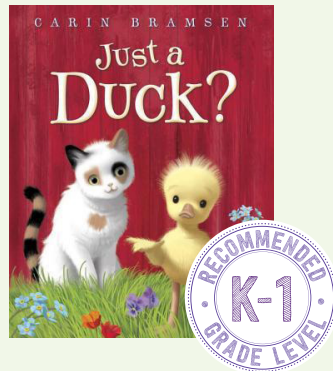


## Just a Duck?

by Carin Bramsen

### Themes

Do Your Best  
Uniqueness of Me  
Friendship  
Compassion  
Self Acceptance  
Encourage Others  
Heroes  
Appreciation of Differences



Cat and Duck are friends. Duck wants to do everything that Cat does but he finds that his best efforts don't produce the same results as Cat's best efforts. Duck soon discovers what he is best at and they both learn that they are real heroes because of their unique abilities.

### Key Vocabulary

**Slink:** to move as if afraid or ashamed. Creep close to the ground to avoid attention.

**Shame:** to feel like you have done something not right

**Shimmy shake:** to move and wobble your body from head to toes

**Bat at leaves:** to swing and softly hit, not to hurt or destroy

### Teacher Note:

NED reminds kids to do their best at everything!

*“Even if you can't do something as great as someone else – always try to do your personal best. That's what makes you a champion! And, if you never give up, you will get better and better with practice.”*



PRINTABLE:

Photos of Animals

### Before Reading: Discussion Starters

1. Show students an empty box and ask, “If you looked into a box and saw a cat, what you would see?” *Answers will vary: four legs, furry, nose, ears, tail.* If students are having trouble visualizing and describing – show them the picture of the cat. Help them to focus on the physical description – not sounds they might hear!
2. Could that same description fit a duck? Why? Why not? Describe how they are the same and different? *Answers will vary as students compare and contrast a duck and cat's physical features.*
3. We're going to read a story about a cat and a duck who want to be friends. Do you think that would work? Why? Why not? *Answers will vary*

### After Reading: Discussion Starters

1. Why did Duck want to do everything that Cat did?  
*They were good friends and enjoyed playing together. Duck wanted to grow up to be just like a cat.*
2. Describe what actions/motions Duck tried to do to be just like cat. Did Duck do his best? What would NED say to Duck when he failed?  
*Answers will vary; slinking-no problem. Climb a tree (race to the top)-duck couldn't grip the tree with his feet and he didn't have 4 legs like cat. NED would encourage Duck for trying and trying...never giving up.*
3. What did Cat do when Duck struggled to climb the tree? Was Cat acting NED-like?  
*Cat encouraged Duck that he needed more time to grow. Cat did not make fun of him, brag or boast. Cat was an encourager like NED! Cat tried to find something else that they both could do.*

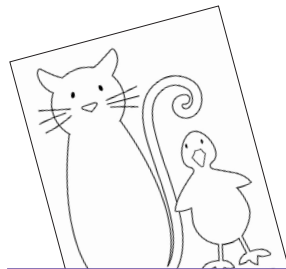
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PRINTABLE:

"I Can" Book



PRINTABLE:

Art Collage Send Home

4. What was Duck able to do his best at that Cat could not do? *Swimming in the water.*
5. Have you ever been like Cat? Are there things that YOU are best at and others struggle with? Have you ever felt like Duck? Are there things that others are best at and you struggle with?  
*Answers will vary. Help students to realize that each of them has something that is easy for them and sometimes others wish they could do the same thing. Reinforce how it's nice to encourage others instead of making fun of them or hurting their feelings when you are better at something than they are. Remind them to **never give up** and **do their best** in everything they try.*
6. How did Cat feel when Duck was "best" at swimming?  
*Answers will vary. Cat considered duck a hero because he saved the day.*
7. Did Duck brag and boast about being the best swimmer?  
*No – he actually thought he was just a duck.*
8. How did Duck and Cat play together in the end? *They did the drip-dry shimmy shake for two! Who was better at doing the dry-dry shimmy shake? They both did their best.*

## Writing Prompt

**Make an "I Can" Book** Each student can draw, color and write in this simple two-page booklet. Print double-sided and fold.

