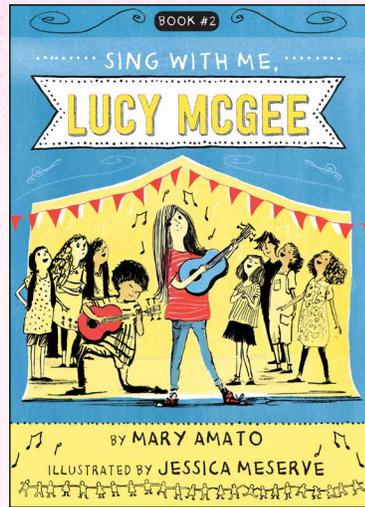
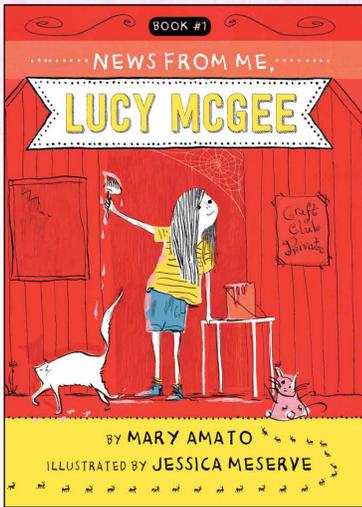


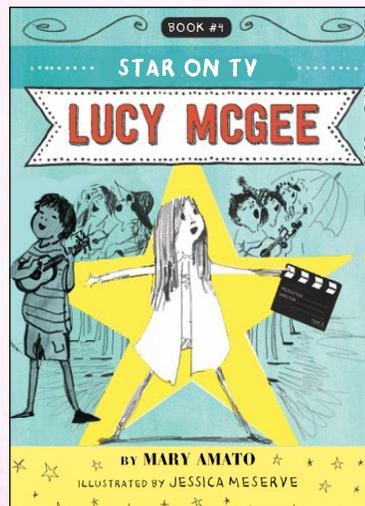
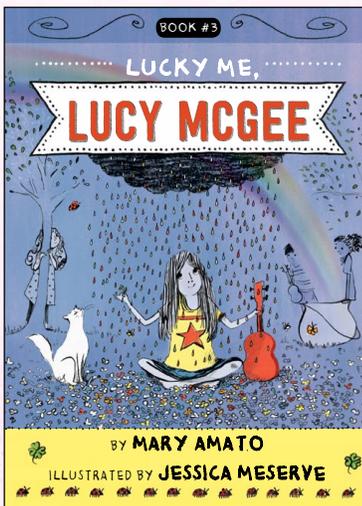
# HOLIDAY HOUSE

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

# LUCY MCGEE



by **Mary Amato**  
illustrated by **Jessica Meserve**



*Coming soon*

## ABOUT THE SERIES

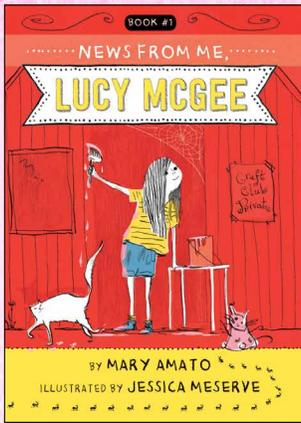
This chapter-book series by favorite, award-winning author Mary Amato stars a fun-loving heroine who matches wits with a mean girl.

Spunky Lucy McGee is in the fourth grade at Slido Creek Elementary School and struggles with making the right decisions. To make matters worse, Scarlett Tandy, a mean girl, manages to manipulate Lucy and her classmates as they chart their way through the school year. There are schemes that go wrong, but through it all spunky and hilarious Lucy, under the careful guidance of a wise father, manages to right some wrongs and gather her friends in song.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Discuss the phrase “Think before you act.” Then have the class brainstorm possible consequences of “not thinking” before “acting.” Divide the class into small groups and ask them to dramatize a scenario where a person or a group “acts before thinking.” Then reverse the dramatization and present the situation as an example of “thinking before acting.”

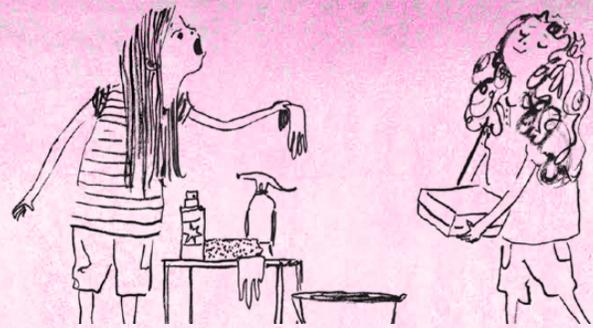




## NEWS FROM ME, LUCY MCGEE Book 1

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Lucy McGee has been a failure at many activities, but now fourth-grader Phillip Lee is starting a Songwriting Club at school, and Lucy's father enrolls her. But trouble erupts for Lucy when she falls prey to Scarlett's flattery and tricks. Lucy faces consequences for her behavior at home and at school, but she also learns important lessons about keeping her word, telling the truth, and the real meaning of friendship.



