WARM WELCOME
Suloliko was grazing in the bush one day when she was interrupted by a small voice. “Excuse me, but could you please tell me how to get to the river?” She looked up and saw a small penguin standing beside her, wearing glasses and a woolly hat.

“Sure,” Suloliko said. “Follow me—I’ll show you.”

“Thanks very much,” the penguin said, waddling along beside her through the grass.

“Are you new here?” Suloliko asked. “I haven’t seen you around before.”

“Yes,” the penguin said. “I come from Namibia, but I’ve moved to the city just there.” She nodded over the hills, indicating the distant city. “I came to find work, you see. My name is Omulonga.”

“It’s nice to meet you. My name is Suloliko.” The two talked as they walked along, learning about each other’s lives and families. “Here we are,” Suloliko said as they arrived at the river. A small blue bird flitted down to land on a bush in front of them. “Oh, hello, Jos.”

“Hello, Suloliko. Who’s your friend?” he asked, straightening his bowler hat.

“This is Omulonga. She’s new here,” Suloliko explained.

“Well, it’s lovely to meet you,” Jos said, reaching out to shake wings with Omulonga. “Let me know if you need help learning your way around. I’m very good at finding places.” He then flew up into a nearby tree, calling into the branches, “Maro! Come and meet the new girl!”
Maro poked her head out of the branches as Jos flew off down the river.

“Hello!” Maro said, jumping down from the tree excitedly. “Oh, it’s such fun meeting new people!” She began chatting with Omulonga, and a few minutes later Jos returned, a line of others trailing along behind him. Omulonga was introduced to each of them in turn.

“You’ll have to come and play with us sometime!” Reë told her.

“Yeah!” agreed Tshameka. “We know the best mud puddles for jumping in!” This much was obvious, as it seemed he and his sister (covered head to toe in mud) had just come from there.

Madala offered her a ride in his Land Rover, if she ever needed to go into town for work, and Nyati invited her to join them all at church on Sunday. Omulonga had been a little nervous about moving to a new place, but her new friends made her feel right at home.

Memory Verse

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.” I John 4:7
Warm Welcome

Themes Found in This Story:

--Importance of creating good relationships
--Welcoming and accepting outsiders

The Story:

Warm Welcome: The character of Omulonga is introduced, and the others welcome and offer to help her. The parent/teacher may read the story aloud or print the story for the children to read or follow along.

Characters in This Story:

Tshameka and Reë (tshah-MEH-kah) and (REE-ah)
They are twin lion cubs from the country of South Africa, near Rustenburg and the World Cup Stadium. Tshameka is the brother. His name is Tswana for “play”. Reë is the sister. Her name is short for Reënboog, which is Afrikaans for “rainbow”. South Africa is also known as the “Rainbow Nation.”

Madala (mah-DAHh-lah)
He is a chameleon from the country of Zambia. His name is the respectful way to say “old man” in the Chinyanga language.

Maro (MAH-roo)
She is a sifaka lemur from the country of Madagascar. Her name is short for Marojejy, a national park that is home to many types of lemur. Sifaka lemurs are also called “dancing lemurs.”

Jos (JAHS)
He is an Abyssinian roller, from the country of Nigeria. His name is also the name of a large city there.

Omulonga (oh-moo-LOHN-gah)
She is a Black-Footed Penguin from Namibia, and is an immigrant new to the area.

Nyati (NYAH-tee)
He is a cape buffalo from the country of Kenya. His name is a Swahili word which means “buffalo.”
Suloliko (soo-loh-LLEE-koh)
She is a zebra duiker from the country of Guinea, in West Africa. Her full name is Suloliko Lamalaka, which in the Kissi language means “close to the king”.

Background Information:

_Cultural note:_

In Africa, it’s all about relationships. It’s very important to get to know someone, and people are willing to get to know outsiders (but outsiders are expected to be equally willing to get to know them). Hospitality and kindness to strangers are widespread cultural values. Notice how Suloliko stopped what she was doing to walk with Omulonga to the river, instead of simply giving her directions. This is because it is more important to foster good relationships than to stick to one’s own agenda. In the same way, the other characters offered to share what they had with Omulonga, because making a visitor feel welcome is all-important. Even in the poorest home, when a visitor arrives, the host shares the best of what he has.

When Omulonga talks about the city, instead of pointing, she nods her head in its direction. This is a very African way of indicating something’s location.

Omulonga is a black-footed penguin. This species of penguin lives along the coast of South Africa and the southern coast of Namibia, where cold waters come up from Antarctica. These penguins live in large colonies. Omulonga, however, has moved from the coast into the city of Johannesburg. She represents the large number of African people who move from smaller, more rural communities into the big cities, in hopes of finding a better job (or in some cases, simply finding any job, as there is not always enough work in the villages).

Possible Bible Memory Verses:

“This is my command: Love each other.” John 15:17 (NIV)

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.” I John 4:7 (NIV)

Activity Suggestions:

Penguin Doorstop Craft
Bucket Game

Prayer Points:

--Pray for people you know who are new to your area. Pray that they will feel welcome and that you will know how to make them feel welcome.

--Pray for African believers who must travel long distances to find work to take of their families.
Penguins love the water. In this game practice carrying water on your head—but try not to get wet!

Say: “In Africa, people have a wonderful sense of balance. They do much of their work by carrying different items on their head. They start carrying small items when they are young, which helps develop the neck muscles so they can balance heavier things as they get older. Also, the women always carry their babies in a sling on their back.”

Place the children into two lines for a relay race. Have a bucket ready for each team, with a bit of water in the bottom. (Don’t use too much water, as it will get heavy, and make sure to do this outside or somewhere easy to clean, as spills will most likely happen.) Ask the first child in each line to balance a bucket on their head and tie a baby doll on their back. They must walk to the other side, circle a chair and return to the end of their line. (They will most likely have to use their hand to balance the bucket – it is not easy.)

They should then pass off the bucket and baby doll to the next person. (If the boys don’t want to use the baby doll, you can eliminate this element and allow the girls to practice after the relay race.)
Penguin Doorstop

Materials
- 2-litre drink bottle
- Black and white craft paint
- Purple felt/construction paper
- Black construction paper
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue (Hot glue will hold better and dry quicker, but regular glue will work fine if there is no adult available to work the hot glue gun.)
- Wiggle Eyes

Instructions
1. Paint bottle black. (This can be done ahead of time if your lesson time is short.)
2. Paint white belly and face.
3. Cut wings out of black paper, glue to sides.
4. Glue on wiggle eyes.
5. Fold up a black pipe cleaner to make a beak, glue to face.
6. Make glasses from pipe cleaner (You may need two, twisted together at the ends to make a long one). Glue to face.
7. Cut a large circle in the felt and glue edges to bottle to make a hat. (Construction paper can be used, but felt will look better.)
OMULONGA