Before Reading

1. Have children look at the cover of the book and read the title aloud. Say:
   - The title of this book is Math Fables. A fable is a story in which the characters are animals that talk and act like people. It is meant to teach a lesson, or moral. Use the title of the book and the picture on the cover to tell or predict what this book will be about. (stories that involve animals in groups and that teach a lesson)
   
   Note: This book does not contain page numbers. You may want to number the pages yourself (starting with #1 on the title page) to make it easier to follow the instructions below.

2. Reread the words above the title on the cover and the title page. Say:
   - “Lessons That Count” can mean two things. What two things do you think this phrase means? (Possible answers: The fables will involve counting; the fables will teach important lessons.)

During Reading

After reading the pages in each section, direct children to use the text and pictures to support their answers to your questions.

1. Read pages 4–7. Have children look at the picture details as you read aloud. Ask:
   - What is the lesson in “Dinner Guest?” (Good things will happen if you are patient and wait.)
   - Look at the text on pages 6–7. What do you notice about the numbers? (They are big and bright.) Why do you think they look like that? (so you notice them)
   - Say: On page 7, I see two number ones at the top of the page and one number two at the bottom. What is a group of one and one? (two)

2. Read pages 8–13. Have children count the animals that go with each big, bright number whenever it appears in a fable. Then continue to engage children in the fable. Ask:
   - How many turtles lived in the woods in “Family Affair?” (three) What number pattern do you notice in the fables we have read so far? (Each fable tells about one more animal.)
   - What pairs of rhyming words do you hear in “Family Affair?” (go, slow; tripped, flipped; more, for) Why do you think the author wrote the fables in rhyme? (to make them more interesting and fun)
   - What do you think albeit means in “Family Affair?” (Possible answers: even if, even though)
During Reading (continued)

- “Going Nuts” tells about four squirrels. How is the number four shown on page 11? (with a group of three and one) How is it shown on page 12? (with two groups of two)
- What lesson did the squirrels learn? (It’s a good idea to plan ahead so you are ready for anything that happens.)

3. Before reading pages 14–21, have children predict how many animals will be in the next two fables. (five and then six) Then read the pages. Ask:

- How can you group five things? (as groups of two and three; as a group of four and one) How do the pictures show this? (Two raccoons are grabbing the garbage can and three raccoons join them; that makes five. Four raccoons are together and one raccoon is alone; that makes five.)
- How do the pictures on pages 18–21 go with the text? (Each picture shows the grouping described in the text on that page.)
- How can you think of the number six in terms of groups? (Possible answer: as groups of two and four; five and one; and two groups of three)

4. Read pages 22–25. Ask:

- In “Gone with the Wind,” how many butterflies were flying to Mexico? (seven) How were they grouped in the fable? (five and two; one and six; three and four)
- The butterflies decided they wouldn’t procrastinate next spring. What do you think procrastinate means? (to put off doing something) What is the moral of this fable? (Don’t wait for tomorrow to do something you should do today.)

5. Read pages 26–37. As you read aloud, help children look for patterns in the fables. Ask:

- How does each fable follow the same pattern? (At the beginning, the text introduces a number and the picture shows that many animals together.)
- After the animals start out together, what happens to them? (They break up into groups of different numbers.) Let’s point to and count the animals.
- How does each fable end? (with all the animals together again)
- These last three fables are about friends helping friends. What did you learn from these stories? (Possible answers: Friends are there to help when needed; when friends work together things get done.)

6. Let’s summarize:
- What did you learn about math and about fables in this book? (There are different ways to group each number. A fable is a story that teaches a lesson; the characters are animals that do things people do.)
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? (Possible answer: to help children think about different ways to group numbers and to learn some good lessons at the same time)

Page 39 suggests math activities to do with children. Choose the activities that are appropriate for your group and try them. Invite children to count the animals in each group in the picture of the animal parade.

After Reading

CONNECT TO MATH AND ART: Create Match Counters for Grouping Fun!

Explain to children that they are going to act out the fables using their own math counters. Hand out the 11 x 17-inch paper and help children fold it to make 16 boxes. (To create 16 boxes of equal size, have children fold the paper in half two times lengthwise, and then two times again in the other direction.) Have children draw a picture that will fit inside each box. (Children may draw the same animal in different colors in each box or different animals in the same color.) Then have children cut out each box on the folds, keeping the square box “counter” shapes. Have each child choose their 10 favorite pictures, setting the other 8 aside. Tell them the 10 they like best will be their 10 counters to act out the “River Sticks” fable. As time allows, repeat the grouping activity with other fables in the book.

Wrap up

Discuss the animals featured in the fables. (spider, birds, turtles, squirrels, raccoons, otters, butterflies, crabs, ants, beavers) Invite children to tell about the fable they liked best. Ask:

- What are some ways the animals acted like people in the stories? (Possible answers: The animals talked, sometimes had problems, had fun together, and helped each other in the ways that people do.)
- How might this book help you remember ways to group numbers? (Possible answer: I will think about what the animals did and how they were grouped.)