

Educator's Booklist



Books for teaching about themes related to homelessness, poverty, empathy, caring, and curiosity

A note about this resource

This book list includes books we've used in our SEEDschool classroom, books that have been recommended to us by other educators, and books we've found as we've searched for books related to homelessness, poverty, empathy, caring and other social issues.

Many of the books were reviewed and graded by Alberta Education K—12 teachers that graciously volunteered their time to The Mustard Seed.

This is an evolving resource. Do you have additional comments, classroom links, or books we should include on this? Send us a note at CommunityEngagement@theseed.ca

Grade Level & Guided Reading Levels

*chart adapted from Scholastic

Grade	Scholastic Guided Reading Level
Kindergarten	A B C D
1	A B C D E F G H I
2	E F G H I J K L M N
3	J K L M N O P Q
4	M N O P Q R S T
5	Q R S T U V W
6	T U V W X Y Z
7—12	N/A

Books Listed by Minimum Recommended Grade Level
(click on a section or book title you're interested in)

Pre K & K+

A Chair for my Mother
A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story
Chocolate Milk, Por Favor!
Counting on Community
David Jumps In
Enemy Pie
Have You Filled A Bucket Today?
Hug Machine
I Am Every Good Thing
I Am Love: A Book of Compassion
I Am One: A Book of Action
I Can Hear The Sun
I'll Walk With You
In My Heart
I Promise
Kamala and Maya's Big Idea
Kishka for Koppel
Last Stop on Market Street
Lovely
Malala's Magic Pencil
On Our Street: Our First Talk About Poverty
Our Class is a Family
Round Trip
Same, Same, but Different
Say Hello
Say Something
Something Beautiful
Still a Family
Stone Soup
Strictly No Elephants
Thankful
Thank You, Omu!
The Bear's Garden
The Cardboard Shack Beneath the Bridge
The Gift Inside the Box
The Man with the Violin
The Most Magnificent Thing
The One with the Scraggly Beard
The Quiltmaker's Gift
The Rabbit Listened
The Three Questions
Tight Times
Usha and the Stolen Sun

Visiting Feelings
What's My Superpower?
When We Are Kind
You Matter
Your Name is a Song

Grade 1+

A Shelter in Our Car
Fly Away Home
If You Find a Rock
Love Is All Around Calgary
Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed
Pies from Nowhere
Shi-shi-etko
Shoebox Sam
The Can Man
The Invisible Boy
The Lunch Thief
The Name Jar
Those Shoes
What Do You Do With a Chance?
What Do You Do With an Idea?
What Do You Do With a Problem?
When We Were Alone
Whoever You Are

Grade 3+

Because of Mr. Terupt
Crenshaw
I Am Not a Number
IF
Mwâkwa Talks to the Loon
Shelter: Homelessness in our Community
Stay
The Carpet Boy's Gift
The Hundred Dresses
The Table Where Rich People Sit
Wishtree
Wonder

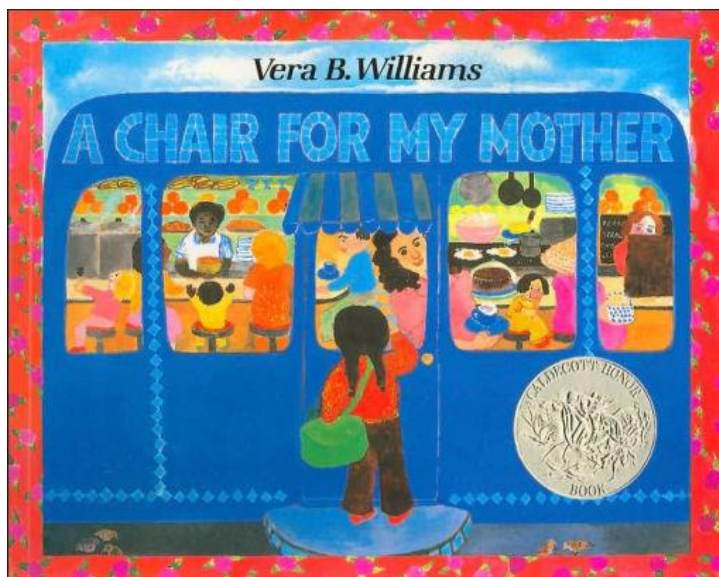
Grade 6+

New Kid
No Fixed Address

Grade 9+

Almost Home
Tell Them Who I Am

Minimum
Grade Level:
Pre K & K +



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

A Chair for my Mother

Vera B. Williams

About

After their home is destroyed by a fire, Rosa, her mother and grandmother save their coins to buy a really comfortable chair for all to enjoy.

Significant Themes

Poverty and Loss: *"There was a big fire in our other house. All our chairs burned. So did our sofa and so did everything else."*

Community: *"The first day we moved in, the neighbours brought pizza, cake, and ice cream.... The very old man next door gave us a bed from when his children were little"*

Saving Money: *"Every time, I put half of my money into the jar."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Grade 1 connections

Social: My world [my home/my community]

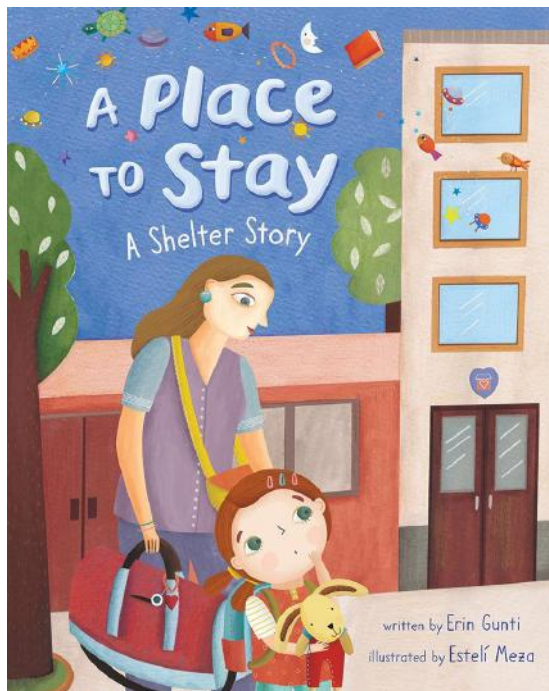
Health: Helping others/ volunteering

Suggested activity:

As a class discuss and find ways to give back to the community, like harvesting the garden for a senior's center, collecting donations, baking snacks for our neighbours, etc.

Grade 2 connections

Express ideas and develop understanding, contribute relevant ideas and information from personal experiences to groups and languages activities.



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story

Erin Gunti, Illustrated by Estelí Meza

About

This simple, touching picture book shows readers a women's shelter through the eyes of a young girl, who, with her mother's help, uses her imagination to overcome her anxiety and adjust. Includes factual endnotes detailing various reasons people experience homelessness and the resources available to help.

Significant Themes

Anxiety/discomfort: *"I don't want to stay here!" I told Mama*

Shelter life: *"Mama filled out some paperwork, then Kelly said she would show us to our room on the third floor. We passed an area with some sofas and a television on one side. Next, we walked past a room filled with toys and books."*

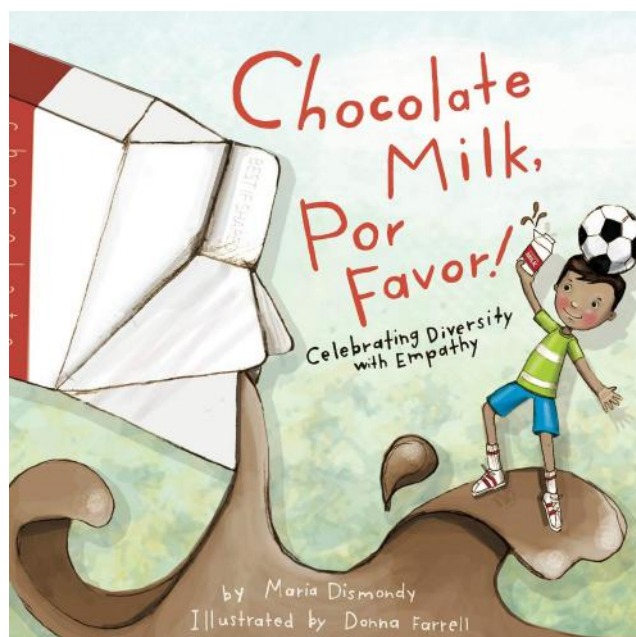
Imagination: *"I think you're right. Looks more like a palace to me! ... Let's go inside and see if the queen is here."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Journal: Imagine your classroom as a different space. Is it a spaceship? A banquet hall? A castle? A zoo? Write in your journal in strong, descriptive language about what your classroom really looks like in your imagination.

Research: Spend some time learning about family shelters in Canada and compare them to the book



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

Chocolate Milk, Por Favor!: Celebrating Diversity with Empathy

Maria Dismondy, Illustrated by Donna Farrell

About

It's Gabe's first day of school in America, and he doesn't speak English. This story shows how a simple act of kindness is worth more than a thousand words. Kindness really is a universal language.

**Disclaimer: The illustrations imply Gabe is Brazilian while the text has him speaking Spanish instead of Portuguese.*

Significant Themes

Friendship: *"He understood that to have a friend is first to be a friend."*

Inclusion: *"Gabe was surrounded by boys and girls laughing and sharing with him."*

Bullying: *"Look, he's not like us. He can't even order lunch."*

Empathy: *"Think about what you can do to help him."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

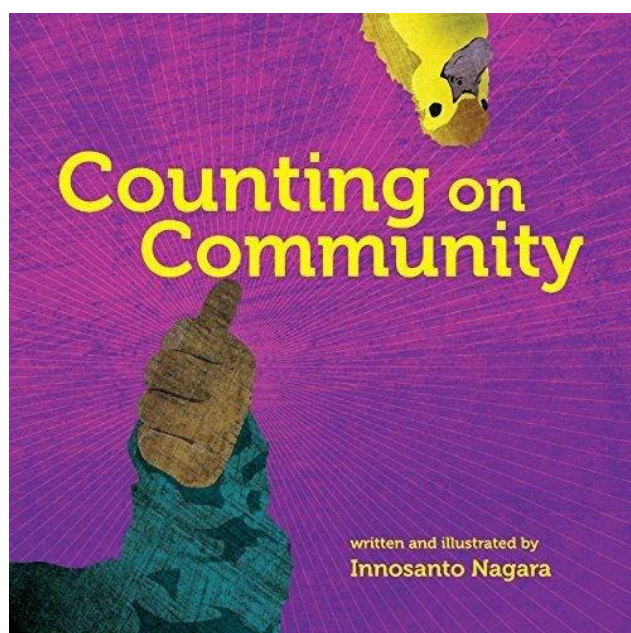
Suggested activities:

Classroom Discussion: Focus on friendship: How to be a good friend? How would you make Gabe feel welcome if he came to our class? Focus on the beauty of difference: Celebrating you! What makes you different? Share with the class.

Journal or Draw: Take a minute to imagine that you were Gabe and Johnny. How would you feel? Why? Express yourself in your journal either with words or a drawing.

Classroom Welcome Guide: As a class write down some rules/steps that can be done to make new students feel welcomed to your class.

Additional Resources: <https://mariadismondy.com/wp-content/uploads/readers-guide-chocolate-milk-small.pdf>



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

Counting on Community

Innosanto Nagara

About

Counts from 1 – 10 the good things about a community. Children are encouraged to recognize the value of their community, the joys inherent in healthy eco-friendly activities, and the agency they possess to make change.

*There is a duck to find on every page!

Significant Themes

Community: *"Living in community, it's a lot of FUN!"*

Citizenship: *"I can count on you, and you can count on me!"*

Identity: *"So what can you count in your community?"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Pre K & K

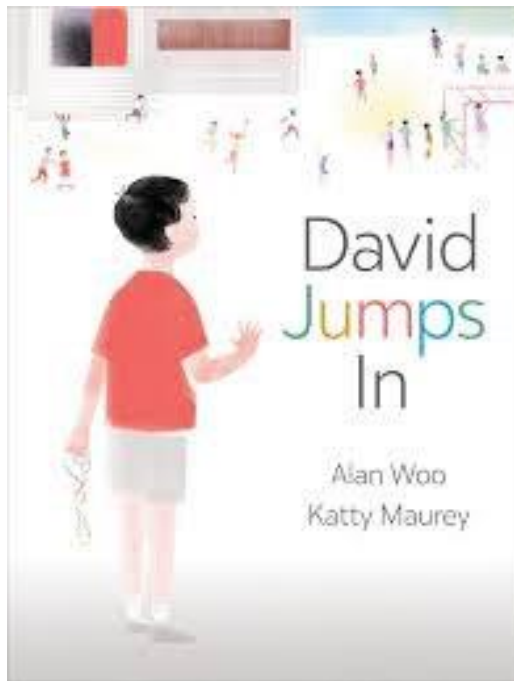
Focus on identity: Who am I? Where do I belong in my community?

Grade 1 social

What makes a community? How do I fit in? Students will work to understand the benefits and responsibilities of living in a community, while appreciating the differences in others. They'll also explore the history of your family and community. They'll consider their own growth and how they are affected by community members. Develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community.

Suggested activity:

Have students create their own list or picture/poster depicting the good things in their own communities (school, church, neighbourhood)



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

David Jumps In

Alan Woo, Illustrated by Katty Maurey

About

This lyrical tale, written in simple free verse, tells how a game with roots in ancient China --- called elastic skip in this story --- helps a boy find his footing on his first day at a new school. It is David's first day at his brand-new school. He doesn't know anyone. At recess, he stands alone and watches the other children enjoying their activities on the playground, from practicing soccer moves and climbing monkey bars to playing hopscotch and daydreaming in the grass. Bundled deep inside David's pocket is a string of rubber bands, knotted and ready for a game of elastic skip. But will anyone want to try that game? he wonders. Will anyone want to play with him?