HC: 978-0-8234-3871-6  
PB: 978-0-8234-4439-7  
E-book: 978-0-8234-4132-7

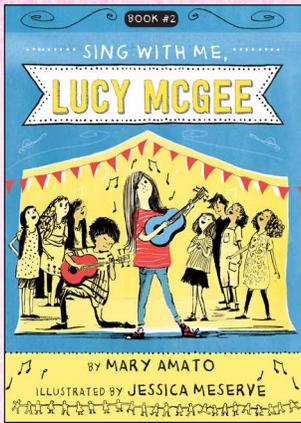
### GROUP DISCUSSION

- Describe Lucy's family. How does the reader know that the McGees are engaged in Lucy's life? Contrast her family with Scarlett Tandy's family. Debate whether Scarlett's family is part of her problem. Explain what Lucy means when she says, "I'm glad I'm in this family" (p. 55).
- Define "manipulation." Describe Scarlett's manipulative behavior. Why is it so difficult for Lucy to see that Scarlett is manipulating her? Lucy takes the complete blame for making a mess at the Tandys' garden shed. When she tells her dad what really happened, he asks, "Why didn't you stand up to Scarlett?" (p. 54). What does Lucy's dad see in Scarlett that Lucy can't see? How does Lucy get revenge on Scarlett? Debate whether revenge is the best approach for dealing with people like Scarlett.
- Lucy often "acts before she thinks." Discuss the bad decisions that Lucy makes. Explain what Lucy's dad means when he says, "If you have a feeling in your gut that something isn't right, listen to that feeling" (p. 54). Sometimes impulsive behavior leads to regrets. What are Lucy's regrets? Debate whether she has learned from these regrets.
- Scarlett encourages Lucy to lie to her parents about attending the Songwriting Club. Lucy is conflicted but decides to be "sneaky" and follow Scarlett. What is the difference between being "sneaky" and lying? How is Lucy responsible for her own behavior? What consequences does she face?
- Define "friendship." What is the difference between a true friend and an almost friend? Discuss the relationship between trust and friendship. At what point does Lucy learn that she can't trust Scarlett? Why is it difficult to be Scarlett's friend? How is Phillip trustworthy? Discuss the friendship between Lucy and Phillip. Explain how Phillip is a forgiving friend.

### ACTIVITIES

- Ask students to work in pairs and dramatize the conversation between Lucy and Scarlett about the stolen paint from the art room (pp. 33–34).
- "Adjectives" are words that describe a person or a thing. As a class, make a list of five adjectives that best describe each of the following characters: Lucy, Phillip, Scarlett, and Mr. McGee. Then ask students to write a character sketch of one of the characters, using the adjectives brainstormed in class. Instruct them to cite scenes and use direct quotes to support their thoughts.
- Lucy finds a way to replace the paint and brushes that she took from the art room. Write a song of confession that she might sing to Mr. Hopkins, the art teacher. Set the lyrics to a favorite tune, and perform it for the class.





HC: 978-0-8234-3876-1  
 PB: 978-0-8234-4545-5  
 E-book: 978-0-8234-4209-6

## SING WITH ME, LUCY MCGEE Book 2

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Lucy McGee and Phillip Lee team up to write a hit song for the school talent show. Then Scarlett Tandy steals their lyrics and tries to convince the other kids that she wrote them. In the days leading up to the talent show, Lucy and Phillip develop a plan to out-scheme Scarlett. But Scarlett's mean streak is hard to beat. Everyone is about to lose when Lucy thinks of a plan that saves their song and the talent show.



