

[PDF] Our Family Tree: An Evolution Story

Lisa Westberg Peters, Lauren Stringer - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Our Family Tree: An Evolution

Author: Lisa Westberg Peters, Lauren

Released: 2003-04-01

Language:

Pages: 48

ISBN: 0152017720

ISBN13: 978-0152017729

ASIN: 0152017720



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Description:

From School Library Journal Kindergarten-Grade 3-Evolution is a ticklish topic. It is controversial to some for religious reasons; for others, it is a challenging concept to present to a young audience without losing scientific veracity. For one thing, young children have little concept of time-a million years might be the span between birthdays. For another, the idea of slow, evolutionary change still seems somehow equal to a magician's trick. So, accomplishing a reasonable explanation of a scientific concept and its progress through millennia is worthy of note. Peters's simple text uses the "we/us" format to place Homo sapiens in the "family" of life at its very beginnings. "All of us," she states in the first sentence of the book, "are part of an old, old family," going back to Earth's beginnings. "We've changed a lot since then." Through a simple progression, amply bolstered by Stringer's striking, large acrylics, she traces "our" family tree from unicellular organisms through

amphibians, therapsids, and early mammals to early primates, hominids, and our distinct "humanness" today. Enriched by two pages of additional data and a colorful time line, the whole is rounded out by carefully written author and illustrator notes. Simpler than Stephen Webster's *The Kingfisher Book of Evolution* (2000) and Melvin Berger's *How Life Began* (Doubleday, 1990; o.p.), and perhaps easier than Joanna Cole's venerable *Evolution* (Crowell, 1987; o.p.), this book is a wonderful companion to Steve Jenkins's equally attractive *Life on Earth* (Houghton, 2002).

Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

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From Gr. 4-7. It seems like a great idea: tell the story of the evolution of all living things by showing that "all of us are part of an old, old family" and that we can trace our roots back to "tiny round cells in the deep dark sea." But it's not that easy to explain the minutiae of DNA and the sweep of Earth's geology and biology to a young audience. This oversize picture book, with chatty text and elaborate, packed, brightly colored, double-page illustrations, may look child friendly, but it's sometimes confusing. Readers are told that the time line, which appears in tiny print, isn't drawn to scale, but it certainly looks as if microscopic bacteria haven't been around much longer than primates. The second part of the book works best, tracing the emergence of warm-blooded creatures right up to the excitement of walking upright. This is best suited to classroom use, where adults can turn to helpful notes at the back to discuss our connections with those first tiny round cells and how we've changed since then. *Hazel Rochman*

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