Significant Themes

Friendship: *"When the recess bell rang, David and his newfound friends raced into sunshine."*

Belonging: *"I'm David, do you want to play elastic skip?"*

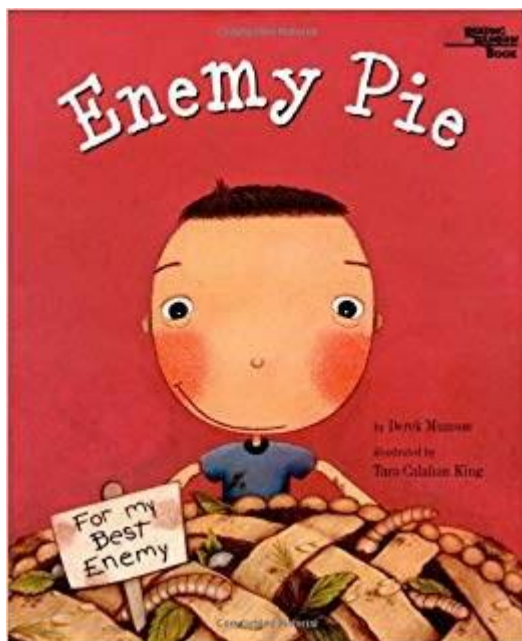
Culture: *"David explained the jumping, and the chanting, and the rubber bands"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Presentations: Have each student make a presentation about something from their culture or family that they would like to share with the class. It could be a food, a game, a tradition, or something else!

Classroom Discussion: How can learn from one another? How does sharing create friendship?



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L—M

Enemy Pie

Derek Munson, Illustrated by Tara Calahan King

About

Hoping that the enemy pie which his father makes will help him get rid of his enemy, a little boy finds that instead it helps make a new friend.

Significant Themes

Friendship: *"It was strange, but I was kind of having fun with my enemy."*

Making judgments: *"It was all good until Jeremy Ross moved into the neighbourhood, right next door to my best friend Stanley."*

Facing challenges: *"In order for it to work, you need to spend a day with your enemy. Even worse, you have to be nice to him. It's not easy."*

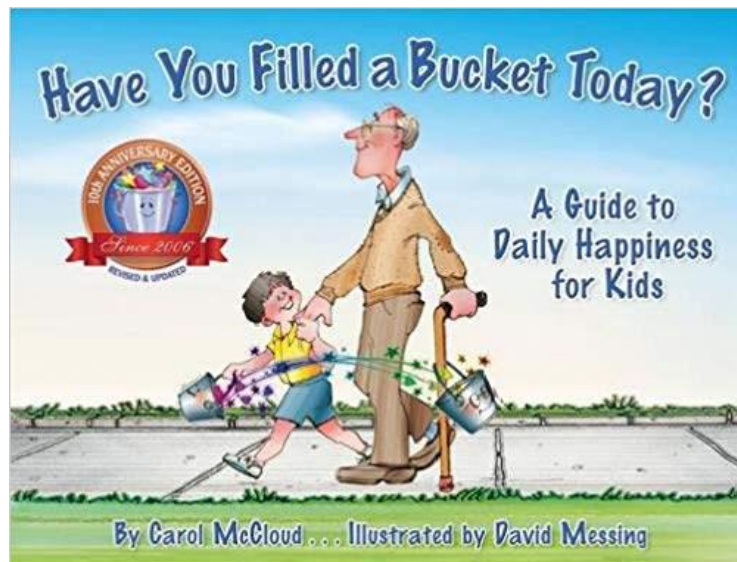
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Classroom Discussion: How does sharing our food with others creates community and makes others feel loved and welcomed?

Brainstorm: As a class have students brainstorm different deserts they could bake at home (or school) and discuss how and where they could share their treats with somebody in the school or neighbourhood who needs to be shown kindness or appreciation

Acts of Kindness: Bring some of your classroom brainstorm ideas to life, whether that be collecting food donations for the food bank or making sandwiches as a class to donate to a local homeless shelter.



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

I — P

Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide To Daily Happiness For Kids

Carol McCloud, Illustrated by David Messing

About

This heartwarming book encourages positive behavior by using the concept of an invisible bucket to show children how easy and rewarding it is to express kindness, appreciation and love by "filling buckets."

Significant Themes

Kindness and appreciation: "You fill a bucket when you show love to someone, when you say or do something kind, or even when you give someone a smile"

Bullying: "You dip into a bucket when you make fun of someone, when you say or do mean things, or even when you ignore someone."

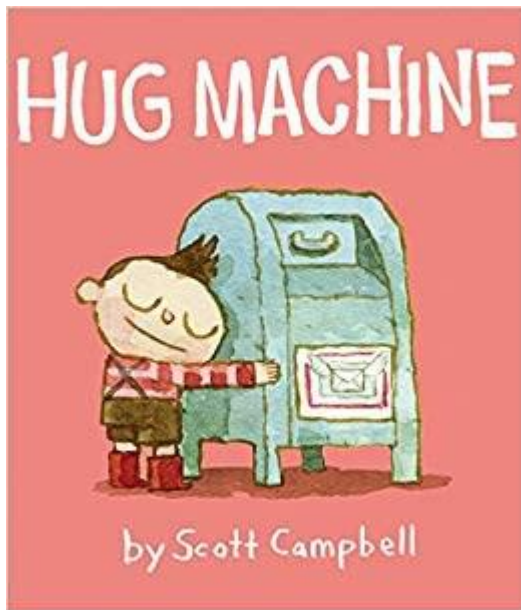
Altruism: "When you fill someone's bucket, you fill your own bucket, too!"

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Reproduce the Great Job sheets (www.bucketfillers101.com/pdfs/GreatJobCards.pdf). Cut the sheets into quarters. Place in a colorful bucket in a central location. Instruct students that each time they act as a bucket filler at school, at home, in their neighborhood, or in the community, they can write about what they did or said on a Great Job slip and place it in their bucket. Periodically gather students and empty their bucket contents in a pile. Read select Great Job slips and celebrate bucket-filling behavior.

Additional Resources: <http://bucketfillers101.com/>



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

J

Hug Machine

Scott Campbell

About

Who have YOU hugged today? Open your arms to this delightfully tender, goofy, and sweet board book from Scott Campbell. Watch out world, here he comes! The Hug Machine! Whether you are big, or small, or square, or long, or spiky, or soft, no one can resist his unbelievable hugs! HUG ACCOMPLISHED!

Significant Themes

Showing kindness: *"My hugs calm people down. They cheer them up"*

Love: *"Hug machine is always open for business."*

Empathy: *"What about me? I am so spiky. No one ever hugs me."*

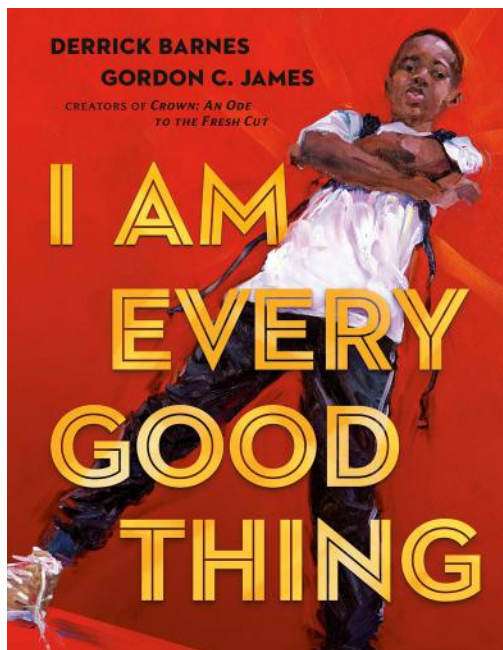
Acceptance and welcome: *"No one escapes the Hug Machine."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

As a class have students brainstorm different ways they can be a hug machine through different acts of kindness and welcome! Have each student pick from the brainstormed list an act of kindness they wish to perform in the classroom, at home or in the community. Follow up by having students journal about their time as a machine of kindness.

Additional resources [here](#)



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

I Am Every Good Thing

Derrick Barnes, Illustrated by Gordon C. James

About

The confident Black narrator of this book is proud of everything that makes him who he is. He's got big plans, and no doubt he'll see them through--as he's creative, adventurous, smart, funny, and a good friend. Sometimes he falls, but he always gets back up. And other times he's afraid, because he's so often misunderstood and called what he is not. So slow down and really look and listen, when somebody tells you--and shows you--who they are. There are superheroes in our midst!

Significant Themes

Confidence: *"I am that smile forming on your face right now."
"I am what I say I am."*

Self-worth: *"I am every good thing that makes the world go round." "I am worthy to be loved."*

Value: *"I am a brother, a son, a nephew, a favorite cousin, a grandson. I am a friend. I am real."*

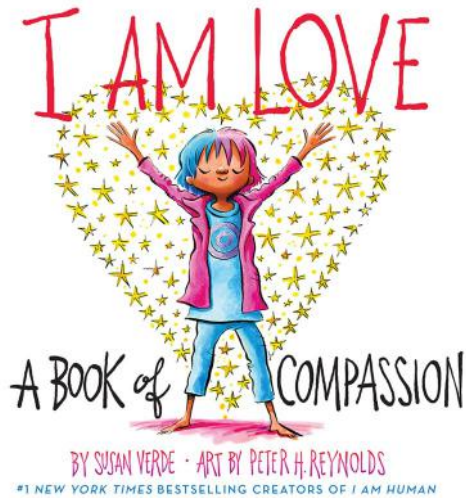
Passion: *"I am a grand slam, bases fully loaded."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Drawing time: Have each student draw a self-portrait in a specific style (including art objectives) and decorate them with words to describe themselves.

Classroom Discussion: How do we know our value? Whose voices matter in our lives? How does confidence empower us to help others? How can we see others as every good thing?



Grade Level

Pre K– 3

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

I Am Love: A Book of Compassion

Susan Verde, Illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

About

Celebrate kindness, compassion, self-care, and love in all its forms! Love means showing kindness, living with gratitude, and taking care of our minds and bodies. Letting our hearts lead the way can help move us closer to a better world.

Significant Themes

Compassion “I have compassion. I act with tenderness.”

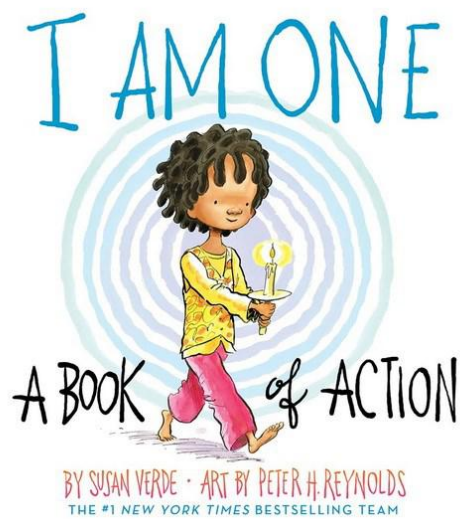
Love “I am love. You are love. We are love.”

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Language Arts/ Physical Education/ Health

Discussion: List good and bad emotions. Which good emotions can help the bad emotions?

Activity: Create a dramatic scene for being a good listener, comforting someone, taking care of me and others, being thankful, being creative, and making mistakes.



Grade Level

Pre K– 3

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

I Am One: A Book of Action

Susan Verde, Illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

About

Discover the power of activism!

One seed to start a garden, one note to start a melody, one brick to start breaking down walls: Every movement and moment of change starts with purpose, with intention, with one. With me. With you.

I Am One is a powerful call to action, encouraging each reader to raise their voice, extend a hand, and take that one first step to start something beautiful and move toward a better world.

Significant Themes

Friendship “I can use my One soft voice to start a friendship”

Kindness “I can perform one act of kindness to start a connection”

Action “I am One. And I can take action.”

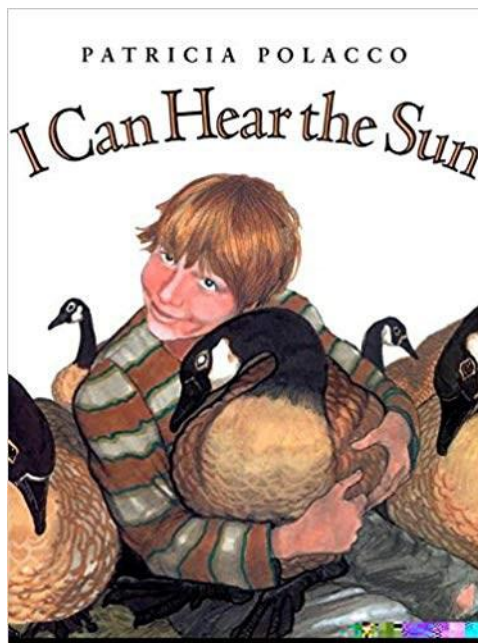
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Language Arts/ Physical Education/ Health

Before Reading: Discuss the Dalai Lama’s in the Author’s notes. Who is the Dalai Lama? What does he do for the world?

Discussion: Create a list of ones. Who in you life needs a one? Pick one and illustrate it happening.

Activity: Have a “One” day. Create a list to show the ones the class has done.



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

P

I Can Hear the Sun

Patricia Polacco

About

A boy experiencing homelessness finds a family at a bird sanctuary with the birds and the caretakers. The boy and a blind goose become best friends and are inseparable. When it comes time for the boy to leave the city he's in, he runs away and flies away with the geese instead. This is a heartwarming and inspirational story that shows family can be more than your relatives.

Significant Themes

Loneliness: *"He didn't smile or talk or play. He just sat for hours alone, and watched the geese."*

Friendship: *"Both of them sat for a while and watched the geese together... they walked together, ate together, and dreamed together"*

Kindness: *"Well child I'm glad you're here, looking at your face starts my day off just fine."*

Hope: *"All you gotta do is believe!"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Language Arts: Fairy Tales/Folklore/Modern Myth

Students use their language skills to describe things in greater detail – rich vocabulary development and lots of new words

Suggested activity:

Have students write their own fairytale or modern myth exploring ideas of identity, hope, and friendship



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

I'll Walk With You

Carol Lynn Pearson, Illustrated by Jane Sanders

About

Beloved author of *The Lesson* and *Will You Still Be My Daughter?* Carol Lynn Pearson is known for her heartfelt, sometimes tear-jerking poetry and stories. Her newest title will enchant children with a sweet, tender poem about loving and accepting others, no matter what they look like, where they come from, or what their age and abilities are.

