

# WINTER IS THE WARMEST SEASON

Written and illustrated by Lauren Stringer  
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## TEACHERS' GUIDE

Most people think summer is the warmest season. This story, however, is brimming with evidence to the contrary – from roaring fires to grilled cheese sandwiches to toasty flannel pajamas. A unique twist on the traditional wintertime picture book, the beautiful visual narrative follows a boy and his family through a day of hot breakfasts, steaming afternoon cocoa, and a festive candlelit party before bed. With its inviting scenes, poetic text, and gorgeous illustrations, *Winter is the Warmest Season* celebrates all the wonderful things that make winter the coziest time of the year.



### About the Author/Illustrator

Lauren Stringer is the illustrator of many acclaimed books, including *Fold Me a Poem* by Kristine O'Connell George; *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant; *Our Family Tree: an Evolution Story* by Lisa Westberg Peters; *Mud and Red Rubber Boots Day*, both by Mary Lyn Ray.

*Winter is the Warmest Season* is the first book Lauren Stringer has both written and illustrated. She was inspired to write it when her then six-year-old son said one hot summer day, "Mom, the warmest season is winter, because in winter we wear warm clothes, drink hot chocolate, and sit by burning fires." Lauren and her family live in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where it is very warm all winter.

## QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK

### Pre-Reading

- ❖ Can you name the four seasons?
- ❖ Which season is the warmest season?
- ❖ Which is the coolest?
- ❖ Do you agree with the title?

### Post-Reading

- ❖ For the narrator, what season is warmest? Why?
- ❖ Do you think winter is his favorite season? Why? What is yours?
- ❖ What types of clothes must the narrator wear all winter? Do you have to wear that many warm clothes in your climate?
- ❖ Can people ever dress like summer in winter? Why? Would you like to live somewhere that you wouldn't need winter clothing? Why or why not?
- ❖ Describe what animals do in winter. Do all animals hibernate?
- ❖ What foods go with summer? What foods are wonderful for winter? Which ones are your favorites?
- ❖ Are most of the statements in the book facts or opinions? What is the difference? How can you tell?
- ❖ Do you agree with the narrator: "I think parties are warmer in winter?" Why or why not? When is your favorite time and place to have a party?
- ❖ Why do stories "last longer" in winter? When and where is your favorite place to read?
- ❖ Which illustration is your favorite? Why?
- ❖ Why do you think Lauren Stringer chose the palette (or selection of colors) that she did for this story? What colors would you pick for a summer story? Why?



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## ACTIVITIES

### Red Hot Snowflakes!

After reading *Winter is the Warmest Season*, try cutting snowflakes out of warm-colored papers. Using reds, yellows, and oranges to make snowflakes for your classroom windows or walls will warm up any winter day! Talk with students about what makes colors cool and what makes other colors warm.

### Mixed-up Seasons

After reading the book, talk with students about the ideas that make winter seem like the warmest season. Is it really the warmest? If the book is right and winter is the warmest season, then would summer be the coldest season? Make a list of what makes summer the coldest season!

### Things Are Not Always As They Seem

After reading the book discuss “assumptions.” Usually when we think of winter we think of cold winds and freezing temperatures (in Minnesota anyway, where Lauren Stringer lives!) Look what happens when we flip our thoughts around and think of winter in a completely different way! Suddenly we are thinking of hot fires and warm clothes. What are other things do we assume we know everything about? Starting with a season, make a list of what we assume we know about the season. Try making a list of opposite observations and see if it can turn around the way you view the world! Try it with people you know or with animals.

### Sing-Along

Sing to the tune of “Mulberry Bush”:

#### Verse One:

*Winter is when we snuggle up  
Snuggle up  
Snuggle up  
Winter is when we snuggle up  
Inside our wooly warm clothes*

#### Verse Two:

*Winter is when we share warm foods  
Share warm foods  
Share warm foods  
Winter is when we share warm foods  
Like soups and pies and hot breads!*

#### Verse Three:

*Winter is the warmest season  
Warmest season  
Warmest season  
Winter is the warmest season  
Inside the coat of friendship*



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## ACTIVITIES (continued)

### Fact vs. Opinion

What is the difference between a fact and opinion? Can you find three of each in the book? Now, write five facts and five opinions about your favorite season!

### Hot Potatoes?

Divide a large piece of paper in half lengthwise. Now, draw or paint things that are cold in summer and hot in winter.

Experiment with color – what color should cold things be? Why? What color should warm ones be?

### Seasons

Draw a picture of a house, tree or school four different times but change the season in each portrait. What details will you add? Why? What colors will you change?