



## “Beautiful Blackbird” by Ashley Bryan

“Blackbird shares his gifts with the birds of Africa in this colorful read-aloud. This adaptation of an Ila story tells of long ago, when all the birds have solid colored, unpatterned feathers, and only Blackbird has any black at all. The other birds agree that Blackbird is the most beautiful, as his black feathers “gleam all colors in the sun.” Blackbird mixes up a little something in his medicine gourd, and presents each bird with some black patterns of its own. The birds are happy with their new designs, and chorus, “Black is beautiful, UH-HUH.” This telling, by the master storyteller, just aches to be read aloud; the lively rhythms keep the simple folktale rollicking along.” Kirkus review

### Let’s Talk

Before the day watch this video of Ashley reading. Perhaps you can share a segment with the children: <https://www.pbs.org/video/georgia-read-more-beautiful-blackbird/>

Look at endpapers and ask these questions. What do you see? What do you think this story will be about? Why are there scissors in the middle of the page? Read back matter to find out! Blackbird says “...color on the outside is not what’s on the inside” and “Just remember, whatever I do, I’ll be me and you’ll be you.” Discuss what this means with the children.

### Let’s Move

Do the “Show Claws Stride” Tip tap toe to left, spin around... (in the book)

### Let’s Create

Try to find Chinese ink and a real gourd to mix paint in. If no gourd, make one out of cup or carton. Let the children paint with the black. (This could also be done with any paint watered down)

Show them a black feather, point out the reflections and colors you can see in it. Children can use the feather as a paintbrush.

### Pair with:

“Brown Bear, Brown Bear” by Eric Carle

