



## 32 Third Graders and One Class Bunny: Life Lessons from Teaching

By Phillip Done

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### 32 Third Graders and One Class Bunny: Life Lessons from Teaching By Phillip Done

Phillip Done fixes staplers that won't staple, zippers that won't zip, and pokes pins in the caps of glue bottles that will not pour. He has sung "Happy Birthday" 657 times.

A witness to the joys of discovery, Done inspires readers with the everyday adventures and milestones of his 32 third graders in this irresistible collection of bite-sized essays. From the nervous first day of school to the hectic Halloween parade to the disastrous spring musical, Done connects what happens in his classroom to the universal truths that touch us all. He reminds us of the delight of learning something for the first time and of the value of making a difference.

*32 Third Graders and One Class Bunny* is for anyone who has ever taught children -- or been to third grade. It is a testament to the kids who uplift us -- and the teachers we will never forget. With just the right mix of humor and wisdom, Done reveals the enduring promise of elementary school as a powerful antidote to the cynicism of our times.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Phillip Done reminds us of the excitement and joy of learning." -- Hal Urban, author of *Life's Greatest Lessons* and *Positive Words, Powerful Results*

"Phillip Done is the voice of the veteran teacher who knows who he is working for; his love for children shines on every page." -- Esme Raji Codell, author of *Educating Esme* and *How to Get Your Child to Love Reading*

"Every so often, a book surfaces that has such unabashed charm you want to praise it from the rooftops. *32 Third Graders and One Class Bunny* is such a book. Simply put, it is an unexpected pleasure and richly deserves an A+." -- *Tucson Citizen*

"...funny and thoughtful" -- *San Jose Mercury News*

"Teacher's school tales are hilarious, poignant...Done is on his way to becoming to teachers what Erma Bombeck was to mothers - someone who can turn the mundane into hilarity." -- *The Gazette*, Colorado Springs

"He so simply captured the thoughtfulness and creativity of teaching" -- *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"Phil Done's experiences as a third-grade teacher qualify him a humorist, essayist and will-you-be-my-new-best-friend? kinda guy...you're in for a treat." -- *The Dallas Morning News*

"Mr. Done is charming and funny...(He) brings back many memories that most of us have long forgotten." -- *The Washington Times*

"...touching and hilarious." -- *Sunday World-Herald* (Omaha)

"Delightful...a good book for anyone who ever went to third grade." -- *Lincoln Journal Star*

#### About the Author

**Phillip Done** won the Schwab Foundation Distinguished Teacher Award. Nominated for the Disney Teacher of the Year Award, he has taught elementary school for twenty years. He lives in Mountain View, California.

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### I Am a Teacher

I read *Charlotte's Web* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* every year, and every year when Charlie finds the golden ticket and Charlotte dies, I cry.

I take slivers out of fingers and bad sports out of steal the bacon. I know when a child has gum in his mouth

even when he is not chewing. I have sung "Happy Birthday" 657 times.

I hand over scissors with the handles up. My copies of *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Treasure Island* are falling apart. I can listen to one child talk about his birthday party and another talk about her sleepover and another talk about getting his stomach pumped last night--all at the same time.

I fix staplers that won't staple and zippers that won't zip, and I poke pins in the orange caps of glue bottles that will not pour. I hand out papers and pencils and stickers and envelopes for newly pulled teeth. I know the difference between Austria and Australia.

I plan lessons while shaving, showering, driving, eating, and sleeping. I plan lessons five minutes before the bell rings. I know what time it is when the big hand is on the twelve and the little hand is on the nine. I say the *r* in *library*. I do not say the *w* in *sword*.

I put on Band-Aids and winter coats and school plays. I know they will not understand the difference between your and you're. I know they will write to when it should be too. I say "Cover your mouth," after they have coughed on me.

I am a teacher.

I examine new braces and new blisters and holes in mouths where teeth have just fallen out. I can spell vacuum. I know the magic word.

I wear four-leaf clovers and dandelions in my shirt pocket that have just been picked with love at recess. I pray for snow days. I pray for Stephen to be absent.

I spend Thanksgiving vacation writing report cards, Christmas vacation cleaning my classroom, and summer vacation taking classes on how to relax. I know the difference between a comma and an apostrophe. I can say "apostrophe."

I buy books about cats and dogs and sharks and volcanoes and horses and dinosaurs. I turn jump ropes and am base in tag. I am glad you can only get chicken pox once.

I correct pencil grips and spelling mistakes and bad manners. I push in chairs all the way, push swings higher, and push sleeves up while children are painting. I can touch the paper cutter.

I own one suit, two pairs of shoes, and eight boxes of graham crackers. I have every teacher mug that Hallmark ever made and every Save the Children tie too. I say, "Use two hands!" when they carry their lunch trays. I say, "Accidents happen," after they did not use two hands.

I wear green on Saint Patrick's Day, red on Valentine's Day, and my bathrobe on Pajama Day. I poke straws into juice boxes and untwist thermos lids that are too tight. I unpeel oranges that are too tight too.

I sign library passes and yearbooks and new casts. I attend soccer games and Little League championships and funerals for guinea pigs. I answer to both "Mom" and "Dad."

I am a teacher.

I hope April Fool's Day is on a Saturday. I blow up balloons that will not blow up. I always blow the whistle too early at recess.

I can borrow and carry very fast. I give them more time to answer six times eight than two times three. I

never end a sentence with a preposition. I know what a preposition is.

I draw stars and smiley faces. I say, "Take over," in four square games when I was not looking. Once I forgot eight plus seven.

I know when to say "can" and when to say "may." I have worn green marker, red paint, yellow chalk dust, glue stick, and glitter all on the same day. I hate glitter.

I always begin a sentence with a capital and end it with a period. I always walk in line. I always lose at arm wrestling.

I leave "shuger" and "vilets" misspelled on their valentines. I know all my continents and all my oceans. I tape pages back into books. I can find the end of the new roll of Scotch tape. I call on children whose hands are not raised.

I know that *colonel* is a really hard word to read, and so is *doubt* and so is *gauge*. I know that kids will read *started*, when it says *stared*. I have spelled out *because* and *beautiful* and *friend* six million times.

I am a teacher.

I look both ways before crossing the street. I save balls stuck in basketball hoops. I have given 842 spelling tests and have written "Have a Good Summer!" that many times too.

I collect milk boxes and coffee cans and egg cartons. I know all my times tables. I can type without looking. I know that two pretzels do not equal one Hershey kiss.

I can make a telescope out of a toilet paper roll and a totem pole out of oatmeal boxes. I can make snowflakes out of coffee filters and a space shuttle out of a Pringles can too.

I know my notes because "Every Good Boy Does Fine." I know my directions because I "Never Eat Slimy Worms." I know all my planets because "My Very Elegant Mother Just Sat Upon Nine Pickles." And I can only say my ABCs if I sing them.

I fix watchbands, repair eyeglasses, and search for lost milk money after freeze tag. I know when their fists will make a rock and when they will make scissors.

I know when a child does not understand. I know when a child is not telling the truth. I know when a child was up too late last night. I know when a child needs help finding a friend.

I am a teacher.

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