the messages in the story.
- Continue to read aloud together even if your child can read alone.



Something to talk about

Before you begin to read the story with your child, look at the cover of the book together. Ask what the story might be about.

As you read the story with your child, talk about these ideas:

- Why did Mother want Frances to be careful?
- What was Frances' goal?
- How did Thelma get Frances to buy the plastic tea set?
- What problems did Frances need to solve?
- What decisions did Frances make to help her solve the problem?
- What was more important to Frances than the tea set?



Something to do

First time allowance

Ages 5+

This activity will help your child understand goal setting with his or her savings. An allowance is one way to teach a child how to manage money, especially if it is paired with regular talks about how the money is used. Frances managed her money by saving it for a blue china tea set. Setting a savings goal and regularly putting aside a portion of an allowance over time helps teach children to save and manage their allowance better.

A good time to start an allowance is when children start asking for things in the store. You decide the right amount for your child. But discuss with your child how often to give the allowance, and stick to the plan. When you pay the allowance, ask your child how much should go toward the savings goal and how much should be used for spending, giving, or other purposes. This will help make savings a habit.

Picture a savings goal

Ages 6+

This activity will teach your child to focus on a savings goal. Frances had a savings goal. She wanted a real china tea set with pictures of birds and a Chinese house.

A picture of your child's savings goal, close to the child's piggy bank or penny jar, may help keep him or her focused.

Ask the child to cut out the picture or draw the thing he or she wants. Have the child tape the savings goal picture to the bank. This way a child remembers what the savings are for and feels a sense of accomplishment when the goal is reached.

Test the claims of a TV commercial

Ages 8 +

This activity will help your child solve problems. Frances was tricked by Thelma's advertising. Even though she had her mind set on a china tea set, Thelma convinced Frances to buy her plastic tea set. When children watch television they are tempted by commercials.

If your child is tempted by a toy, food, or other product advertised on television, find out more about it together. Examine the product together. Have the child answer these questions about it:

- Does it really do what they say on TV?
- Is it as much fun as it looks on TV?
- Is it right for the child's age?
- Is it safe?
- Will it last?

Many times children will see that the item does not look like what they saw on television. Explain to your child that TV commercials use special words, music, and settings to make us want to buy. We can be disappointed if we buy something advertised without checking it out first.

About this guide

The Money as You Grow Book Club is a research-based program designed to help parents, caregivers, and others teach children ages 4 through 10 money skills through reading, activities, and play.

The Money as You Grow Book Club is an updated version of the University of Nevada Extension's Money on the Bookshelf program. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), The University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Financial Security, and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs have worked together to expand the program and make it available to libraries, educators, and parents nationally.

The CFPB is an independent federal agency. We write and enforce rules that keep banks and other financial companies operating fairly. We also help educate and empower consumers. For more about tools and resources for parents, visit consumerfinance.gov/MoneyAsYouGrow.

The Center for Financial Security is a research center that seeks to help the public build financial knowledge and skills, increase access to financial services and increase the financial security of families. The University of Wisconsin-Extension is part of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Cooperative Extension System, which brings vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, and young people.

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