

# Sylvie and the Wolf

ACTIVITY KIT

FIVE ACTIVITIES  
TO FOSTER  
CURIOSITY,  
EMPATHY,  
AND COURAGE



**Dear friends,**

I've heard it said that children's authors often write the books they wish they'd had when they were children. For me, that's true of my first picture book, *Sylvie and the Wolf*, a story about a girl who faces a fear that has begun to take over her life.

When I was a child, I was a mix of brave and scared (like now!), but there were times when it felt like fear was the biggest part of me. One day when I was very young, I began to feel afraid for no reason at all. My heart raced, my stomach did a somersault, and I felt like I wanted to run away. I didn't know how to tell anyone about it. It seemed too strange. Most people I knew were afraid of real things you could see or hear—like tornadoes or spiders. So I kept my fear to myself and hoped my uncomfortable feelings would go away.

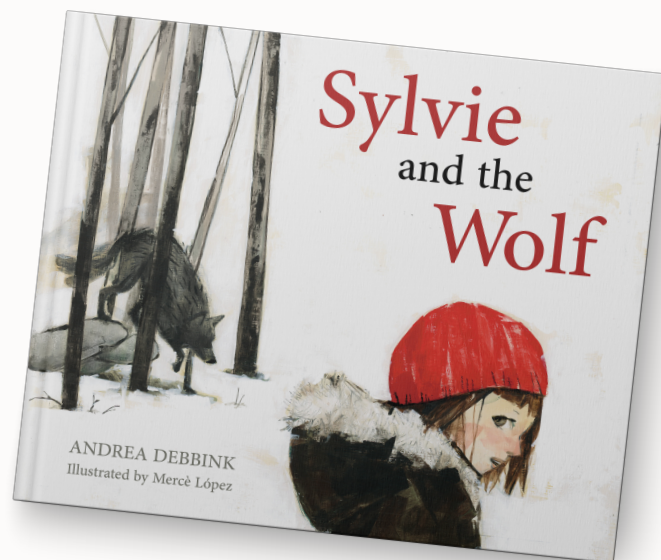
But just like Sylvie in my book, my fear didn't go away. Instead, it grew and grew, until one day I finally told someone I trusted about my fear. And that was the magic moment. The moment someone listened to me with kindness. That day, I learned that my fear had a name: anxiety. And I learned that I wasn't the only person who felt afraid or anxious, lots of people do.

Before I learned about anxiety, it seemed like a wild animal, one that I didn't understand or know anything about. That's why a wolf represents Sylvie's anxiety and fear in this book. Some people think wolves are scary, but that's often because they simply don't know much about them. And in Sylvie's case, the wolf turns out to be something quite different than she imagines. Anxiety, too, turned out to be different than I had imagined, and I discovered there are ways to tame it and live alongside it.

It's my hope that Sylvie's story will help readers understand that everyone feels afraid or anxious sometimes—and that it's OK to feel that way. And I also want readers to know that facing fear takes time and practice. **Courage is a muscle, and we can strengthen it, bit by bit.**

