

# How Saturn Got Its Rings

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## Tips for Telling

*I used this story in the context of a Beaver Astronaut theme.*

*Throughout the story I embedded notes relating to several magic tricks I used. You do not have to do the magic to make the story successful. The tricks are to remove a ring from a rope, then using a different trick, put the ring back onto the rope. Neither trick is difficult to learn. I found them in library books.*

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## The Story

This is the story of how Saturn got its rings.

In the early days of the solar system the rings that are now around Saturn played wherever they wanted. They played Tag, Hide and Seek, and Ring Around the Rosy. They had fun, like all young children, but sometimes, they would get into trouble. The rings would bump into stars, causing them to blink, or the moon, leaving holes where they'd hit.

The elders of the solar system decided it was time for the rings to stop playing, and to tie the rings in one place.

*Here I put the rope through the ring. I give both ends of the rope to a Beaver, and the ring to another. I ask the Beaver with the ring if he can gently get the ring off the rope.*

The elders thought that tying the rings with the rope would be a good idea. "It would keep them in one place," they agreed. The rings just laughed quietly to themselves. Then the elders thought that if one loop was good, a second loop around the rings would be even better.

*I make the second loop on the ring. While I hold the ring, I hand one end to a Beaver and the other end to another Beaver.*

No sooner had the elders tied up the rings than a cloud of cosmic dust settled over the solar system.

*I cover the ring with a bandanna.*

When the cloud lifted, the rings were again free and playing throughout the solar system.

*Remove the ring from the rope and show it to the Beavers.*

The elders were astounded. The rings were again free. The elders turned to the planets for help.

First, they asked Mercury, who is closest planet the sun, and the fastest. "I'm sorry," said Mercury, reluctantly. "I am far too busy. I know I get things done quickly, but it's because I am so close to the sun that I need to do things fast. It gets too hot if I don't. I just haven't got the time to show the rings what to do." The elders agreed, Mercury was too busy.

Next they asked Venus, the morning star. Venus answered, "I would like to help, but you see, I must shine my mirrors before the night is over, otherwise nobody would see my beautiful light in the morning." The elders agreed, Venus was too busy.

Next, the elders turned to Earth. "Earth, surely you could help?" the elders asked. "Come

back when we've raised all these children," replied the Earth. "The moon and I are busy enough right now bringing life and beauty to all the children of this world." The elders agreed, Earth was too busy.

The elders were beginning to get concerned. They turned to the Red planet, Mars. Before the elders could speak Mars raised his shield. "I have a big responsibility already," said Mars. "I am the protector of the solar system." "So you are," said the elders, and they sadly turned to look at the long journey, to the outer reaches of the solar system, that might be ahead of them.

The elders looked to the outer planets: Neptune, Uranus and Pluto. Then the elders agreed, these planets were just too far away.

They looked hard at Saturn and Jupiter. Jupiter was too big for the rings. Besides, he had his own moons to look after, and he was the big brother to all the other planets in the solar system. Saturn looked just right for the job. The elders agreed, Saturn might be the planet to do the job.

"Saturn," they asked, brightly. "We need you to look after the rings and help them to grow to be useful members of the solar system."

There was a pause. Then Saturn spoke to the elders quietly and confidently. "I will," he said, "but you will have to let me do it in my own way." The elders agreed.

So Saturn went into his workshop and closed the doors.

*At this point I lay down a colourful shoelace and place a ring on top. I then cover these with a bandanna. I tell the Beavers to watch the ends of the lace, that it is not to come inside the bandanna. While I tie the rope back on the ring, I continue with the story ...*

Everyone could hear the noises of Saturn using his tools. Outside they heard banging, sawing, sanding and polishing. At last the noises stopped. "I'm ready," Saturn called out. The workshop doors opened. Saturn came out holding the rings.

*From one side of the bandanna, I slowly pull out the lace, tied to the ring. I hold it up for the Beavers to see.*

"Saturn," the elders laughed, "don't you remember? We tried tying the rings with a rope."

"Ah, but this is different," smiled Saturn, knowingly. He gave one end to an elder, (*give one end to a Beaver*), and the other end to another elder (*and the other end to another Beaver*). He asked the elders to slowly pull the ends of the rope. (*As the Beavers do, the ring will magically locate on to the middle of the rope.*) The elders were amazed. The rings have stayed with Saturn. They learned from Saturn, and together the rings make Saturn a very special planet in our solar system. To this day, if you look through a telescope, you'll see Saturn and its beautiful rings.