Significant Themes

Diversity: "If you don't look like some people do, some people just look down on you."

Acceptance: "I'll walk beside and match your stride, that's how I'll show my love for you."

Compassion: "I will listen to and learn from you, that's how I will show my love for you."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

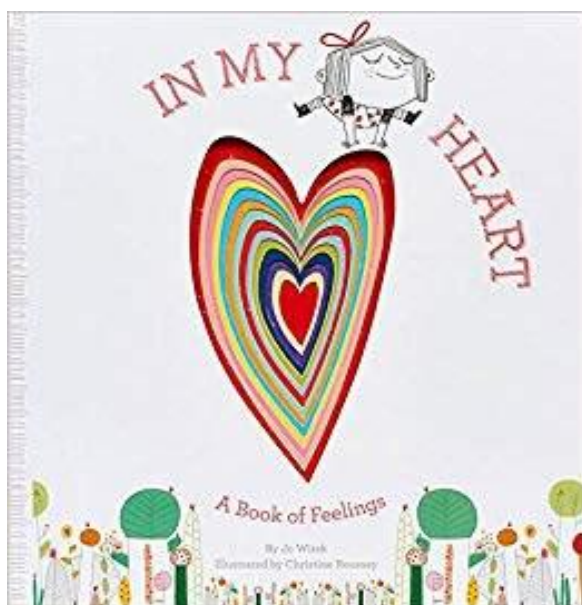
Sing-a-long Version: of "I will walk with you" using plastic spoons with actions: <https://youtu.be/JgaxXX5WCUU>

Write a class pledge or promise. This is an opportunity for the class to recognize the needs of others and share in a promise to walk alongside those that are often excluded or alone in their walk.

- Who do we walk with? What kind of class do we want to become? Who can we help by walking alongside?
- Identify the class core values like acceptance, charitableness, compassion, generosity, gratitude, helpfulness, etc.
- "We will walk alongside _____ even when nobody is looking" "We will walk with others every time" "Our goal is to help and to care"

Begin to use this mantra in your every day interactions with students to help them internalize it.

Adapted from *UnSelfie: Why empathetic kids succeed in our all-about-me world* by Michelle Borba, Ed. D. (2016)



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

J

In My Heart

Jo Witek, Illustrated by Christine Roussey

About

An exploration of feelings – big and small. A lovely book to explore emotional intelligence and emotional literacy with younger children. Lots of sensory imagery help to explain how feelings can look, feel, or be described.

Significant Themes

Feelings: *"My heart can feel so many feelings, and yours can too!"*

Emotional awareness: *"When I get really angry my heart feels as if it will explode"*

Mindfulness: *"Today, my heart is proud. How does your heart feel?"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

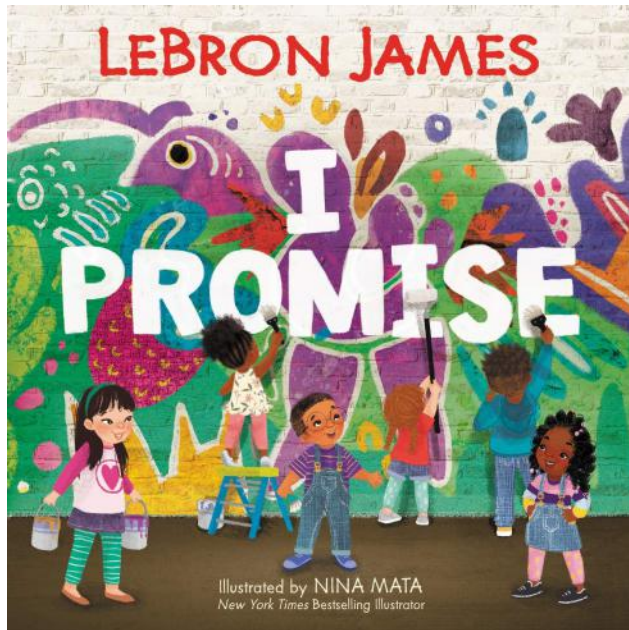
Grade 2 and 3 Health: Personal safety and wellness choices.

Relationship choices: People make choices as to how to express themselves. Safe expression of feelings is healthy. Identify physiological and psychological responses. Develop communication strategies to express needs and seek support. Express ideas and develop understanding, contribute relevant ideas and information from personal experiences to group language activities.

Suggested activities:

Journaling: Focus on feelings and their triggers. Use an ABC chart for those with known SEBD concerns

Art project: Buy small jewelry boxes from the dollar store. Have students decorate the outside to represent how they think people see them, and have them paint the inside with colours that represent their feelings and emotions that people might not usually see. Remind students that they can use whatever colours they like to represent each emotion (for example, blue could represent sadness but could also represent calm or peace.)



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

I Promise

Lebron James, Illustrated by Nina Mata

About

I Promise is a lively and inspiring picture book that reminds us that tomorrow's success starts with the promises we make to ourselves and our community today. This book has the power to inspire all children and families to be their best.

Significant Themes

Dedication: *"I promise to work hard and do what's right, to be a leader in this game of life."*

Commitment: *"I promise to ask for help whenever I need it."*

Perseverance: *"I promise to run full court and show up each time, to get right back up and let my magic shine."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Class Pledge or Mantra: Discuss who you are as a class and write a class pledge or mantra. This is an opportunity for the class to define their beliefs and who they will become as students.

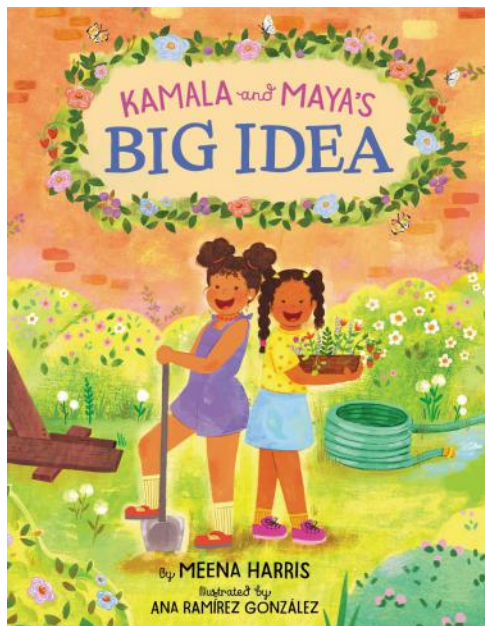
- What do we stand for? What kind of class do we want to become? What kind of feeling do we want to have in our class? What principles do we want to follow?
- Identify the class core values like acceptance, charitableness, compassion, generosity, gratitude, helpfulness, etc.

Create a mantra or motto that includes these things:

- "We are kind even when nobody is looking" "We put others first every time" "Our goal is to help and to care" "We show empathy and walk in somebody else's shoes"

Begin to use this mantra in your every day interactions with students to help them internalize it.

Adapted from UnSelfie: Why empathetic kids succeed in our all-about-me world by Michelle Borba, Ed. D. (2016)



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Kamala and Maya's Big Idea

Meena Harris, Illustrated by Ana Ramirez Gonzalez

About

This is the uplifting tale of how the author's aunt and mother first learned to persevere in the face of disappointment and turned a dream into reality. This is a story of children's ability to make a difference and of a community coming together to transform their neighborhood.

Significant Themes

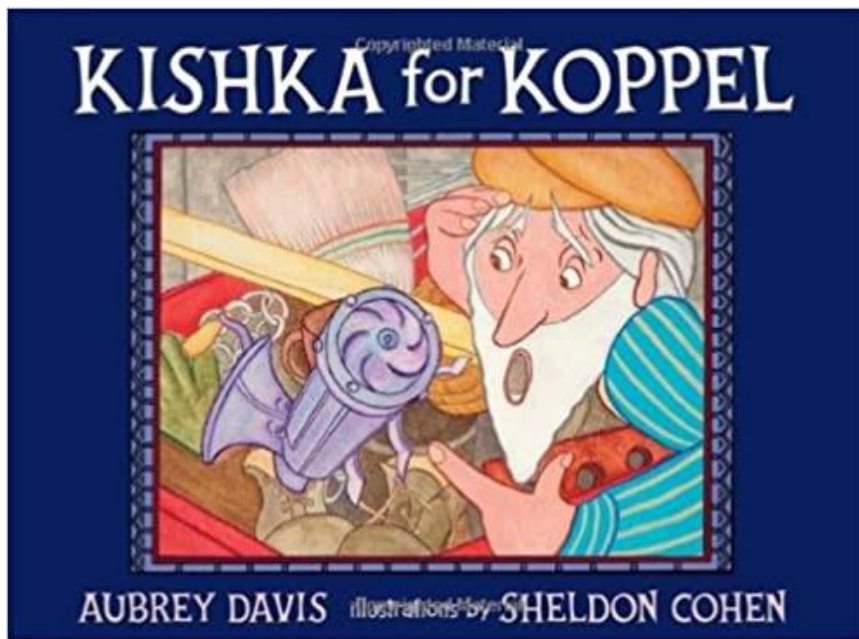
Perseverance: "Kamala and Maya had an idea. It was a very good idea. And a very big idea. And with a lot of help, they made it happen."

Cooperation: "No one could do everything but everyone could contribute something."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

A great template for brainstorming, problem-solving, and writing letters based around a big idea can be found [here](#)



Grade Level

K+

Kishka for Koppel

Aubrey Davis, Illustrated by Sheldon Cohen

About

In this retelling of a Jewish tale, a magic meat grinder helps a poor Jewish couple recognize their blessings after the three wishes it grants them don't bring the happiness they expect.

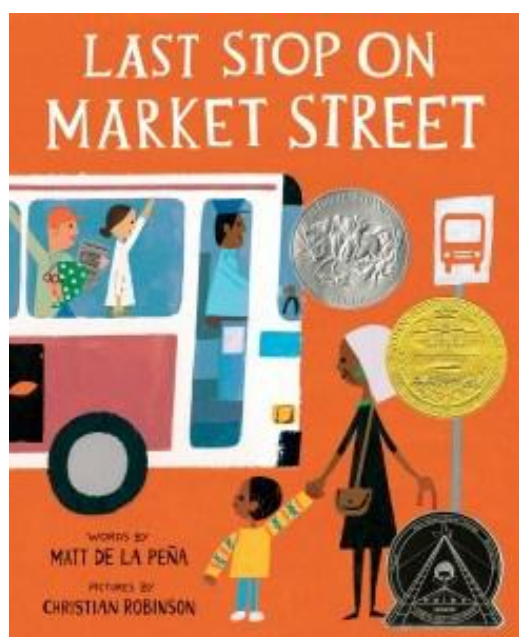
Significant Themes

Gratitude
Satisfaction,
Wants vs. needs

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Look up other "3 wish" stories and practice writing your own. What might your character wish for that wouldn't turn out the way they'd hope? How do we tell apart wants from needs? What can we be thankful for, even if we don't have all our "wants"?



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

Last Stop On Market Street

Matt De La Peña, Illustrated by Christian Robinson

About

Every Sunday after church, CJ and his grandma ride the bus across town. But today, CJ wonders why they don't have the same things as others on the bus. Each question is met with an encouraging answer from grandma, who helps him see the beauty—and fun—in their routine and the world around them.

Significant Themes

Kindness: *"Nana gave everyone a great big smile and a 'good afternoon.'"*

Generosity: *"A man climbed aboard with a spotted dog. CJ gave up his seat"*

Finding beauty around us: *"He wondered how his nana always found beautiful where he never even thought to look"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Social Studies

1.1 Community

3.1 Connecting communities, 3.2 Global Citizens

Science: Observation skills - modelled by the grandmother on the bus

Suggested activity:

Head out into your school or neighbourhood and have students journal on 5 beautiful things they've never noticed before

Practice observation skills in journaling by encouraging students to write a journal entry in their classroom or outside as if they are news reporters. What is happening? Where? To whom? How? Why?



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

Lovely

Jess Hong

About

Big, small, curly, straight, loud, quiet, smooth, wrinkly. Lovely explores a world of differences that all add up to the same thing: we are all lovely!

Significant Themes

Diversity: *"Lovely is different, weird and wonderful."*

Inclusion: *"We are all...Lovely"*

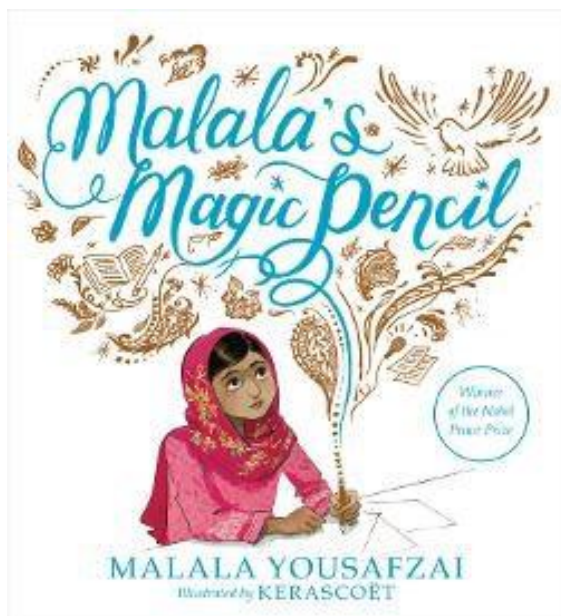
Acceptance: *"Fancy. Sporty. Graceful. Stompy."*

Self-worth: *"Lovely is you. Lovely is me."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Draw a self portrait and write down some things that are lovely about yourself. Now draw a picture of a friend and write some things that are lovely about them!



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

Malala's Magic Pencil

Malala Yousafzai, Illustrated by Kerascoët

About

Nobel Peace Prize winner and New York Times bestselling author Malala Yousafzai's first picture book, inspired by her own childhood.