## Activities

**Can You Be a Cat?** This is a great brain break activity to help students rerresn and rejuvenate.

- Pretend to **SLINK** around the room.  
*Get close to the ground and slowly and quietly lifting one leg high and then placing it down. Repeat with second leg.*
- Pretend to **CLIMB** a tree.  
*Move arms and legs as if climbing a tree higher and higher. Move one arm, then the second arm, one leg and then other leg. Repeat until you get to the top of the tree!*
- Pretend to **JUMP UP** and bat at leaves.  
*Jump and stretch with your right hand and then jump and stretch with your left hand.*
- Pretend to **SWIM**.  
*Use your arms only and do different swimming strokes.*
- Do the **DRIP-DRY SHIMMY SHAKE!**

**Art Collage** Use the printable of a simple drawing of a cat and duck to create a texture collage. What can students add, from the art supplies in the classroom, to show the unique features of a cat and duck? Suggested materials: scrap pieces of fake fur, feathers, glass eyes, black buttons. **TEACHER NOTE:** This activity makes a great parent/child home project. Have students bring back their completed collages to share with the class.

### Resources

Accelerated Reading Quiz: 171838  
Author Website: [www.carinbramsen.com](http://www.carinbramsen.com)

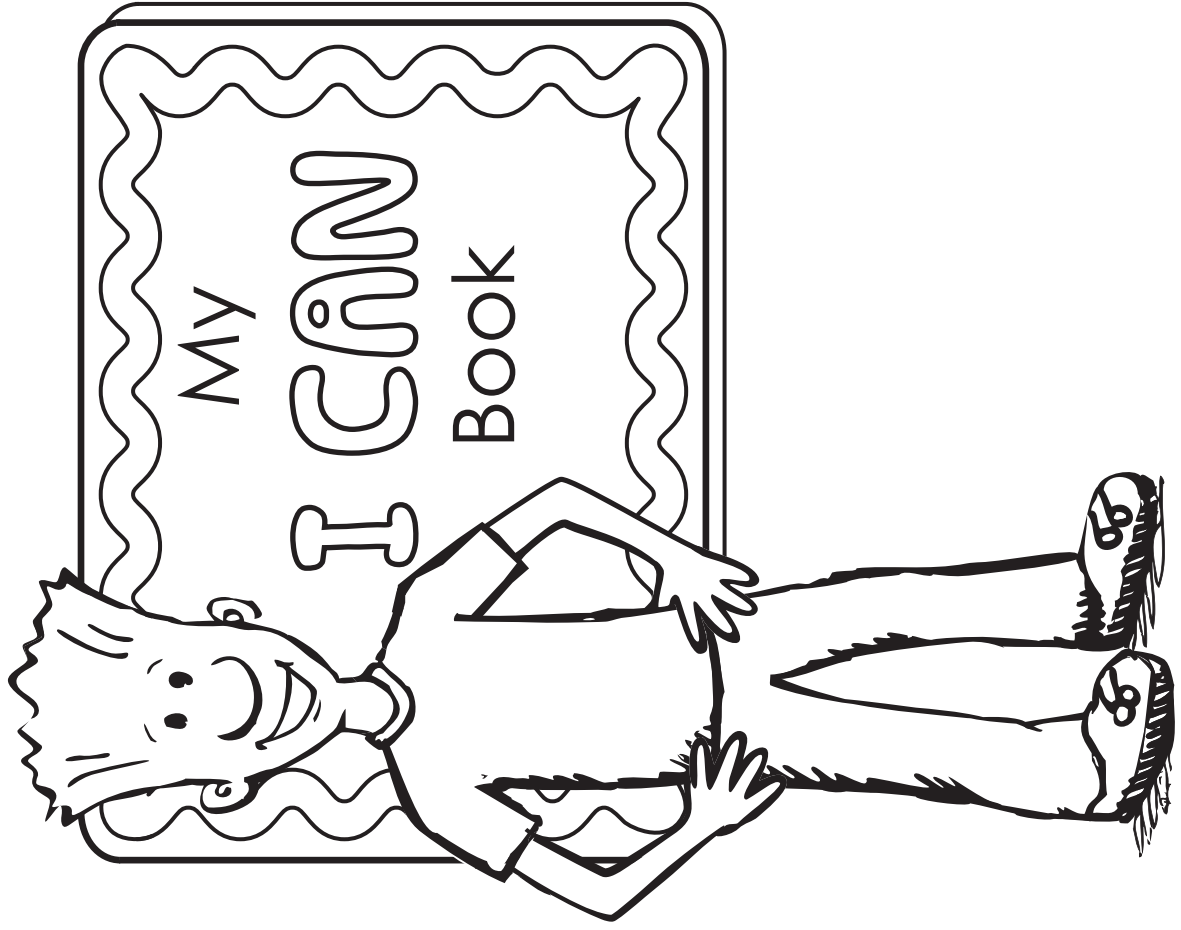
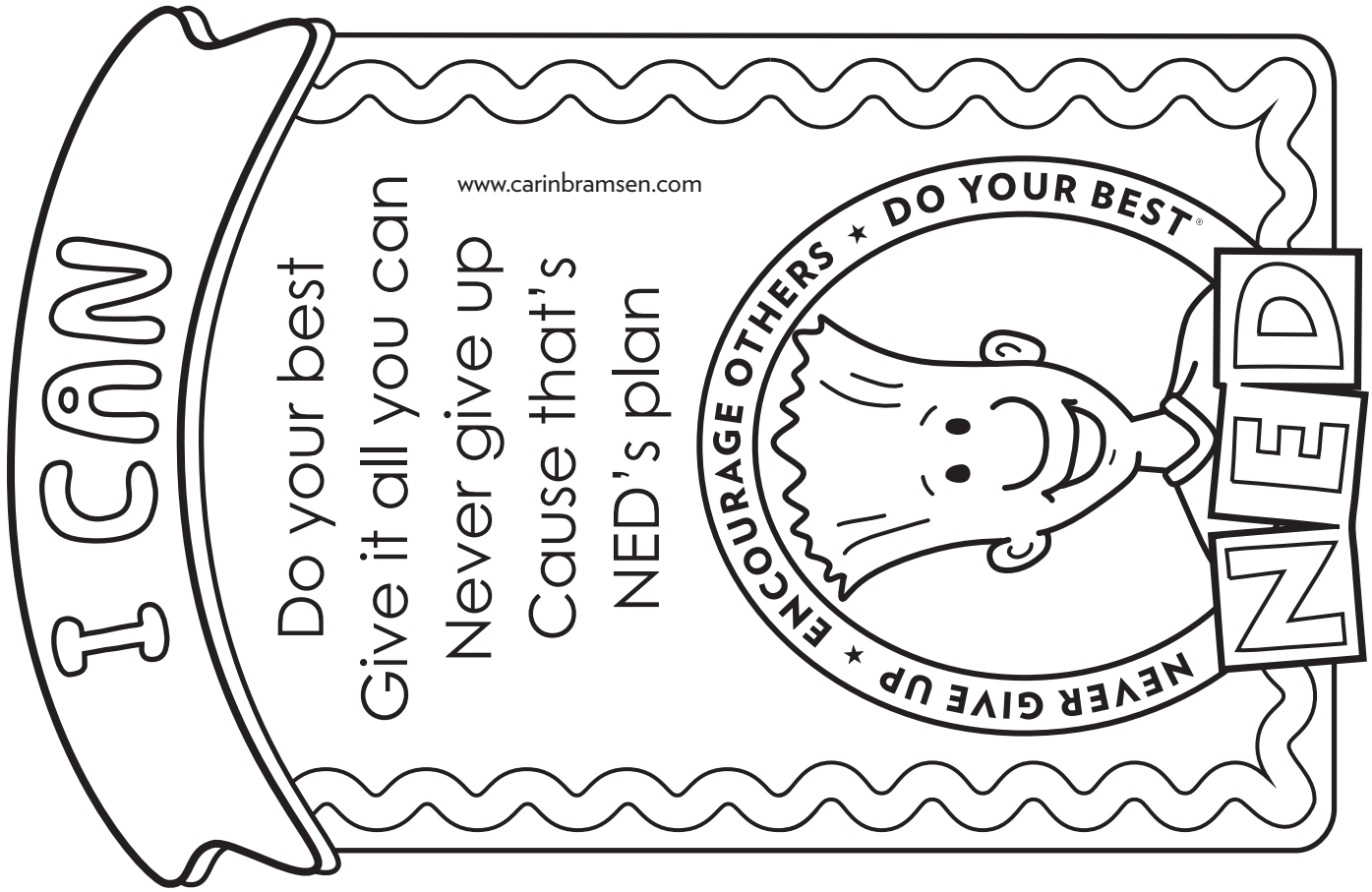
### "I Did My Best" Button

NED buttons are a great reward when students do their personal best! Visit [www.ShopNED.com](http://www.ShopNED.com) to purchase.





"Orange tabby cat sitting on fallen leaves" by Hisashi is licensed under CC BY 2.0



I can

But I can't

yet!

NED says "Never give up and Do your best!"





