

## FLO: Return of the Water Beetles

Five engaging sorting and pattern activities are mixed with a values education theme, in this well-designed title for younger children. Like *Buzby: Breakin' all the Rules* (the sister title to this one) the activities are embedded in a story where the main characters encounter situations where they must think about their values. For example, when one of the characters in the story thinks another is lying, he looks up to the sky, says a prayer, and gets a reply with suggestions for the situation. The five activities, which have no direct religious agenda, fit nicely into the storyline, which tells the story of a girl's frantic attempt to get the garden ready for the invasion of a hot British Rock band... the Water Beetles.

There are other fun puns in the game, including a fast-paced Tetris-like pea sorting game, where the reward is a bowl full of "world peas." You can also create a pie by following the step by step directions of "Sarah Leech."

The insect theme comes from the *Hermie & Friends* video series. Children are rewarded with seeds, which can be planted in a garden to grow musical instruments; a clever way to tie the entire game together. A sign-in screen is used to remember progress from play to play.

Weaknesses are few; but include a lack of a hint system. At one point we were stuck making a cookie, and had no option other than to exit the activity. This is a minor problem, however, because children are always free jump to another activity. As children play, the progress gets harder, which keeps things interesting. All in all, this is an excellent merging of quality, developmentally appropriate games with a playful theme.

Details: Digital Praise, Inc., [www.DigitalPraise.com](http://www.DigitalPraise.com), 510-770-0244, \$29.95, for ages 3-6. Runs on Windows XP, Windows 98, Mac OSX. Teaches: truthfulness, forgiveness, critical thinking, memory, spatial reasoning, problem solving, classifying, patterns, creating music, rhythm, religion. Rating (1 to 5 stars) = 4.5 stars. Review date: 3/31/2006.

<b>Ease of Use</b>	9
<b>Educational</b>	10
<b>Entertaining</b>	9
<b>Design Features</b>	9
<b>Good Value</b>	8

90%