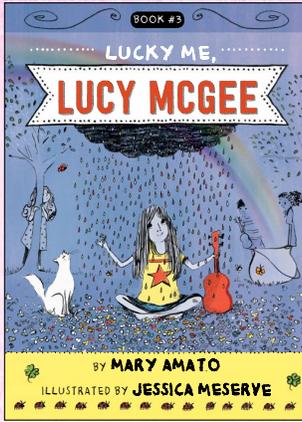
### GROUP DISCUSSION

- A conflict in a novel is a problem to be solved and is often revealed in the first chapter. What is the conflict in *Sing with Me, Lucy McGee*? Who is the root of the problem?
- Scarlett is forming a secret group for the talent show and leaves out Lucy and Phillip. How is Lucy hurt by this? What is Phillip's reaction? Why do they think the answer is spying on Scarlett? At what point do Resa, Saki, and Natalie begin to see through Scarlett?
- Why is Catherine, Scarlett's babysitter, worried about Scarlett? Explain Lucy's reaction when Catherine asks her if Scarlett is being teased about being too tall. Discuss what Catherine means when she says, "I think she's trying to hide how sad she is" (p. 101). How does Lucy's dad encourage her to be nice to Scarlett?
- Lucy's father says that sometimes people need to vent. What is the difference between venting and fighting? Discuss how Scarlett talks to her mother. Debate whether Scarlett's family vents or fights. How does Lucy feel when she witnesses these scenes? Scarlett's mother often gives in to her daughter. Debate whether this encourages Scarlett's bad behavior.
- Lucy, Phillip, and the other members of the Song-writing Club invite Scarlett back to the club. Explain her "mean" behavior after they've been nice to her. Scarlett falls off the stage after she tries to force herself to the front of the group. Ms. Adamson says, "The show must go on." How does Lucy save the show? Debate whether her nice gesture is likely to change Scarlett.

### ACTIVITIES

- Remind students that a metaphor is an indirect comparison of unrelated things. Lucy hides in her closet when she is sad or angry. She says, "It's like I'm alone in the jungle, and there are vines around me" (p. 21). How is "jungle" a metaphor for "closet"? What are the "vines"? Have students write a metaphor that best describes the way Lucy feels after the talent show.
- Divide the class into small groups and ask them to write down what they know about Scarlett. Then instruct them to write a song titled "How Do We Solve a Problem Like Scarlett?" Ask them to set it to music and perform the song for the class.
- Lucy tells her little brother and sister, "When you're old like me, life is complicated" (p. 16). Ask students to write a short paper titled "Lucy McGee's Complicated Life." Instruct them to support their thoughts by citing specific scenes and using direct quotes.





## LUCKY ME, LUCY MCGEE Book 3



### ABOUT THE BOOK

The kids in the Songwriting Club are excited because Ben & Bree, their favorite singing group, is performing at the Hamil Theater. The tickets are expensive, and Scarlett Tandy is the only one who can afford to go. She has an extra ticket, and unveils a plan to make her classmates “beg” for it. Lucy’s problem is bigger than simply going to the concert. She needs to win the ukulele that Ben & Bree give away to replace the one she lost. And she needs to get extra creative to charm the always-scheming Scarlett.

HC: 978-0-8234-4364-2  
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E-book: 978-0-8234-4383-3

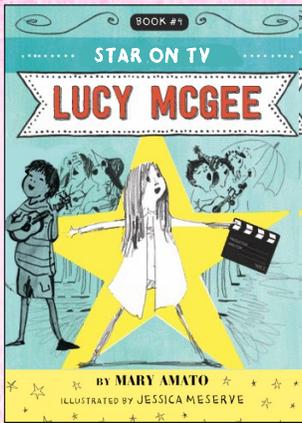
### GROUP DISCUSSION

- The kids in the Songwriting Club want to go to the Ben & Bree concert. It turns out that Scarlett Tandy is the only person who gets a ticket, and she has an extra one to give away. Discuss Scarlett’s scheme to make her classmates “beg” for the ticket. Scarlett says, “This is fun.” How does this statement define Scarlett’s character?
- Lucy thinks that Scarlett has good luck all the time. Debate whether this is actually true. Cite ways that Lucy is luckier than Scarlett.
- The Songwriting Club learns that there is a contest to win four tickets to the concert. Lucy says that entering a contest is both “fun” and “not fun.”
  - Discuss the fun parts of entering the contest. What part is “not fun”? When the club doesn’t win, how does Lucy’s father find a way to make the kids feel better?
- Lucy loses the ukulele that she borrowed from the school. What are the mistakes she makes when trying to locate the lost instrument? Discuss what she should have done when she first realized it was missing. How does her dad help her solve the problem of the missing ukulele?
- Mr. McGee says that Lucy has “pep in her step.” What does he mean? Why is this a good quality to have? Cite scenes to support Mr. McGee’s view of his daughter.