As a child in Pakistan, Malala made a wish for a magic pencil. She would use it to make everyone happy, to erase the smell of garbage from her city, to sleep an extra hour in the morning. But as she grew older, Malala saw that there were more important things to wish for. She saw a world that needed fixing. And even if she never found a magic pencil, Malala realized that she could still work hard every day to make her wishes come true.

Significant Themes

Advocacy: *"One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world."*

"I spoke for all the girls in my valley who couldn't speak for themselves."

Equality: *"I would draw girls and boys together as equals."*

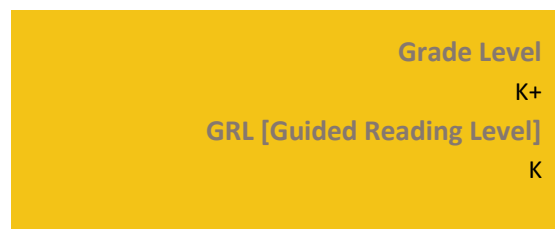
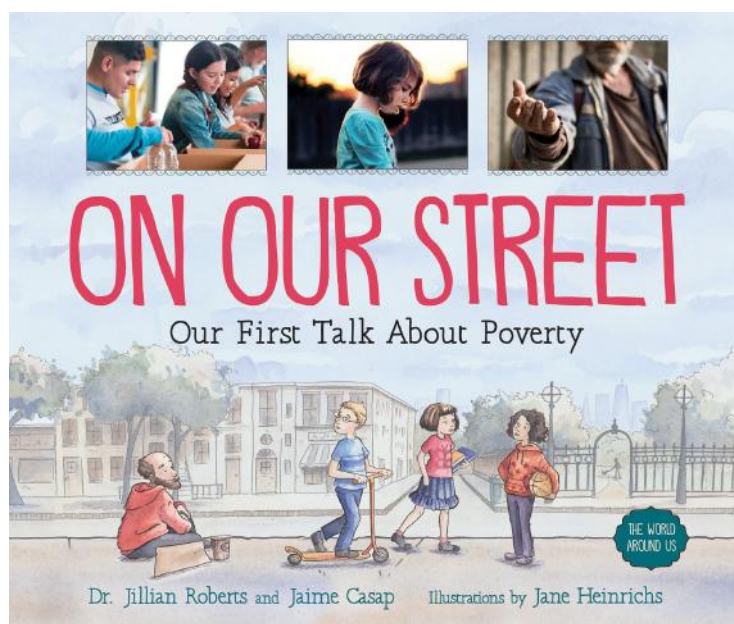
Resilience: *"And now my voice is louder than ever..."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

A great teaching resource can be found [here](#)

There are also lots of worksheets around this book on Teachers Pay Teachers



On Our Street: Our First Talk About Poverty

Dr. Jillian Roberts & Jamie Casap, Illustrated by Jane Heinrichs

About

A gentle introduction to the issue of poverty, *On Our Street* explores the realities of people living with inadequate resources. Using age-appropriate language, this book addresses mental illness, homelessness and refugee status as they are connected to this issue. Quotes from individuals and organizations such as UNICEF are included throughout to add further perspective on the issue.

Significant Themes

The world around us, homelessness & poverty, mental illness, human rights & essential services, immigrants and refugees, hope

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Health

Grades 1—6 - Awareness of the world around us

Social Studies

Gr. 1-3 Communities

Gr. 1: My community 1.1, 1.2

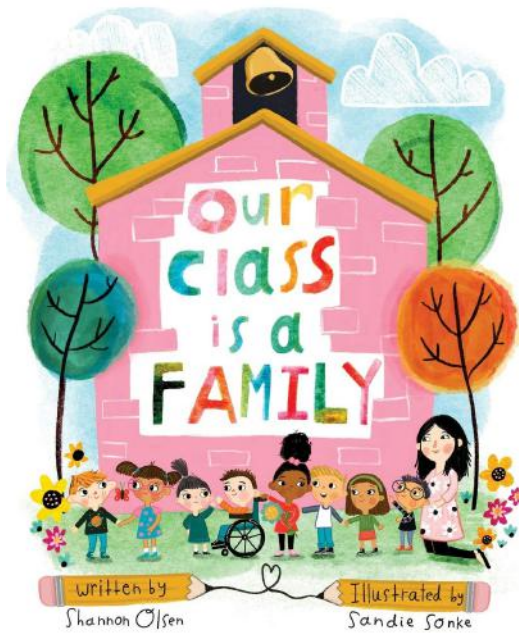
Gr. 2: Canada's Dynamic Communities 2.2

Gr. 3: 3.1 Communities in the World and 3.2 Global Citizenship

Gr 9 Social: Canada: Opportunities and Challenges

9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights

9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States



Grade Level
Pre K+
GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Our Class is a Family

Shannon Olsen, Illustrated by Sandie Sonke

About

Teachers do so much more than just teach academics. They build a sense of community within their classrooms, creating a home away from home where they make their students feel safe, included, and loved. With its heartfelt message and colorfully whimsical illustrations, “Our Class is a Family” is a book that will help build and strengthen that class community. Kids learn that their classroom is a place where it’s safe to be themselves, it’s okay to make mistakes, and it’s important to be a friend to others. When hearing this story being read aloud by their teacher, students are sure to feel like they are part of a special family.

Significant Themes

Belonging: “We’ll have things in common, these are connections that we’ll seek.”

Community: “In this classroom of four walls, we will stick together.”

Family: “You have our back, and we have yours. We’re a classroom family.”

Friendship: “And as long as you’re a friend to others, your peers will be there too.”

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

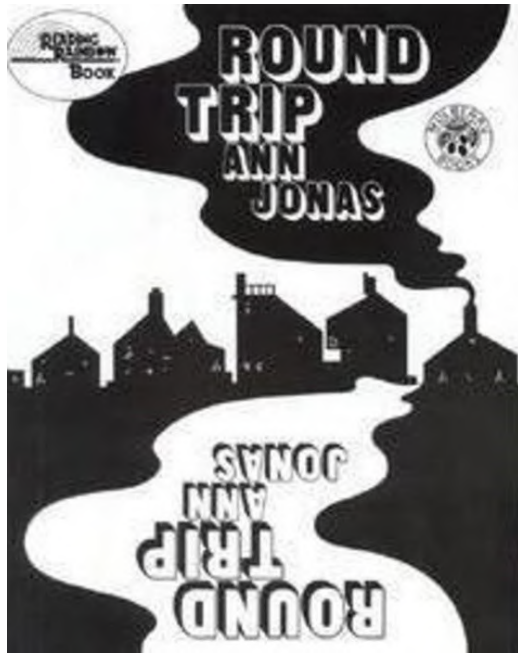
Suggested activities:

Discussion: How is our class like a family?

Journal: Write or draw a favourite “Class family memory.” Share with the class why this memory is special to you.

Class Family motto or mission statement: Determine together what are the class family values and what promises should be made as a class family.

An example can be found [here](#)



Grade Level
Pre K+
GRL [Guided Reading Level]
K

Round Trip

Ann Jonas

About

Black and white illustrations and text record the sights on a day trip to the city and back home again to the country. The trip to the city is read from front to back and the return trip, from back to front, upside down.

Significant Themes

Perspective

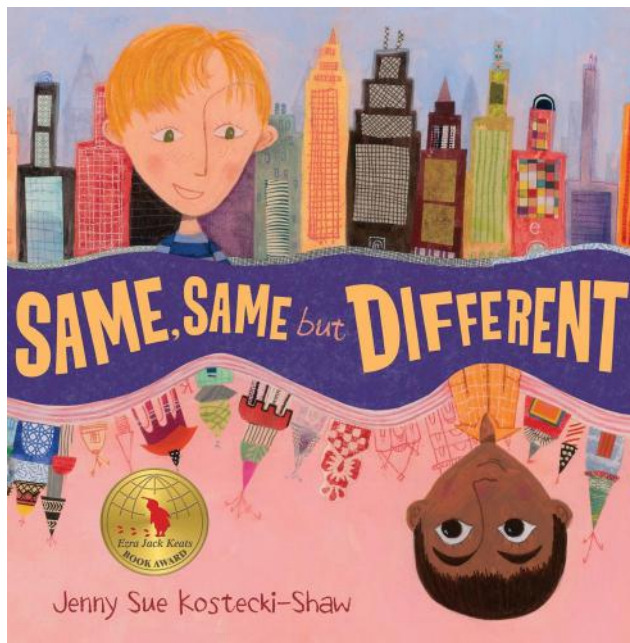
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Discussion: What is perspective? How can I learn to see from another perspective? Why is it important to consider issues from multiple perspectives?

Journal: Practice the “Up, Down, All Around” journal prompt—split a page into six boxes and draw what you see in front, behind, on each side, above, and below you. Have journals trade journals with friends to see from another perspective.

Perspective: Try journaling for 30 seconds to a minute, writing down all you can see, hear, smell, and feel. Move to a new spot and repeat, paying attention to all the new things you notice from your new perspective.



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Same, Same, but Different

Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

About

Elliot lives in America, and Kailash lives in India. They are pen pals. By exchanging letters and pictures, they learn that they both love to climb trees, have pets, and go to school. Their worlds might look different, but they are actually similar. Same, same. But different!

Through an inviting point-of-view and colorful, vivid illustrations, this story shows how two boys living oceans apart can be the best of friends.

Significant Themes

Diversity: *"We're best friends...even though we live in two different worlds."*

Commonalities: *"I have pets too, but not nearly as many as you!"*

Understanding: *"Different, different but the same!"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Pen-Pals: Create an opportunity for students to correspond with pen-pals from a different classroom, school, city, province or country. Invite them to brainstorm questions to ask their pen-pals, as well as information they might consider sharing about themselves.

Stamp That!: The end-pages of this book are covered with interesting stamps from India and America. Invite your students to design their own stamps. What do these stamps say about them and the world they live in?

Picture It: Elliot and Kailash use very little words to describe their worlds. Instead, they rely on communicating through pictures. Invite students to paint a detailed picture of their own worlds. Encourage them to include the features that make it special and unique. They may want to try using collage or other illustrating techniques demonstrated in the book.

Additional resources with activities and discussion questions [here](#)



Say Hello

Jack & Michael Foreman



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

G

Say Hello

Jack Foreman, Illustrated by Michael Foreman

About

A lone dog comes upon a group of kids playing ball and with leaping ease, joins the game. They're all having so much fun, they don't see a sad little boy standing off by himself. Who will spy the boy and invite him to play? With arresting images by a master illustrator and a simple, touching text by his son, SAY HELLO evokes the joy and relief of finding a new friend just when it's needed the most.

Significant Themes

Kindness: *"Come and join the fun!"*

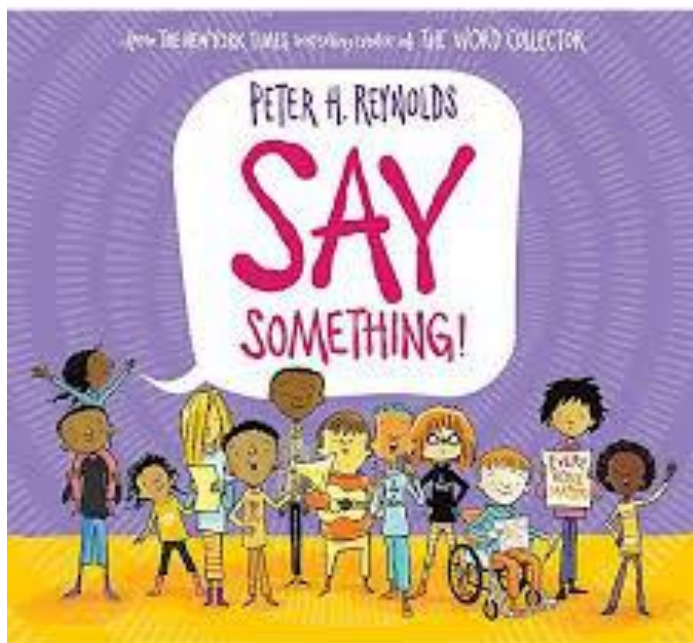
Friendship: *"It's great to make new friends like you!"*

Inclusion: *"When someone's feeling left out, low, it doesn't take much to say...Hello"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Challenge students to say hello to five people they don't know in the hallway or on the playground throughout the day. Have students record/journal their observations about how people respond.



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

Say Something

Peter H. Reynolds

About

In this empowering new picture book, beloved author Peter H. Reynolds explores the many ways that a single voice can make a difference. Each of us, each and every day, have the chance to say something: with our actions, our words, and our voices. Perfect for kid activists everywhere, this timely story reminds readers of the undeniable importance and power of their voice. There are so many ways to tell the world who you are... what you are thinking... and what you believe. And how you'll make it better. The time is now: SAY SOMETHING!

Significant Themes

Inclusion/kindness: "If you see someone lonely, say something by just being there with them."

Care for the earth: "If you see an empty lot, say something by planting a seed and watching it bloom"

Bullying: "If you see someone being hurt, say something by being brave"

Justice/advocacy: "If you see an injustice, say something peacefully. Inspire others to do the same"

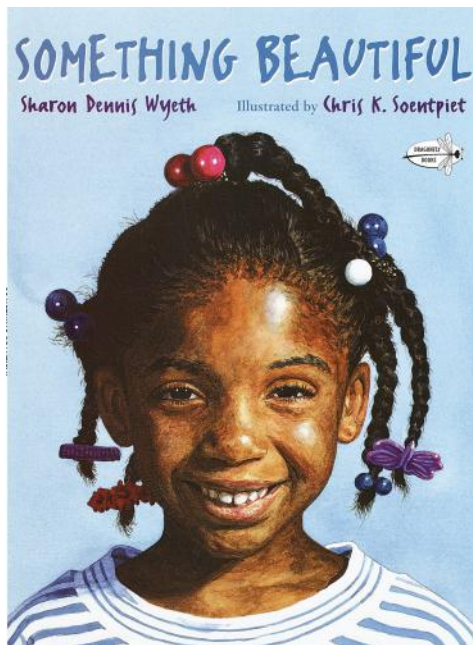
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Create stations: for students to rotate through or to select the station that appeals to them the most as a way to say something. Stations can include a painting or art creation station, a planting station with soil and seeds, a poetry station, a microscope or magnifying glass observation station, a dress-up station, a sign-making station, and even a whisper-to-the-world station. After rotating through stations, have students share what their favorite way of saying something was that day with reasons to support their thinking.

