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Expanding Horizons: The Reading Bookbag To Go

Char M. Lemons
Allegan Public Schools, Allegan Michigan

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The Reading Bookbag To Go

Char M. Lemons

Now your student can take you home — your voice, that is — when you tape record yourself reading or storytelling your favorite read aloud.

The *Reading Bookbag To Go* can be tailored to fit your classroom's needs. Create a theme, include puppets, posters, store bought taped stories and blank story writing books — whatever coordinates with your curriculum or season of the year. The Reading Bookbag that I have used consists of a compact and simple (goof proof) cassette recorder and a durable, waterproof tote bag. Laminated identification tags are attached to the tote bags and each cassette recorder is engraved with an identification number. A teacher can arrange for a different student to take the bookbag home nightly, or use the bookbag as a good behavior reward incentive.

I am a Chapter One Reading Specialist, and the Reading Bookbag To Go has made a difference for my struggling readers. Reluctant students feel at ease moving at their own pace with the taped stories. Comprehension skills, fluency of language, and most importantly self-esteem are all reinforced and strengthened through this at-home reading experience. Feedback from parents indicates that they appreciate having the convenience of a professional storyteller to help out with bedtime story hour.

Busy parents can create their own version of the Reading Bookbag. A blank cassette tape and storybook sent to special relatives can turn an ordinary story into a special personalized experience for your child on those busy evenings when parents need to be away from home at story hour.

Char M. Lemons is a Chapter One Reading Specialist in the Allegan Public Schools, Allegan Michigan.