### ACTIVITIES

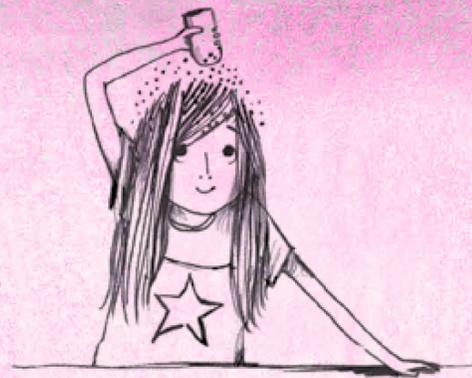
- Divide the class into groups and ask them to consider what they know about Lucy and write song lyrics that she might write titled “Pep in My Step.” Set it to a familiar tune and perform it for the class.
- Resa’s grandmother thinks that it’s good luck if a ladybug lands on you. Ask students to use books in the library or sites on the Internet to research other good luck charms. Instruct them to select a good luck charm for either Lucy or Phillip and write a paragraph that explains the selection.
- Lucy says that her dad is a “lighthouse” for her. Discuss what she means. Then write an acrostic poem about Mr. McGee, using LIGHTHOUSE as the spine word.





HC: 978-0-8234-4606-3  
PB: 978-0-8234-4830-2  
E-book: 978-0-8234-4884-5

## LUCY MCGEE, STAR ON TV Book 4



### ABOUT THE BOOK

Pablo, a fifth grader, likes Lucy and Phillip's song about rain, and suggests that the three of them sing it on Morning Mix, the school news show. Their appearance on the show angers other members of the Songwriting Club, especially Scarlett. The club members decide to take an oath to never leave anyone out. But Scarlett breaks the oath and devises a plan to have some of the kids sing the weather on Channel Four. Lucy decides to "infect Scarlett with kindness" so that everyone is included.

### GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pablo thinks it would be fun to sing the weather on Morning Mix, the school news show. Why doesn't Lucy want Scarlett involved? Discuss why Scarlett calls Lucy and Phillip "The Liars Club."
- How does appearing on Morning Mix get Lucy and Phillip in trouble with Mrs. Brock? How is this another example of Lucy "acting" before "thinking." Discuss Phillip's reaction when they are scolded by their teacher. Explain what Lucy should have done to keep them out of trouble.
- Everyone is mad at Lucy because they felt left out. Why is Phillip angry? Explain what Lucy means when she says, "It's scary to go to school when everybody is mad at you" (p. 21). How do Lucy's troubles get resolved?
- Everyone in the Songwriting Club takes an oath to never leave anyone out. How does Scarlett break the oath? Debate whether the other kids are surprised at Scarlett's behavior. Lucy's solution to dealing with Scarlett is to "infect her with kindness," and she plans a party for the club. Why is Scarlett surprised that she is invited? Explain how Lucy accomplishes her goal.
- It's decided that only fifth graders can participate in Morning Mix. Scarlett's mother does the weather for Channel Four. How does she give the Songwriting Club a better opportunity? Lucy is being punished for having kids over without permission and almost misses the chance to sing the weather on Channel Four. Discuss the plan to include her. Debate whether Scarlett redeems herself for her "mean" behavior.

### ACTIVITIES

- The Songwriting Club sings the weather for Channel Four. Divide the class into groups, and ask them to research one of the following weather patterns:
  - Hurricane
  - Tornado
  - Snowstorm
  - HailstormThen have the group write a song as a warning about the severe weather event.
- At the end of the novel, Lucy's brother, Leo, is missing. Lucy gets an idea to have the Channel Four drone locate him. Write a front-page news story for the local newspaper titled "Leo McGee Found." Include comments from Lucy and Mr. and Mrs. McGee. Remember to include who, what, when, where, and how.
- Discuss the meaning of the phrase "Two wrongs don't make a right" (p. 23). Then write a short paper that explains why Lucy should heed this advice from Phillip.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mary Amato** “loves the spilling of ink from head to heart to page.” She writes fiction for children, such as the Lucy McGee series for younger readers and the hilarious Riot Brothers series, but she is also a singer-songwriter who performs in the Washington, D.C., area. Her music can be heard on SoundCloud. In addition, she is a cofounder of Firefly Shadow Theater, a puppet company for which she writes and directs shows. Her novels have appeared on children’s choice state award lists around the country. She lives in Hyattsville, Maryland. Visit her online at [MaryAmato.com](http://MaryAmato.com).

For more fun Lucy McGee activities, including karaoke sing-alongs and videos of ukulele tips, go to: [MaryAmato.com/lucy-songs/](http://MaryAmato.com/lucy-songs/)

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Jessica Meserve**, illustrator of the Lucy McGee books by Mary Amato, has written and illustrated her own picture books, including *Small Sister*. She illustrated the Daisy Dawson series by Steve Voake as well as other books that have been published in the U.S. and the UK. She was born in Maine and lives in England.



Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