Make signs: Invite students to create their own signs using a variety of materials. If students would benefit from a scaffold, revisit the beginning two-page spread with dozens of examples of powerful speech bubbles that students can use in their own signs, such as "follow your heart," "together is better," and "be brave." Have students hold up their signs and take photos for a display as a source of inspiration for others

From Scholastic discussion guide [here](#)



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

Something Beautiful

Sharon Dennis Wyeth, Illustrated by Sharon Dennis Wyeth & Chris Soentpiet

About

A young girl looks around her home and community and sees trash and broken things, she yearns for something beautiful to make her feel happy. In talking to those in her community she discovers that beauty is all around and mostly within us!

Significant Themes

Poverty and homelessness:

"Where I walk I pass a lady whose home is a big cardboard carton, she sleeps on the sidewalk wrapped in plastic."

Diversity & Inclusion:

"Everyone should have something beautiful in their life"

Taking control and action:

"I scrub the door very hard and when DIE disappears I feel powerful."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

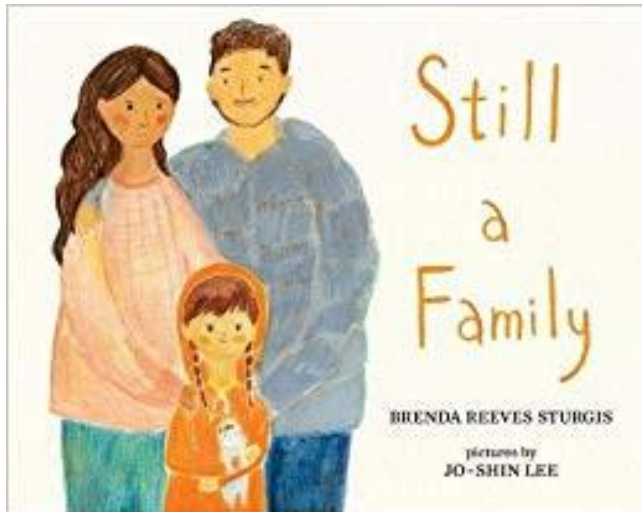
Suggested activities:

Review: Study the quote "Beautiful – something, when you have it, your heart sings"

Mind map: As a class do a mind map or web and write down all the things that make your hearts sing

Creative corner: Have students draw a picture, write a paragraph or poem focusing on the one thing that makes their heart sing most.

Discussion: What things can students do in their lives to take control, and be powerful, to be proactive?



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

1

Still a Family

Brenda Reeves Sturgis, Illustrated by Jo-Shin Lee

About

A family are split and live in 2 separate shelters (women and children, and one for men) and the little girl shares how even though they may be apart, they are still a family. The family begins the story living in separate shelters, and finishes the story still living in shelters. So many stories want to have “happy endings”, to “fix” things for their characters, but for most families struggling with poverty there are so easy fixes, and things don’t change overnight. By not changing the family’s situation, *Still a Family* reinforces the message that living in a shelter is nothing to be ashamed of, and that life carries on, no matter where you live.

Significant Themes

Resiliency:

“We are together, we are still a family”

Reality for families on the streets:

“Even though Dad goes one way, and we go another, we are still a family”

Hardship:

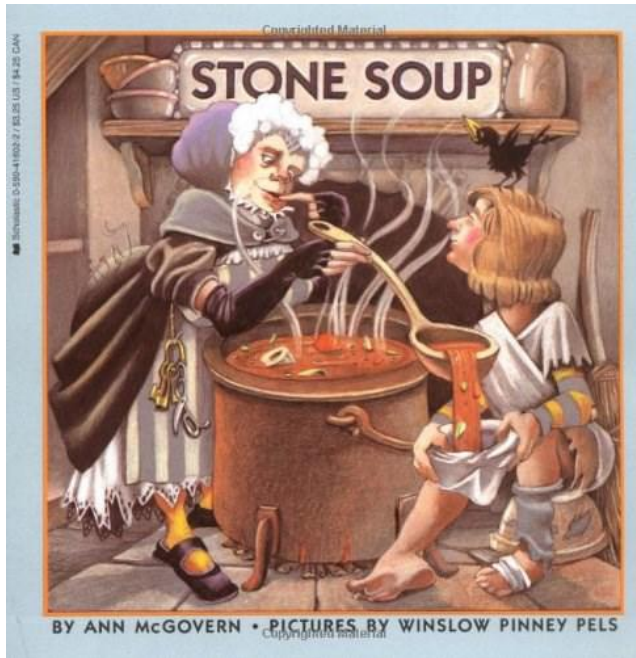
“I miss my quiet home, my comfy bed, and my cozy quilt.”

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Tour or volunteer at Inn From The Cold. Many shelters exist in Calgary, but Inn From the Cold is the only family shelter in all of Alberta – this impacts family separation and makes an already hard situation even harder. Tour IFTC, have them come speak in your class, book a volunteering shift (ages 8+), or facilitate a fundraiser to support kids and families experiencing homelessness.

Book a Speaker: At The Mustard Seed, we have engaging speakers that are happy to share with students about our upcoming family housing build.



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

J

Stone Soup

Ann McGovern

About

A clever young man tricks an old woman into believing that soup can be made from a stone. As the pot of water boils with the stone in it, he urges her to add more and more ingredients until the soup is a feast "fit for a king".

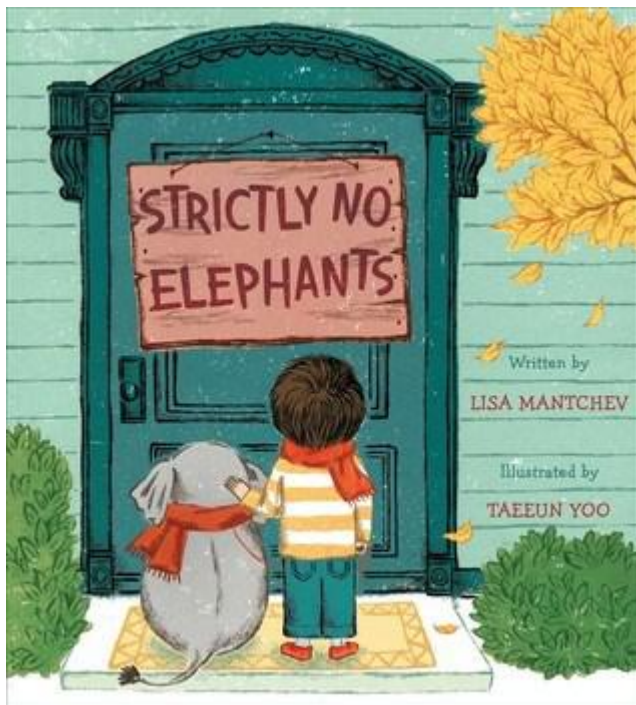
Significant Themes

Charity: *"She took out her best tablecloth, and her best dishes, and the little old lady and the hungry young man ate all the soup."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Write recipes for a "classroom soup". What kind of "ingredients" are important to our class? Kindness, humility, compassion, humour, etc. How much of each? Which is the most important to our class? Work in small groups or as a class to decide on what ingredients best represent your students and values.



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

J

Strictly No Elephants

Lisa Mantchev, Illustrated by Tae-eun Yoo

About

When the local Pet Club won't admit a boy's tiny pet elephant, he finds a solution—one that involves all kinds of unusual animals in this sweet and adorable picture book.

Today is Pet Club day. There will be cats and dogs and fish, but strictly no elephants are allowed. The Pet Club doesn't understand that pets come in all shapes and sizes, just like friends. Now it is time for a boy and his tiny pet elephant to show them what it means to be a true friend.

Imaginative and lyrical, this sweet story captures the magic of friendship and the joy of having a pet.

Significant Themes

Friendship: *"That's what friends do: lift each other over the cracks... brave the scary things for you... never leave anyone behind."*

Restrictions: *"Strictly no elephants"*

Being different: *"The trouble with having a tiny elephant for a pet is that you never quite fit in."*

Inclusion: *"All are welcome"*

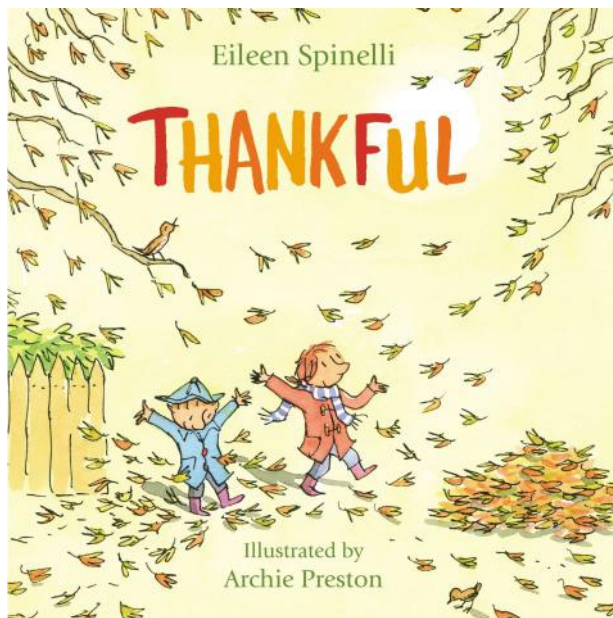
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested Activities:

Classroom Discussion: What do you think happens next, after the end of this story? Why would they let the boy and his elephant into the pet club? Without words, show me why you think the pet club didn't want a skunk. Show me, by the look on your face, how the boy and his elephant feel.

Cooperative Learning: Think of a pet you would like. Give your partner three clues (what color it is, where it lives, what it eats, it has a short tail, big ears, etc.) and see if they can guess your pet.

Additional Resources [here](#)



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

Thankful

Eileen Spinelli, Illustrated by Archie Preston

About

Thankful, written by beloved children’s author Eileen Spinelli and illustrated by Archie Preston, combines charming rhymes and whimsical illustrations to convey the importance of being thankful for everyday blessings. Like the gardener thankful for every green sprout, and the firefighter, for putting the fire out, children are encouraged to be thankful for the many blessings they find in their lives. Spinelli exhibits her endearing gift for storytelling with this engaging poem, reminding children how blessed and special they are. Meant to be read aloud, this heartwarming board book will be a treasured keepsake for parents and children alike.

Significant Themes

Gratitude: “The poet is thankful for words that rhyme”

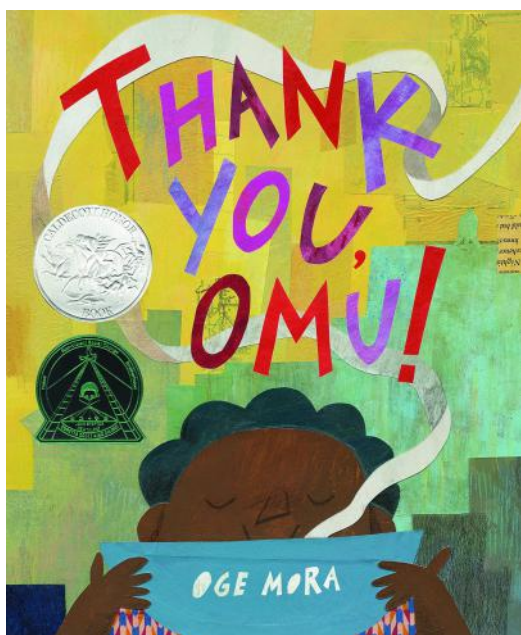
Noticing small things: “The crafter is thankful for glitter and glue”

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Brainstorm: What things do you have to be thankful for every day? How does appreciating these things make a difference in how you see the world?

Thankful tree: Go on a walk around the school observing what we are thankful for in our school community. Have students collect small branches that have enough “arms” on it to hang thankful leaves. Place the branches in a jar in a prominent place in the classroom. You can print off copies of leaves or have students make their own leaf shapes. Punch a hole in the end of each leaf to add a loop of string or yarn for hanging. Kids can write their moments of gratitude on them. This is a fun way for students to see how many things we are all thankful for and appreciate them.



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

Thank You, Omu!

Oge Mora

About

Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scrumptious scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. Has she been so generous that she has nothing left for herself?

Significant Themes

Generosity: *"And each time they knocked, Omu shared"*

Sharing: *"Omu thought for a moment. There was still enough to share. Would you like some?"*

Reciprocity: *"Don't worry, Omu. We are not here to ask...We are here to give."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Writing: At the end of the story, the little boy shows his gratitude to Omu by writing a thank-you note. Talk to students about who they are thankful for and why. Then let students write a thankyou note and decorate a note to someone—a family member, a community member, or a friend. Help students distribute the cards.

Gratitude Jar: In the story, the neighbors come back to Omu's apartment to show their gratitude, or to say thank you. As a class create a gratitude jar. Then, using small slips of paper, have your students write the name of something or someone they are grateful for. Keep the jar available for your students to add to over time. When the jar is full, reread some of the notes and find a way to celebrate all of the special students in your class.

Additional Resources [here](#)



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

The Bear's Garden

Marcie Colleen, Illustrated by Alison Oliver

About

Inspired by the true story of a community garden in Brooklyn, New York, this picture book, *The Bear's Garden*, by writer Marcie Colleen and illustrator Alison Oliver, is a testament to how imagination and dedication can transform communities and create beauty for everyone in unexpected places.

