

A Sensory Story about Growing Things:

THE LITTLE RED HEN

This is my version of the traditional folktale with a slightly more cooperative ending than the original!

If you would like to join in the story with some props you could gather together: a small tin or Tupperware pot of seeds (you could use rice or beans or anything that rattles for the seeds), a watering can, a rattle or bell or any kind of noisemaker, a bowl or colander of tomatoes, a saucepan and wooden spoon and a tablecloth (or something similar).

Some children might enjoy an actual spray of water on the back of the hand when the little hen is watering the seeds.

The story ends with a big bowl of spaghetti and pot of tomato sauce. Using real tomato sauce might end up a bit too messy, but you could try using real spaghetti. Or alternatively cut long thin strips of newspaper or fabric.

If you are using this story in school as part of a 'growing things' topic you could combine it with real gardening and cooking activities, for example, real seed planting and watering. You could also use actual seedlings and tomato plants. (Changing the animals to human characters can make the story feel more appropriate for older children.) Directions for actions are in the square brackets.



Once upon a time a little red hen found some seeds in an old tin at the back of the shed.

[Shake tin or pot with seeds inside]

“Who will help me plant these seeds?” said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the cat.

“Not I,” said the rat.

“Not I,” said the big pink pig.

“All right then, I’ll do it myself,” said the little red hen – and she did!

She ran round and round and round and planted all the seeds.

[Using your index finger trace circles on the palm or back of your child’s hand]

Here I plant my seeds in a row, seeds in a row, seeds in a row!

[As you chant this ‘plant’ the seeds in a row on your child’s arm by gently pressing your thumb at regular intervals along their arm]

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“Who will help me water the seeds?” said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the cat.

“Not I,” said the rat.

“Not I,” said the big pink pig.

“All right then, I’ll do it myself,”

said the little red hen – and she did!

She ran round and round and round and watered all the seeds.

[Use your index finger on your child’s hand as above and then with the watering can mime watering the seeds]

“Who will help me keep the birds away from the seeds?”

said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the cat.

“Not I,” said the rat.

“Not I,” said the big pink pig.

“All right then, I’ll do it myself,”

said the little red hen – and she did!

She ran round and round and round

and scared all the birds away from the seeds.

[Use your index finger on your child’s hand as above and then shake the bell or rattle]

The seeds grew into five seedlings.

And the seedlings grew into plants.

And the plants were tomato plants!

“Who will help me pick the tomatoes and carry them inside?”

said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the cat.

“Not I,” said the rat.

“Not I,” said the big pink pig.

“All right then, I’ll do it myself,”

said the little red hen – and she did!

She ran round and round and round and

picked all the tomatoes.

Pick, pick, pick, pick, pick.

[Use your index finger on your child’s hand as above and then mime picking tomatoes, then show your child the bowl or colander full of tomatoes]



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The little red hen turned those tomatoes into tomato sauce!

“Who will help me stir this sauce?” said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the cat.

“Not I,” said the rat.

“Not I,” said the big pink pig.

“All right then, I’ll do it myself,”
said the little red hen – and she did!

[Stir the pot]

“Who will help me lay the table and make it nice?”
said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the cat.

“Not I,” said the rat.

“Not I,” said the big pink pig.

“All right then, I’ll do it myself,”
said the little red hen – and she did!

She ran round and round and round and made everything nice.

[Use your index finger on your child’s hand as above and then shake out the tablecloth]

In the middle of the table she put a big bowl of spaghetti
and a big pot of tomato sauce.

[Show your child the spaghetti]

“Who will help me eat the spaghetti
and tomato sauce?” said the little red hen.

“I will,” said the cat.

“I will,” said the rat.

“I will,” said the big pink pig.

The cat, the rat and the big pink pig ran to the table.

[Make a running noise with your feet]

“Stop!” said the little red hen “Stop! Stop! Stop!”

[Hold your hand up to make ‘stop’ sign]

“You watched when I planted the seeds.

[Shake seed pot]

You watched when I watered the seeds.

[Mime watering]



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You watched when I scared the birds away.

[Shake bells or shakers]

You watched when I picked the tomatoes and made the tomato sauce.

[Stir pot]

You watched while I made the table nice.

[Show the tablecloth]

And now you can watch while I eat my spaghetti and tomato sauce!

“Uh-oh,” said the cat.

“Uh-oh,” said the rat.

“Uh-oh,” said the big pink pig.

“We are sorry! We are very sorry! We are very very sorry”
said the cat, the rat and the big pink pig.

[Apologise with lots of exaggeration]

“Well...” said the Little Red Hen

[Long pause!]

“Okay – you can share.”

The little red hen, the cat, the rat and the big pink pig ate and ate and ate.
And then the cat, the rat and the big pink pig ran round and round and
round washing the dishes and tidying up.

[Using three fingers trace circles on the palm or back of your child’s hand]

“We can do it ourselves!” they said.

And they all lived happily ever after.

TRADITIONAL STORY ADAPTED BY AILIE FINLAY
flotsamandjetsam.co.uk

ILLUSTRATED BY KATE LEIPER
kateleiper.co.uk



If you enjoyed this story, you can find more at wigtownbookfestival.com or on the **Big DoG Children’s Festival** YouTube channel.