Take courage and happy reading,

**Andrea**





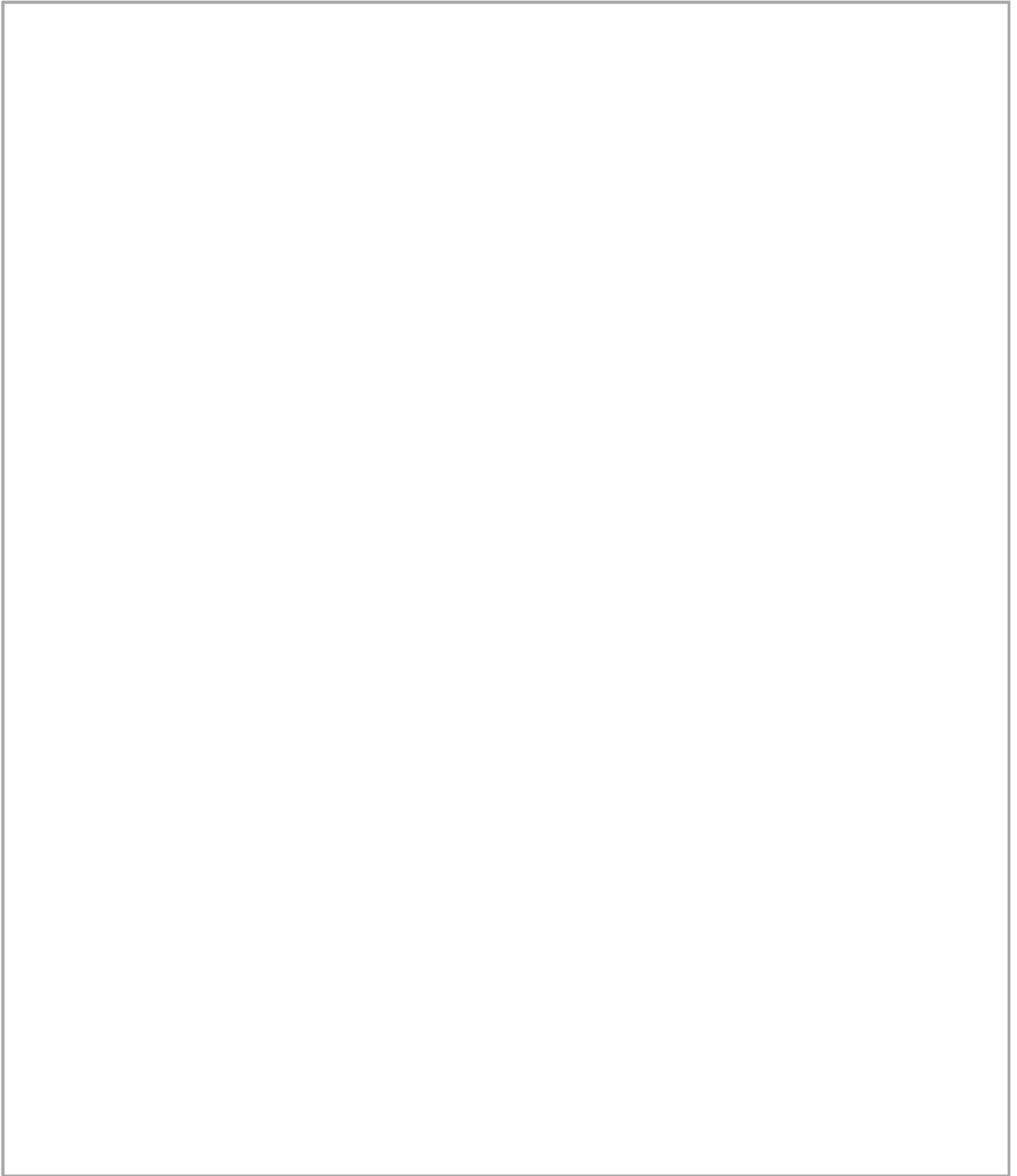
# BECOME A MINDFUL OUTDOOR ADVENTURER

Sylvie is an outdoor adventurer who knows the sights, smells, and sounds of her local forest. While she mistakes the shadow in the woods for a wolf, she also learns to face her fears by giving her surroundings a closer look (with the help of Tante, of course!).

This activity will help kids slow down and tune in to their surroundings, whether it be in the woods, a park, or on a playground. An adult should guide them through the exercise by reading the question prompts below:

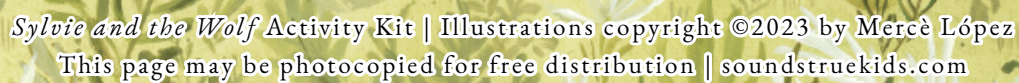
1. Take the next page or a notebook and a pen or pencil out into nature. Find a comfortable seat somewhere and take a few minutes to simply be still and observe what's around you.
2. What do you see? What are the colors around you? How do things move in the wind or in the water? What do you hear? Are sounds far away or really close? What do you smell? Do these smells bring up any memories?
3. Take some time to draw or write out your findings. Be creative and try to match an image to the smells and sounds if you can!
4. Now pick something that you had written or drawn earlier, and if possible and it's safe, go get a closer look. What do you notice about it up close?
5. Bring in the sensation of touch. Think about how things might feel on your fingers, but also consider how the ground feels beneath your feet or how the breeze feels on your face.
6. Spend some more time drawing or writing the things you notice. If you feel comfortable, share your work with a partner or a group.