Significant Themes

Caring for communities: *"In the big, bustling city, all the people were busy. They rushed up and down the street without seeing that some buildings needed paint, that some buildings were empty, that some buildings were gone."*

"The city was a place to grow, a place to play, a place to love"

Working together: *"Without her care and without her love, she knew the plants would wither... If the little girl could not take care of the garden, someone else would have to."*

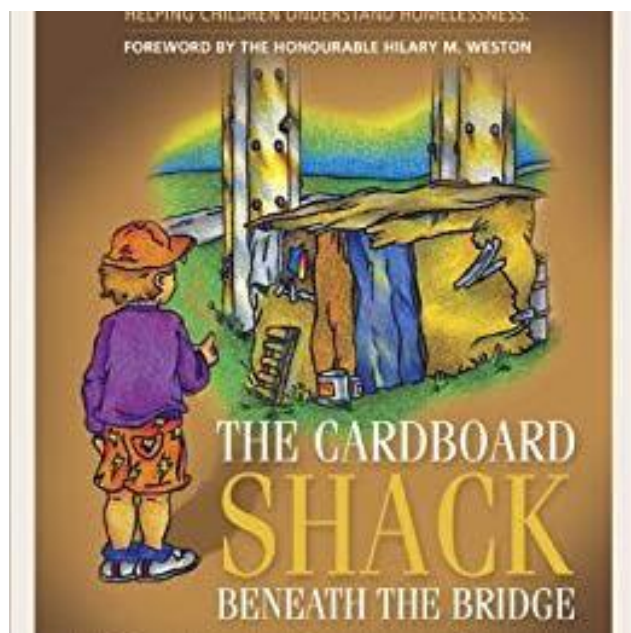
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Grade 4-10 Demonstrate knowledge and skills for the study, interpretation, propagation and enhancement of plant growth.

Suggested Activities:

Plan a garden as a class. What would you like to grow? How many seeds would you need? What are the instructions for planting? How much sun and water do they need? Once you're finished researching, purchase plants to grow in pots or planter boxes in the school yard. Work together to grow your garden and enjoy the flowers or share the harvest together.

Plant fast-growing mustard sprouts or microgreens in plastic cups with wet paper towel instead of soil. Cover with plastic wrap and watch them take root and sprout in just a matter of days!



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

The Cardboard Shack Beneath the Bridge

Tim Huff

About

A picture book that lays the groundwork for adults to enter in to conversations about homelessness, it's causes, and how students can help. Written in 16 stanzas, each accompanied by a colourful drawing, it gently raises questions in language a pre-schooler can understand and leaves it to the adult to decide where to take the discussion.

* Note—contains mention of prayer/faith

Significant Themes

Shelter: *"It may look dark and very small, unlike the home you know, but made for shade and feeling safe, it blocks the rain and snow"*

Compassion: *"No matter what you see or hear, one thing is always true: each one without a house and home was once a child like you"*

Action: *"While some need shelter, food or clothes, some simply want a smile. And if you're with a grown-up, you may just talk a while"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Global Citizenship

Students discuss how their actions might affect people elsewhere in the world and how the actions of others might affect them. Consider the needs and points of view of others. Work and play in harmony with others to create a safe and caring environment.

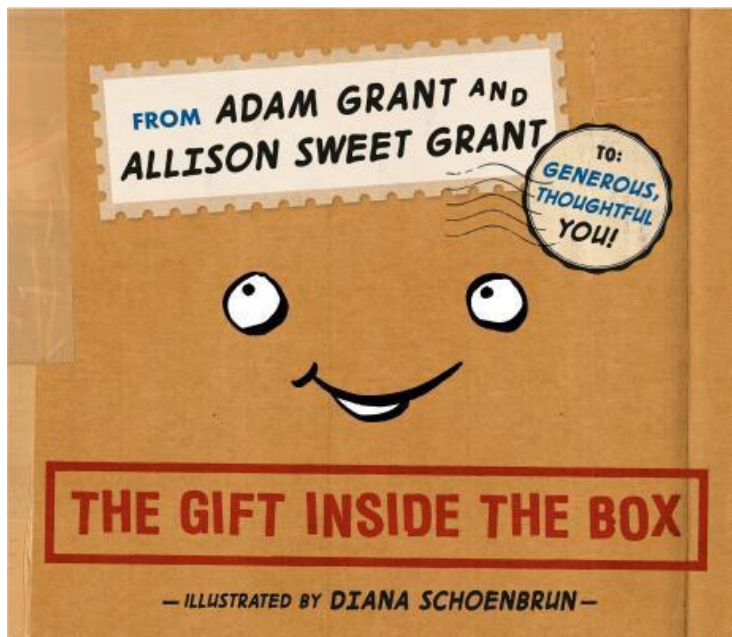
Faith-Based Connections

Beatitudes review - "Blessed are the poor"

Discussion guide at the end of the book could help group discussion sessions

Suggested activity:

Have students draw a picture or write about what kind of person might be homeless. What do they look like, think about, spend their time doing? What do they enjoy or dislike? After reading this story, have students edit or add to their original work



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

The Gift Inside the Box

Adam Grant and Allison Sweet Grant, Illustrated by Diana Schoenbrun

About

A mysterious gift box finds himself in search of someone to open him, but nobody seems to be the right one. After disheartening interactions with grabby kids, selfish siblings, and other single-minded would-be recipients, the box wonders if he'll ever find someone deserving of him. Could that someone be the very person who's reading the book itself?

Significant Themes

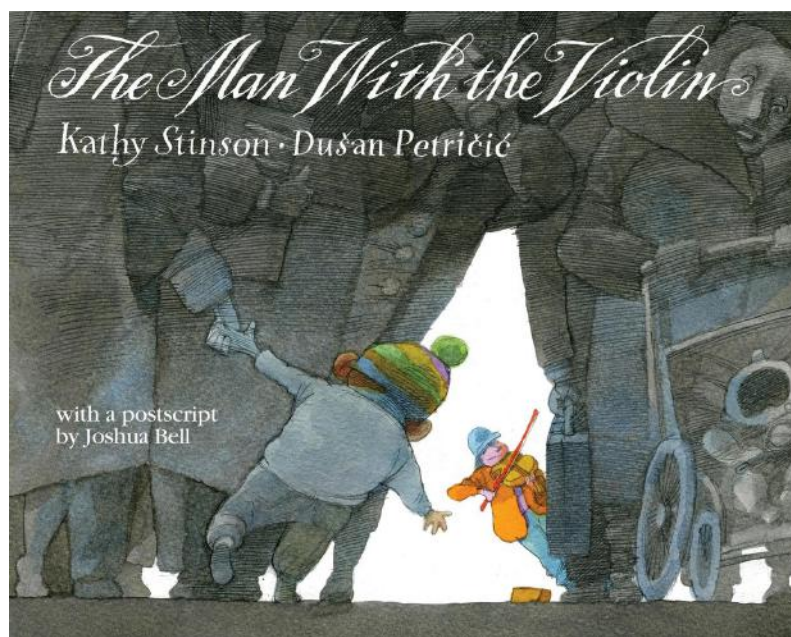
Generosity: *"I've been looking for the perfect gift for someone special. I would love to give you to..."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Discuss: Who would you give the box to? Why? What do you think is inside?

Journal: Draw a picture of what you think is inside the box.



Grade Level

K+

Lexile

AD560L

The Man with the Violin

Kathy Stinson, Illustrated by Dušan Petričić

About

When Dylan hears someone playing their violin in the subway he wants to stop and listen, but his mother and other commuters ignore the violinist completely. Based on the true story of Joshua Bell, the renowned American violinist who famously took his instrument down into the Washington, D.C. metro for a free concert

Significant Themes

Noticing: *"Dylan was someone who noticed things. His mother was someone who didn't."*

Missed opportunities, close listening: *"The music fades. The voice on the radio says 'today over 1,000 people had the chance to hear one of the finest musicians in the world. Joshua Bell was playing some of the most elegant music ever written on one of the valuable violins ever made, yet few people listened for even a minute.'"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Kathy Stinson, the author, has some activity suggestions [here](#)



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

The Most Magnificent Thing

Ashley Spires

About

A little girl and her canine assistant set out to make The Most Magnificent Thing. But after much hard work, the end result is not what the girl had in mind. Frustrated, she quits. Her assistant suggests a long walk, and as they walk, it slowly becomes clear what the girl needs to do to succeed. A charming story that will give kids The Most Magnificent Thing: perspective!

Significant Themes

Perseverance:

"The thing is still wrong. She decides to try again."

Understanding our feelings:

"She gets MAD... Her hands feel too BIG to work, and her brain is too full of all the not-right things."

"...She EXPLODES! It is not her finest moment."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Science

Gr 1 : Building Things

Gr. 3 : Building with a variety of materials and testing materials and designs

Gr 4 : Building devices and vehicles that move

Suggested activity:

Ask students "If you could make a magnificent thing for yourself that is not a toy, something that could help you fix your problems, what would it be?" Invite students to journal what magnificent thing they would make for themselves, why they would make it and then draw a picture of what it would look like.

Additional Resources [here](#)



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

The One with the Scraggly Beard

Elizabeth Withey, Illustrated by Lynn Scurfield

About

A child tries to understand the life of a man he has seen sleeping under a bridge. The boy's mother patiently answers his questions and explains how people's life paths can be so different. The child observes the things he has in common with the man and wonders where his own path will lead.

The One With the Scraggly Beard is defined by a simple narrative in which a child's curiosity and perceptiveness act as catalysts for understanding fear, suffering and resilience while exploring themes of homelessness, belonging and compassion. This unique book will speak to children and adults alike. A note from the author explains how the origin of this story is rooted in her own life.

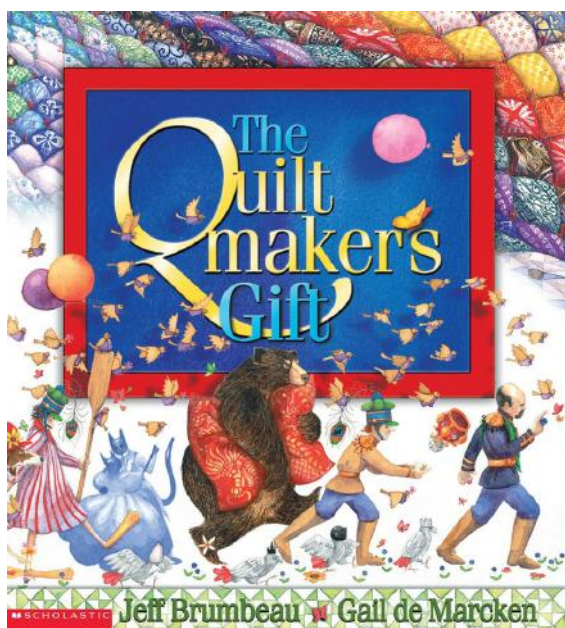
Significant Themes

Belonging, identity, empathy

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Imagine the man under the bridge as a child and journal about his life. What do you think his favourite toy was? Who did he play with? What was his time at school like? How do you think he became homeless?



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

P

The Quiltmaker's Gift

Jeff Brumbeau, Illustrated by Gail De Marcken

About

When a generous quiltmaker finally agrees to make a quilt for a greedy king, but only under certain conditions, she causes him to undergo a change of heart. Each page highlights a different quilt block pattern whose name relates to the unfolding story.

Significant Themes

Generosity: *"I give my quilts to those who are poor or homeless."*

Kindness: *"On the darkest or coldest nights she would wander the streets until she came upon someone sleeping in the chill and take one of her newly finished quilts and wrap there shivering shoulders."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Quilt time: Work together as a class to design and assemble a quilt to donate to a shelter. Students can design their own square with fabric sharpies, and parent volunteers can help with the assembly.

Brainstorm: with students about one thing that they own that they could give to somebody who needs it more. It could be a toy, a book, a clothing item, or a small amount of money.

THE RABBIT LISTENED

CORI DOERRFELD



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

P

The Rabbit Listened

Cori Doerrfeld

About

The Rabbit Listened is a tender meditation on loss. When something terrible happens, Taylor doesn't know where to turn. All the animals are sure they have the answer. The chicken wants to talk it out, but Taylor doesn't feel like chatting. The bear thinks Taylor should get angry, but that's not quite right either. One by one, the animals try to tell Taylor how to process this loss, and one by one they fail. Then the rabbit arrives. All the rabbit does is listen, which is just what Taylor needs. Whether read in the wake of tragedy or as a primer for comforting others, this is a deeply moving and unforgettable story sure to soothe heartache of all sizes.

Significant Themes

Grief and loss:

"Out of nowhere, things came crashing down"

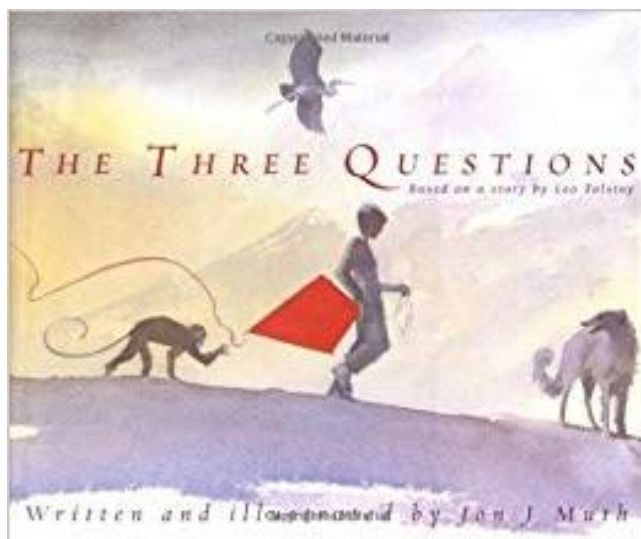
Empathy and listening:

"Together they sat in silence until Taylor said, 'please stay with me.' ...The rabbit listened"
"Through it all, the rabbit never left"

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Type up the text of the book into a script. Split students into small groups and have them act out the story using their best dramatic expression. Discuss how we all need somebody to listen to us and how sometimes just being a good listener can be the best help to somebody else.



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

The Three Questions

John Muth

About

Based on a story by Leo Tolstoy. A young boy asks: When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do? Find out what he learns in this charming, lyrically told story!

