

Barkley

By Rebecca Crane

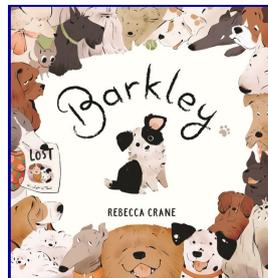
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A deceptively simple ode to happiness and self-confidence, as told through the voice of a lovable dog named Barkley.

This is the story of a small dog named Barkley who is having a bit of an identity crisis. Barkley belongs to a little boy named Max, who is part of a large community of people with all different kinds of dogs, each with a very distinct characteristic. Except for Barkley. So, what kind of dog is he? Just imagine his surprise when he discovers he's a LOST dog. Luckily, Max helps him realise he's more than just that: he's a best friend dog, and that makes him a happy dog, too. And you can't ask for much more than that.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Friendship
- Belonging
- Self Esteem
- Animals

Discussion Questions and Activities:

- What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title *Barkley*.
- Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?
- Barkley describes himself in certain ways, such as being big, or being fluffy. But then when he compares himself to the other dogs he decides that he is not big or fluffy at all. Do you think he is correct?
- If another dog is fluffier or bigger than Barkley, does that mean Barkley is no longer big or fluffy at all? Think about one of your own features or talents. If someone else has more of that feature or talent than you do, does that negate your feature or talent altogether?
- When Barkley continues to compare himself to other dogs, how does he end up feeling? What does he end up thinking about himself? Think about a time that you might have compared yourself to someone else (i.e. have you ever wished that you looked the same or had the same skills as someone else?). What did you compare (talents, looks, belongings?) and how did it make you feel? How did you deal with those feelings and what did you learn from the experience?
- Max is very sad when he loses Barkley. Do you think he is worried that Barkley is not the biggest dog? Or the fluffiest, or the fanciest dog? Why do you think Max is sad? What do you think he cares about most when he thinks of Barkley?
- There are lots of wonderfully different characters in this book, both dog and human. Is there a human that looks like someone you know? Can you identify any of the different breeds of dogs? Do you have a dog at home, and do you know what kind of dog it is? Can you see a dog in the illustrations that looks like your dog? Use the library resources to find books on dog breeds to find out more about the dogs in the illustrations.
- Think about all the different kinds of dogs that you have seen in the illustrations and that you looked up in the library resources. Now draw and collage a picture of your perfect dog. Have a think about what materials will help you to create your perfect dog, would she be fluffy or scruffy? Big or middle size? Spotty or fancy? Wearing a hat or carrying a stick? Use materials collected from your craft stash and from outside to give your dog lots of personality. Make sure you give your dog the perfect name as well.