

# EDUCATORS' GUIDE

## SALAMANDER SONG by Ginny Neil

Ginny Neil is an author, illustrator, award-winning teacher, and Master Naturalist. When she's not slogging through a marsh trying to spot spring peepers or chasing errant sheep across mountains and meadows, she writes about all the things and people that make Earth such a fun and fascinating place to live. *Salamander Song* is a book born from her love of and fascination with the natural world.



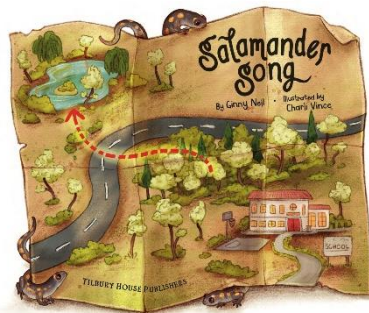
You can find her at

<https://www.ginnyneilwrites.com>

### Pre-Reading Discussion

Look at the illustration on the inside of the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Now, look at the inside of the back cover. What can you add to your prediction?

The title page includes this map. How does this new information change your prediction?



Salamanders are amphibians. What do you know about amphibians? What questions do you have?

This story is informational fiction. That means all of the information about salamanders and about



### About the Book:

Salamanders and children alike hear the rhythms and song of the seasons as winter gives way to spring. They meet on a night of salamander rain (the first warm rain of spring), when the children and their teacher work to help the salamanders cross a busy road to the vernal pool on the other side. This lyrical, parallel narrative story reinforces the idea that kids can make a big difference. The author's note includes information about amphibian migrations and descriptions of citizen science activities that kids can participate in to help keep the world wild and beautiful.

Age Range: 6-8 years

Grade Level: 1-3

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people helping salamanders is true, but it is told as a story.

### **During Reading**

When the story starts, the children and the salamanders in this book haven't met. As you read, watch for the moment they discover each other.

There aren't many words in this story, so take time to look at the pictures. What do you notice about the salamander's world? What do you notice about the children's world. How are they alike? How are they different?

In the story we see three seasons: fall, winter, and spring. Are the children and salamanders doing the same thing during each season? What do you think each group will do in summer?

In the author's note about the actual events that inspired this story, readers meet the words "**vernal pool**" which is another name for the salamander pool. To learn more about vernal pools, explore these books: THE NOISY PUDDLE by Linda Booth Sweeney, THE SECRET POOL by Kimberley Ridley, SAFE CROSSING by Kari Percival

### Curricular Connections

**Reading and Writing:** Salamander Song is written using lots of poetic elements. Here are some you can look for:

- Alliteration: two or more words together that start with the same sound. Example: waltz and whirl.
- Onomatopoeia: words that describe a sound. Example: SWISH!
- Rhyme: words that end with the same sound. Example: deep and sleep.
- Repetition: two or more words or phrases that repeat on the same page or subsequent pages

**Math:** Look at the last page of the story where the salamanders are swimming in the pool. Estimate how many salamanders there are, then count them. Were you right?

Count the number of people walking in the rain on the middle spread of the book. Use that number to estimate how many boots there are on the page. How did you arrive at your number? Now count the boots. Were you right?

**Social Studies:** Good citizens do things that are helpful. How does this story show people being good citizens? What are some ways you are a good citizen? Citizen science is a way ordinary people can help scientists. Look at the examples of citizen science listed at the back of the book. Are there any you can do with your class or your family?

**Science:**

**Habitats** are the places that people and animals and insects live that provide food, shelter, space and water. What examples of salamander habitats do you see in this story? Describe their food, shelter, water, and space. What examples of human habitats do you see? Describe their food, shelter, water, and space. Do humans and salamanders share some parts of their habitats?

Explore **habitats** with these other books by author Ginny Neil:

**THE GLORIOUS FOREST THAT FIRE BUILT:** This story of how a forest regrows after a fire includes forest, meadow, and pine habitats and the animals that inhabit them. Point out which animals can get their needs met in more than one habitat.

**A RIVER OF WIND** (releasing Aug 2026): This story about some of the things that travel above our heads includes animals that use the wind to move to new habitats. It's a great way to talk about how habitats can change with seasons.



**Spring is coming.  
Get ready to rise!**

From SALAMANDER SONG by Ginny Neil, illustrated by Charli Vince  
[www.ginnyneilwrites.com](http://www.ginnyneilwrites.com)

**These salamanders want to lay their eggs near the plants in the middle of this vernal pool. Draw a path to show them the way.**

A vernal pool is a special pond that fills with water in the spring then dries up in the summer. Fish don't live there, so a vernal pool is perfect for keeping salamander eggs and babies safe from being eaten by fish. Color your vernal pool blue so your salamanders have water to swim and lay eggs in.