Significant Themes

Inquiry: *"When is the best time to do things?" "Who is the most important one?" "What is the right thing to do?"*

Attentiveness and action: *"Nikolai suddenly heard a cry for help, running down the path he found a panda whose leg had been injured by a fallen tree, carefully Nikolai carried her and bandaged her leg with a stick of bamboo."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Science: Inquiry/asking questions

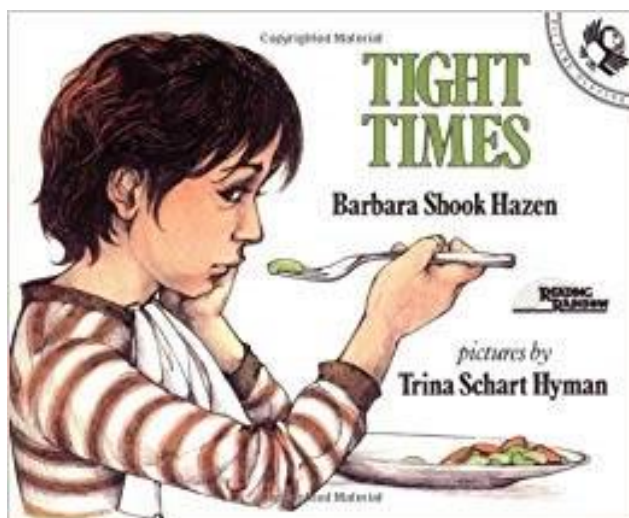
Health: Attitudes determine what kinds of questions we are willing to ask

Suggested activity:

Learn about questions: In his article, *"What is a Good Guiding Question?"* Rob Traver states that good questions:

1. Are open ended, yet focused on a specific topic
2. Are non-judgmental, not value laden, and encourage the learner to think and ask other questions
3. Contain an emotive force or an intellectual bite such as, "When are laws fair?"
4. Are succinct, containing only a handful of words, yet demand a lot.

As a class, practice writing and asking good questions



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

Tight Times

Barbra Shook, Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman

About

A young boy desperately wishes for a dog, however his father has lost his job and they are experiencing “tight times”.

Significant Themes

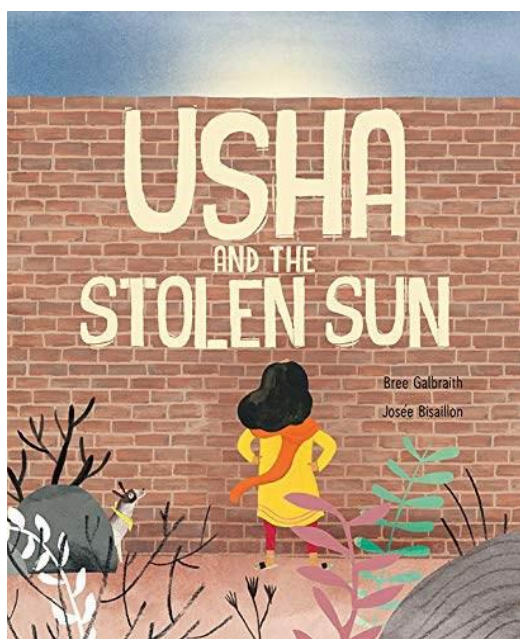
Economic awareness: “*Tight times are when we all eat Mr. Bulk and not cereals in little boxes*” and “*Why we went to the sprinkler last summer instead of the lake.*”

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Practice Spending: Play a token game where students must shop for a list of supplies. Provide limited tokens and then allow the class to shop and see what they buy, how much they can afford, etc. to understand “tight times.” As a direct example from the book, use cereal in bulk/no name brand vs the fancier cereals in little boxes.

Create a Budget: Assign student groups of 2-4 a limited amount of money and provide them with a list of things to purchase (rent, new clothes, groceries, a gift for a friend, new video game, etc.) and how much each item costs. As students make difficult choices about their priorities, discuss how somebody could get help paying for rent or if they could access the food bank. Ask students why they made the decisions they did, and discuss the different choices made by different groups



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Usha and the Stolen Sun

Bree Gailbraith, Illustrated by Josée Bisaillon

About

Usha lives in a town where the sun hasn't shone for as long as anyone can remember. Only her grandfather remembers its brilliance and tells Usha stories about the time before other people took the sun away, building a wall to keep it all to themselves. So Usha decides to do something and sets off in search of the sun.

When at last Usha reaches the wall, she tries to kick it down, climb it, yell her way through it—but the bricks don't budge. It's only after remembering her grandfather's words and hearing voices on the other side of the wall that cunning Usha changes her plan to make sure her voice is heard. She shares her grandfather's stories, even the ones that rightfully make her angry, and piques the curiosity of the people on the other side until they are inspired to remove the bricks, one by one to better hear what Usha has to say.

Significant Themes

Discourse: *"Why didn't you yell and scream and make them stop? We did yell, Usha, whispered Grandfather but they were unmoved."*

Compassion: *"I'm afraid I will never see the sun again said Grandfather. Usha decided to do something about it."*

Perseverance: *"Usha studied the wall. Then she whispered, I want the sun." "And just as Usha was almost out of words, the wall began to shake.."*

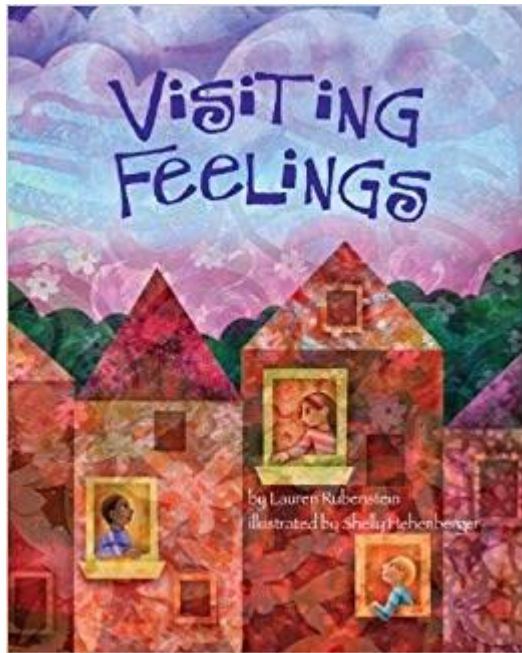
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Classroom Discussion: When Grandfather was little, a wall was built to block the sun from his town. How do you think life would be different if you didn't have access to direct sunlight? What about access to clean air? Or fresh water?

Usha has never seen the sun. How does she know she deserves it? Do we have basic rights as human beings? Should all human beings share the same rights? If so, can you think of any examples?

When a system of fairness doesn't work for everyone, is it possible to change it? Have you heard of ways in your family, community, or country that people have changed what is considered fair or unfair? Have you experienced, heard, or seen unfair situations in your life?



Grade Level

K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

Visiting Feelings

Lauren Rubenstein, Illustrated by Shelly Hehenberger

About

An open book which invites children to explore their feelings with intentionality and mindfulness. It's an invitation to accept feelings and explore their in a sensory manner – how they look, smell, feel to the touch, sound, etc.

Significant Themes

Emotional intelligence & mindfulness:

"Do you have a feeling that's visiting today? Can you open the door and invite it to play?"

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Grade 1 Health: Personal safety and wellness choices

Relationship choices:

R1.1 Different ways to express yourself R1.2 Identify different physiological responses to emotions

R1.3 Identify positive & negative feelings R1.4 Compare/contrast positive/negative non-verbal communication

Suggested activities:

Start a healthy relationships or friendship group: Explore feelings, how they come into the day, how we experience them, what reactions we have, and how to manage them

Practice Poetry: This is a great poetry mentor text for older students (grade 4-5)

Practice Yoga: Standing poses: Star (proud); Mountain (strong); Tree (steady and focused)

Art project: Buy small jewelry boxes from the dollar store. Have students decorate the outside to represent how they think people see them, and have them paint the inside with colours that represent their feelings and emotions that people might not usually see. Remind students that they can use whatever colours they like represent each emotion (for example, blue could represent sadness but could also represent calm or peace.)



Grade Level

Pre K - K

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

What's My Superpower?

Aviaq Johnston, Illustrated by Tim Mack

About

Nalvana feels like all of her friends have some type of superpower. She has friends with super speed (who always beat her in races), friends with super strength (who can dangle from the monkey bars for hours), and friends who are better than her at a million other things. Nalvana thinks she must be the only kid in town without a superpower. But then her mom shows Nalvana that she is unique and special, and that her superpower was right in front of her all along.

Significant Themes

Uniqueness & inclusion: *"Can't you see?... Your superpower is making people feel good about themselves."*

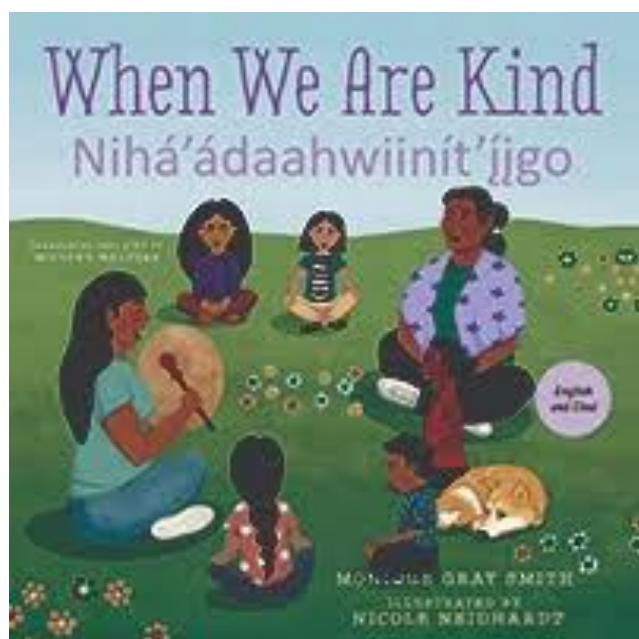
FNMI perspectives: book written by an Inuk author and has cultural references and traditional names

Determination: *"Nalvana tried to build an Inukshuk but it fell over, she tried to build a house out of her lego but it was too hard, she sighed I guess its not my superpower."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Help students identify positive traits in themselves and one another (kind, big smile, funny, creative, resilience, respect, courage, empathy) and design a drawing or craft that depicts and explains their "superpower."



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

When We Are Kind

Monique Gray Smith, Illustrated by Nicole Neidhardt

About

When We Are Kind celebrates simple acts of everyday kindness and encourages children to explore how they feel when they initiate and receive acts of kindness in their lives. Celebrated author Monique Gray Smith has written many books on the topics of resilience and reconciliation and communicates an important message through carefully chosen words for readers of all ages.

Significant Themes

Generosity and inclusion: *"I am kind when I share with my friends"... "I am kind when I help my neighbour"*

Indigenous themes: *"I am kind when I bring food to my elders" .. "*

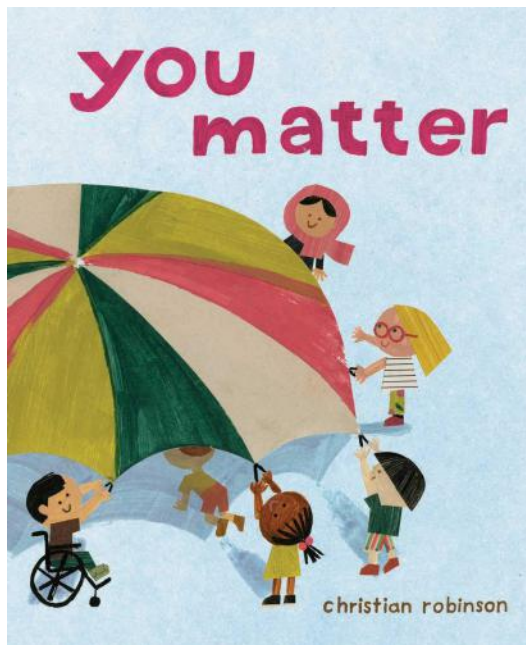
Responsibility: *"I am kind when I only take from the earth what I need"*

Self-care: *"I am kind when I take care of myself and get a good night's sleep"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Have students trace their hands in their journals. Brainstorm a list of kind things they can do at home, at school, in their communities, and to take care of themselves. Have students write one kind thing they can do in each finger & the thumb and decorate the page.



Grade Level

Pre K+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

You Matter

Christian Robinson

About

In this full, bright, and beautiful picture book, many different perspectives around the world are deftly and empathetically explored—from a pair of bird-watchers to the pigeons they're feeding. Young readers will be drawn into the luminous illustrations inviting them to engage with the world in a new way and see how everyone is connected, and that everyone matters.

Significant Themes

Diversity: *"Old and young. The first to go and the last. The small stuff to small to see. You matter."*

Self-esteem: *"Sometimes you feel lost and alone but you matter."*

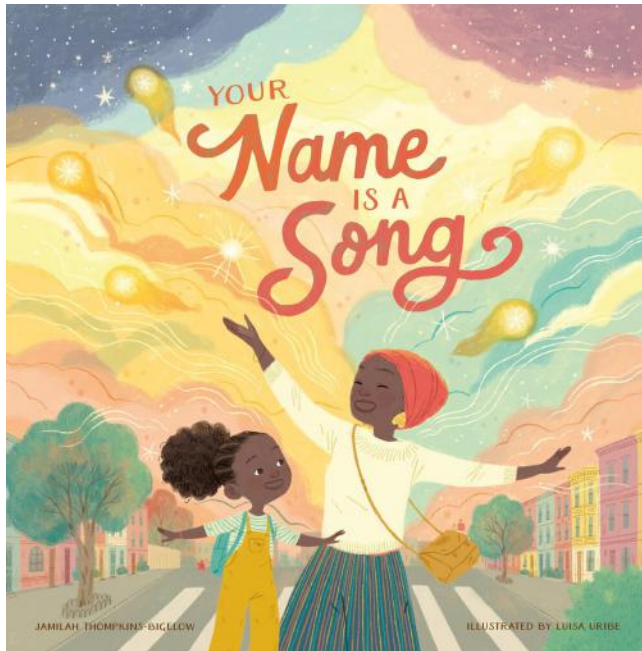
Value: *"When everyone thinks you are a pest. When something is just out of reach. When everyone is too busy to help. You matter."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Class Discussion: Work together as a class to define the word "value". Discuss who and what has value. Who decides? Can different people value different things? Can value change?

