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# **Bedtime Bravery**

## Classroom Guide

*Scary things can't stay scary when you make them silly*

**CASEL Competency:** Self-Management

**Grade Level:** Pre-K–1

**Duration:** 40–50 minutes

**Category:** Growing Up

## Learning Objectives

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- Discover the "Silly Trick" — making scary things ridiculous shrinks fear
- Understand that caregivers come back and teach us coping tools
- Practice using humor to transform nighttime anxiety into laughter
- Recognize that a dark bedroom hides gentle magic for brave explorers

## Overview & Preparation

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### Key Vocabulary

Silly Trick • Shadow • Ridiculous • Courage • Nightlight • Moonlight • Cozy • Caregiver • Giggle • Secret room

### Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Flashlight for shadow play
- Paper and crayons
- Stuffed animals or comfort objects
- Optional: silly costume props (paper hats, mustaches)

## Before Reading

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### Connection Question

*Have you ever made something scary into something silly? What happened to the scary feeling?*

### Background Building

Talk about what "brave" really means — it doesn't mean never feeling scared. It means doing something even when you're scared. In this story, the hero learns a special trick: when something looks scary, you make it RIDICULOUS. Give the shadow a top hat! Give the monster polka-dot underpants! Scary things hate being laughed at — they shrink right up.

## During Reading — Pause Points

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- **When the big light clicks off and the room feels different** — The room looks different in the dark. Everything feels bigger. Has your room ever felt different at night?
- **When the caregiver sits on the bed and teaches the Silly Trick** — The caregiver says: "Make it SILLY!" Give the shadow a top hat and mustache! Why do silly things stop being scary?
- **When the hero makes shadow puppets on the wall** — The shadows went from scary to a puppet show! The hero is making a giant bunny, a dinosaur, a silly blob. What changed?

## Discussion Questions

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1. The caregiver taught the Silly Trick — give scary things polka-dot underpants or a chicken hat. Why does making something silly shrink the fear?

↳ Can you think of something that seemed scary until someone made you laugh about it?

2. The hero discovered the bedroom at night is a "secret room full of gentle magic." What magical things might YOUR room hide at night?

↳ What does moonlight look like on your walls or ceiling?

3. The hero made shadow puppets — giant bunny, dinosaur, silly blob. How did shadows go from scary to a puppet show?

↳ What shadow puppet would you make?

4. At the end, the hero says "goodnight" to everything in the room — the nightlight, the favorite thing on the wall, the silly shadows. Why is this a brave thing to do?

↳ What would you say goodnight to in your room?

## Facilitation Tips

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Some children may have intense nighttime fears. Validate all feelings without judgment. The story's power is in the HUMOR — model the Silly Trick enthusiastically (give a shadow a squeaky voice, make a creak sound like a burp). Laughter is contagious and reframes fear naturally.

## Emotional Payoff

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*The Silly Trick — making scary things ridiculous — gives children a portable, repeatable tool they can use tonight. Give the shadow a top hat, the monster polka-dot underpants, and watch them shrink. The bedroom at night transforms from a scary place into a SECRET room full of gentle magic, and the child is the boss of every shadow in it.*

## After Reading Activities

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### The Silly Trick Workshop

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Paper, markers, silly accessories (paper hats, googly eyes)

Each child draws something that scares them, then adds the most ridiculous accessories they can imagine — a tutu, a chicken hat, polka-dot underpants, googly eyes. Watch the scary thing become hilarious. Do a gallery walk so everyone can see and laugh together.

### Shadow Puppet Theater

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Flashlight, hands, white wall or sheet

Dim the lights and use a flashlight to create shadow puppets on the wall. Start with "scary-looking" shapes, then transform them into silly ones by adding ears, wiggling fingers, making them dance. Practice the story's lesson: shadows are just silly puppets waiting for a show.

### Nighttime Room Discovery Drawing

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Black construction paper, white and silver crayons, star stickers

Draw your bedroom in the dark using white and silver crayons on black paper. What might look different at night? What might be beautiful? Add star stickers for moonlight. Share what "gentle magic" is hiding in your room when the lights go off.

## Writing Prompts

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- Draw a scary thing wearing the silliest costume you can imagine. What is it wearing? Why is it funny now?
- If your bedroom shadows could put on a puppet show, what would they perform?
- Write a "goodnight" message to three things in your bedroom that you love.

## Home Connection

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### Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "Bedtime Bravery," about a child who learns the Silly Trick — when something looks scary, make it RIDICULOUS. Give the shadow a top hat! The monster gets polka-dot underpants! The creaky noise is the house burping! Scary things shrink when you laugh at them. Your child also discovered that a dark bedroom is actually a secret room full of gentle magic — moonlight paintings, shadow puppet shows, and familiar objects transformed into something beautiful.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Practice the Silly Trick at bedtime — pick one scary thing and make it ridiculous together
- Try shadow puppet theater with a flashlight before lights-out
- Say goodnight to items in the room, just like the hero does: "Goodnight, nightlight. Goodnight, bookshelf castle."

With warmth,  
Your Child's Teacher

### Related Books

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- The Dark by Lemony Snicket
- Orion and the Dark by Emma Yarlett
- Can't You Sleep, Little Bear? by Martin Waddell
- There's a Nightmare in My Closet by Mercer Mayer