# BECOME A MINDFUL OUTDOOR ADVENTURER





## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, stylized illustration of a tree branch with brown bark and some light green leaves. The rest of the page is empty.



# FUN FACTS ABOUT DOGS AND WOLVES

Dogs were one of the first animals domesticated (tamed) by humans, over 20,000 years ago! As dogs evolved from wolves, their skulls, teeth, and paws shrank, and they became more docile and obedient to humans.

**So then, what makes a wolf, a wolf?**

A wolf's sense of smell is **100 times stronger** than a human's.

**Wolves live in groups called packs**, made up of seven to eight wolves with a mom, dad, and offspring. Wolves must work together to hunt, raise their young, and protect their territory.

When a pack of wolves howl, it can be heard **from 10 miles away**.

**Each pack has a unique howl**, and while they don't howl at the moon, wolves howl more when the moon is full and bright.

Young wolves stay in their parents' pack **for at least two years** before some of them take off to join other packs or start their own.

When a wolf wants to play, it prances about happily and bows—lowering the front of its body while its rump stays up in the air with its tail wagging. **Sounds kind of familiar, doesn't it? Dogs do this too!**



# FUN FACTS ABOUT DOGS AND WOLVES

Wolves and dogs are closely related, and the ways they communicate and behave are very similar, but there are key differences that have made dogs man's best friend for thousands of years.



Dogs are the most popular pet on the planet! **A third of all households around the world have a dog.** These playful, friendly, loyal animals make great companions (humans are their "pack"), but they can also be fierce protectors and intelligent helpers.



While dogs also have an extremely strong sense of smell, like wolves, they also have fantastic hearing! **They can detect high-pitched noises and distant sounds** from much farther away than humans can.

**Most dogs have a dominant hand—or in their case, paw!** To figure out which one it is, you can conduct a simple science experiment...

Watch a dog moving from standing still to walking forward. Do they start walking with their left leg, or their right? Watch several times, noting the starting leg each time, and see if there's a pattern. Many dogs will often lead with the same leg—their dominant one!

Content adapted from "Dog Facts for Kids!" (National Geographic Kids UK) and "Gray Wolf" (National Geographic Kids)

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# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The wolf in the story represents Sylvie's anxiety and fear. As she begins to understand her fear and live alongside it instead of running away, she finds the wolf is not so scary after all.

In real life, wolves are often feared and misunderstood animals. They were hunted almost to extinction in the United States in the last 200 years, but thanks to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, wolf populations have been recovering. This law is an example of championing wildlife conservation.

## What is wildlife conservation?

The word "conservation" comes from the verb "to conserve"—to preserve, protect, save, defend, support, maintain, sustain. It's the opposite of "destroy" (or letting something be destroyed).

Wildlife conservation means taking actions to save entire ecosystems around us (like oceans, forests, and deserts), the species that live in them (from birds to bears to bugs), and in turn, our planet's climate (which shapes the weather and the life-support systems that keep us all going, like clean air and water).

Content adapted from the Woodland Trust:  
[woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/01/conservation-for-kids](https://woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/01/conservation-for-kids)



# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

There are many easy ways to be a wildlife conservationist in your own neighborhood. Check out some of the ideas below:

- When walking in natural areas, keep to marked paths so you don't trample on delicate plants that serve as a much-needed source of food and shelter for animals of all sizes.
- Leave nothing behind: Always take your trash and dispose of it properly in a trash can so it doesn't pollute a local ecosystem.
- Use natural items you find on the ground to make up games or crafts, but don't pick them from live plants and trees. This can harm their growth.
- Walk or cycle to school if you live close enough and use public transport whenever you can rather than a car. This will help cut down the air pollution caused by traffic that can harm delicate ecosystems in your area.
- Provide extra food for the creatures that visit your garden by putting out bird and butterfly feeders.
- Build a bug hotel out of wood and branches to provide shelter and a nesting area for pollinating insects.
- Designate a part of your yard or balcony as a pollinator garden. Native wildflowers offer butterflies and bees a safe place to rest their wings and food to eat. Many local garden stores and nurseries can educate you on the best flowers to plant in your area.
- If you have the space, build a small frog pond surrounded by water-loving plants to provide shelter for our amphibian friends.
- Volunteer with your local wildlife conservation organization.



