

# Hope is a Spark

AUTHOR

**COLIN BUCHANAN**

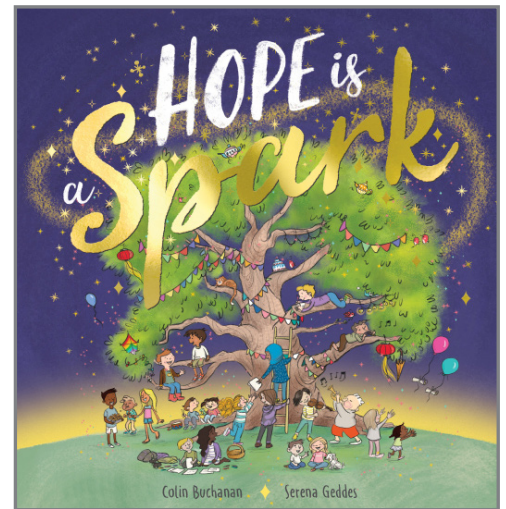
ILLUSTRATOR

**SERENA GEDDES**

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

When it's gloomy and grim, when it's dreary and dark, be it ever so small, hope is a spark! A book that celebrates the small joys in life through the power of togetherness and hope.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin has won seven Golden Guitar awards and has written songs with Lee Kernaghan, Adam Brand and Troy Cassar-Daley. His song 'Hat Town', written with Lee Kernaghan, won an APRA Award, while his Christmas album, recorded with Greg Champion, has become an Australian classic, in particular his 'Aussie Jingle Bells', now a staple at school end-of-year concerts.

Colin appears as a regular presenter on repeats of ABC TV's *Play School*. More recently he can be seen on *Playhouse Disney*, a co-production between Australia's Seven Network and Disney Channel. He appears with Monica Trapaga each year representing Seven and Disney on Carols in the Domain. He also regularly hosts on radio Qantas' in-flight country music channel.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Serena spent six years working with a fabulously mad group of talented artists at Walt Disney Studios in Sydney before embarking on the path of picture book illustration in 2009. She works both traditionally and digitally and has illustrated eighteen books, ranging from picture books to board books to junior novels.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What does the cover artwork show happening?
  - How many different people can you see on the cover and what are they doing?
  - Why do you think that the people shown on the cover are behaving in this way?
  - How does the picture on the cover make you feel when you look at it?
  - What do you think that this book might be about?

- How do you think the people in the cover artwork are feeling? Why do you think this?
- Choose one of the full page spreads in the story, and use it as inspiration to help you create a hope-filled artwork of your own using pencils and watercolour paints.
- Look at the first picture in the book, and as a class discuss what you can see happening. How do you think the people in the picture are feeling? In pairs or small groups, make a list of as many different words as you can think of that can be used to describe this picture and the physical and emotional state of the people in it as you can.
  - Now, look carefully at the picture of the children making music. How do you think the different people in this picture are feeling? Make another list of words to describe this picture and the people in it.
  - Once you have finished, as a class discuss your two different lists, and compare and contrast the words you have used. Can you see any patterns in the similarities and differences between the two lists? Choose one of the words from your lists, and use it as the centrepiece of an A4 or A5 sized artwork. Arrange everyone's individual artworks featuring different words into a wall display in the shape of the word 'hope'.
- As a class, share music and songs with each other that you feel inspire hope. Practise several of your favourites from the ones everyone shared, and have a class performance of hope-filled music at assembly or for a group of parents.
- What is something that fills you with feelings of hope that isn't mentioned in the book? Create an artwork illustrating your chosen event, act, or circumstance, and caption it with a brief description of what it is and how it fills you with hope.
- As a class, draw a large picture of a leafless tree, and mount it on the wall of the classroom. Individually, draw a large leaf shape on a piece of paper, and write messages of hope, caring and encouragement inside your leaf shape. Once finished, colour and cut out your leaf, and attach it to the branches of your tree.
- Individually, write a letter to someone you care about, telling them how and why they are important to you. Hand deliver your letter if they live close by, or send it in the post if they are further away.
- As a class, make and decorate cupcakes or gingerbread men. Write a short description of how they smell while they are baking, how it makes you feel to smell them, and how it feels to eat them afterwards.