Explore more resources, events, and opportunities at:

**The Nature Conservancy:** [nature.org](https://www.nature.org)

**World Wildlife Fund:** [wwf.org](https://www.wwf.org)

**National Wildlife Federation:** [nwf.org](https://www.nwf.org)

**National Audubon Society:** [audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org)



## BEGINNER TRACKING WALK

Animal tracks—in the mud or in the snow—are a great way to see into the secret lives of animals. You can tell where they are headed, see how quickly they were moving, and maybe even see what they were eating as they passed through.

Next time it rains or snows, put some snow or rainboots on, bring your guide on the next few pages, and head outside with an adult. It's best to wait a few hours after the bad weather has passed or until morning since many animals travel during dusk and dawn.

Walk slowly, looking for tracks and signs of wild animals on the ground. When you come across some tracks, take some time to look at them closely without stepping on them. Examine them from different angles; this will help you get a full picture of the track.

This guide shows examples of tracks from some of the most common mammals found in North America. For an online guide to identifying a wide range of animal tracks, visit the University of Michigan's BioKIDS website at [biokids.umich.edu/guides/tracks\\_and\\_sign](https://biokids.umich.edu/guides/tracks_and_sign). They offer guides that can help you identify tracks you are seeing by noting simple traits like the number of toes or claws, the size, and the placement of tracks.



# BEGINNER TRACKING WALK

Take notes or circle the tracks on the next page that match up with what you see. Consider some of the following questions:

**How big are the tracks? How far apart are they?**

**What does this tell you about the size of the animal?**

**How long do you think its body is from tail to nose? How tall might it stand? What animals live in your area that are around that size?**

**How many toes do you see? Are they rounded or pointy?**

**Did the animal have claws, talons, or maybe hooves?**

**Did the animal walk mostly in a straight line or did it wander?**

**Are there other signs of the animal like leftover food, fur, feathers, or scat?**

**Based on the number of tracks, do you think the animal traveled alone or in a group?**

**Extra Challenge:** Try to sketch the tracks you discover on a clean sheet of paper or in a notebook to help you figure out which animal they belong to.

## BEGINNER TRACKING WALK

**Note:** You will see two distinctly different tracks represented here (not to scale)—one is for the front feet of the animal, and the other for the back feet. More often the back feet are larger than the front feet, but there are exceptions such as the red fox and woodchuck.



White-footed mouse



Dog



House Cat



White-tailed deer



Raccoon



Skunk



Beaver



Gray Squirrel



Opossum



Woodchuck



Muskrat



Cottontail Rabbit



Black Bear



Nine-Banded Armadillo



Red Fox



Long-Tailed Weasel

Tracking images from Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Yellowstone National Park Service, and the artist, Dee Ebbeka.

## A DAILY BADGE OF COURAGE

Reflecting on daily successes, big or small, is important to fostering more courage and curiosity as you get older. Some days, you also might need a little mood boost when you are feeling down or worrying.

Print and cut out these badges of courage below, and claim one for yourself or give one to a friend who you want to celebrate or lift up. The first six have been filled in to give you an idea of things to celebrate and words of encouragement, while the blank badges on the next page allow you to write in what applies best for you or a friend in that moment.

Get creative and color them in, hang them around your room or on the fridge, or tape them to your favorite notebook.

***Tried a  
new sport  
or hobby  
this week***

**TOLD THE  
TRUTH EVEN  
IF IT WAS  
EASIER NOT  
TO**

**Tried a  
new food  
today**

**I am  
strong  
and  
brave**

**COURAGE is  
like a MUSCLE.  
It gets STRONGER  
each time I use it.**

**READY FOR  
WHATEVER  
TODAY  
BRINGS**



## A DAILY BADGE OF COURAGE