Mind map: Create a web of all the things that matter to your class and then brainstorm how we care for and show what we value.



Grade Level

Pre K +

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Your Name is a Song

Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, Illustrated by Luisa Uribe

About

Frustrated by a day full of teachers and classmates mispronouncing her beautiful name, a little girl tells her mother she never wants to come back to school. In response, the girl's mother teaches her about the musicality of African, Asian, Black-American, Latinx, and Middle Eastern names on their lyrical walk home through the city. Empowered by this newfound understanding, the young girl is ready to return the next day to share her knowledge with her class. *Your Name is a Song* is a celebration to remind all of us about the beauty, history, and magic behind names.

Significant Themes

Names: *"The girl looked down. No one could say my name."*

Beauty: *"Yes, girl! From your heart, say your name. Those girls will learn to use their hearts too."*

History: *"Made up names come from dreamers. Their real names were stolen long ago so they dream up new ones."*

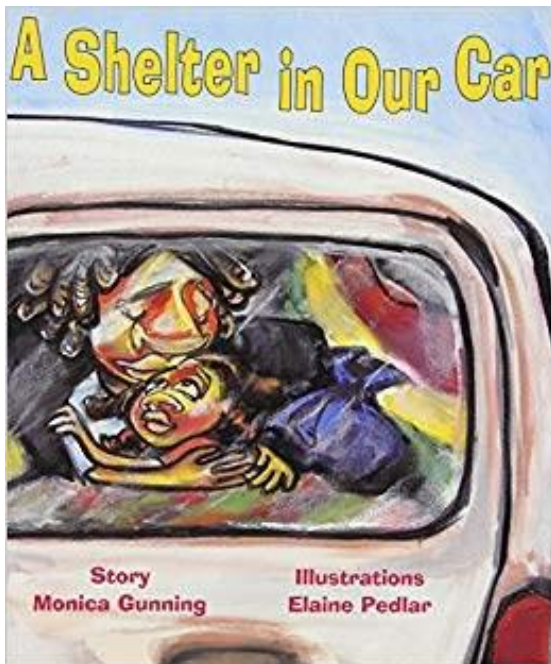
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Classroom Discussion: Why is it important to know someone's name? What does your name mean? What are some ways we can make sure we know and use everyone's names properly?

Partner Sharing: Have students share with a partner or the class what their name means, if they were named after someone/something, if there is a cultural component to their name, and how to pronounce it properly.

Minimum
Grade Level:
Grade 1+



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Q

A Shelter in our Car

Monica Gunning, Illustrated by Elaine Pedlar

About

Tells the Story of Zettie whose mom has moved to America with her after her dad Dies. Life as an immigrant is difficult and ideas such as loss, identity, community, bullying, and empathy can all be explored as well.

Significant Themes

Loss: *"In the street lights their colors as bright as the flowers in the yard we left behind"*

Hardship: *"When I get a steady job there will be sunshine again, mama says. I'm silent, I hear that from mama all the time but things are so hard now."*

Resiliency: *"After supper mama winks. Surprise! We'll sleep in a real bed tonight."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Social Studies:

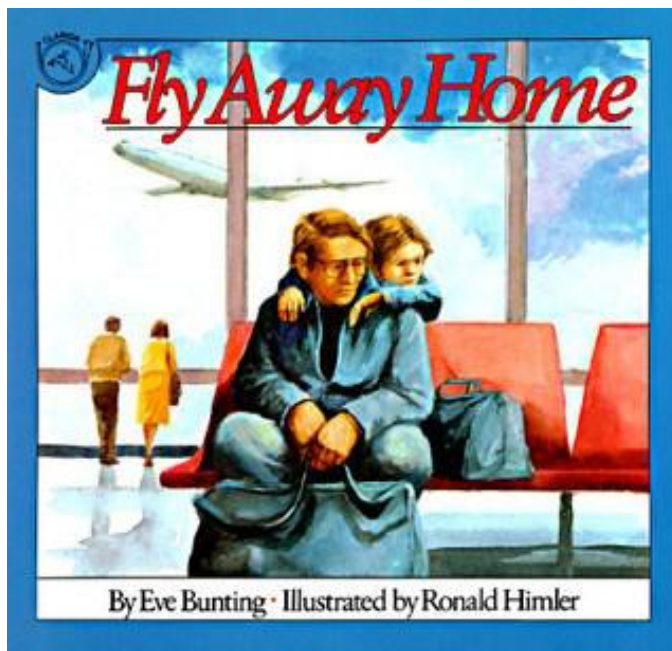
Apply their understanding of community to this story - appreciate how communities are shared by a variety of factors, such as the past, where they are located, the groups to which they belong and the exchange of goods and services

Suggested activities:

Make a Venn Diagram: Contrast and compare as a whole group the differences and similarities between a city in Jamaica and Calgary. Use a template Venn Diagram for students to chart their ideas and those of others during the sharing phase.

Brainstorming Together: How can we as a community make newcomers or immigrants feel welcome?

Expert interview: Book a presentation from an expert at a local organization that helps immigrants (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, the Centre for Newcomers, etc.) to learn more about resources for new Canadians.



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

M

Fly Away Home

Eve Bunting, Illustrated by Ronald Himler

About

A homeless boy who lives in an airport with his father, moving from terminal to terminal trying not to be noticed, is given hope when a trapped bird finally finds its freedom.

Significant Themes

Homelessness: *"Not to be noticed is to look like nobody at all."*

Despair: *"Sometimes I just want to cry. I think dad and I will be here forever."*

Hope: *"Fly, bird, I whispered. Fly away home!"*

Uncertainty: *"Will we ever have our own apartment again? I ask Dad. I'd like it to be the way it was before Mom died."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

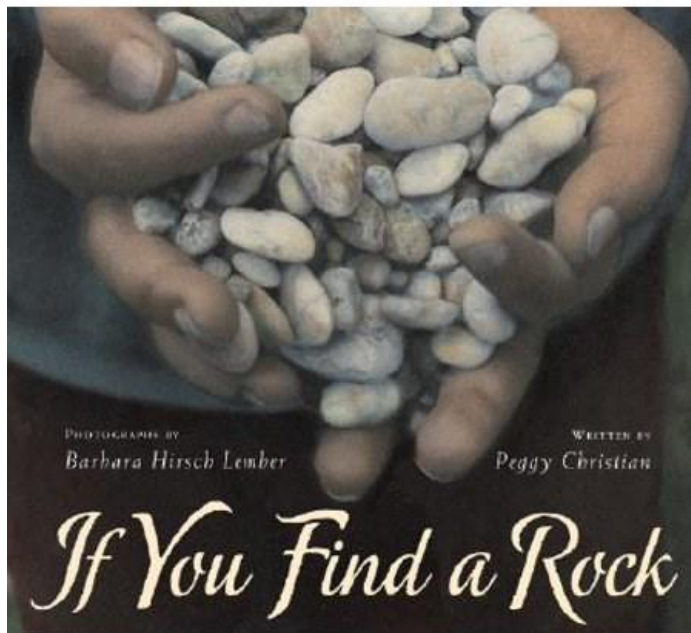
Social Studies:

Values and Attitudes. Global citizenship

Explore how people live in different communities, gaining an understanding of the global community and Canada's role within it.

Suggested activity:

Symbols: What is a symbol? Learn about symbols of Hope (e.g. the bird) Can you create a symbol of hope, or a symbol to represent something else? What does it mean/represent? What is its purpose? Can this be a symbol for only one community only, or can many people from different backgrounds recognize it? Present as a poster/PowerPoint



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

O

If You Find a Rock

Peggy Christian, Illustrated by Barbara Hirsch Lember

About

Think of all the rocks there are: the skipping rocks, the splashing rocks, and the chalk rocks. Whether the found treasures are climbing rocks or wishing rocks, children can't help collecting them. With joyful text and luminous photographs, *If You Find a Rock* celebrates rocks everywhere--as well as the mysterious and wonderful places they are found.

Significant Themes

Impact: *"You toss it out on the water just so and see it trip across the surface, making a chain of spreading rings."*

De-stressing: *"You rub it between your fingers and your troubles are smoothed away."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Art: Photography, use of rocks in nature art

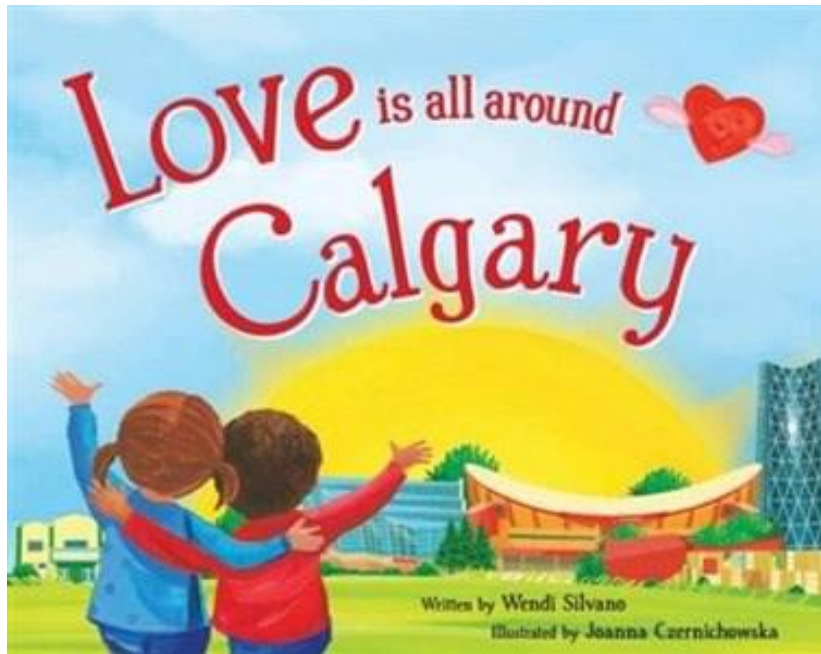
Science: Nature walk, rock observation walk, grade 3 rocks and minerals

Language Arts:

1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1 Students use their language skills to describe things in greater detail – rich vocabulary development and lots of new words

Suggested activity:

Writing & developing observation skills: Practice journaling and observing using the "looking at objects" journaling prompt



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

J

Love Is All Around Calgary

Wendi J Silvano, Illustrated by Joanna Czernichowska

About

A book based on Calgary communities and noticing love in all the areas of our city.

Significant Themes

Community awareness: *"Love grows from the ground."*

Kindness and selflessness: *"You can see how love travels when shared with a friend"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Community awareness and **LA, Art** and **Citizenship** outcomes covered.

Grade 1-6 Health: Awareness of the world around us

Grade 1-3 Social Studies:

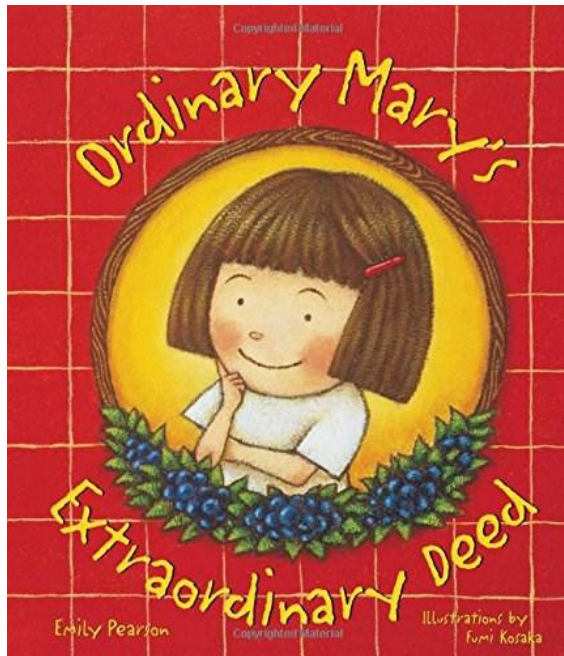
My community

Canada's Dynamic Communities

Communities in the World and Global Citizenship

Suggested activity:

Brainstorm: Think of all the communities mentioned in the book. Is one yours? Maybe not, but how do you know love is in your community? Small acts of kindness can go a long way – how can we be more kind and caring?



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Q – R | Lexile coded for adult-directed reading

Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed

Emily Pearson, Illustrated by Fumi Kosaka

About

A delightful tale of a young girl who does a good deed which travels and impacts the lives of everyone around her and in her community. Her deed goes full circle and teaches us about the good in "paying it forward."

Significant Themes

Good deeds have a ripple effect: *"Ordinary Mary's extraordinary deed had come full circle and on its way it had changed the lives of every person living."*

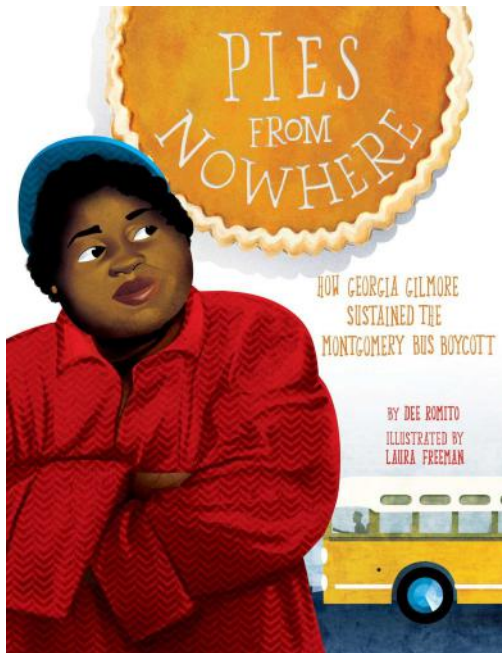
Kindness: *"Love was sent to every person everywhere"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Math: Work as a group to calculate the reach of Mary's deed by multiplying 5x5, 5x5, 25x5, etc. as far as students are able

Suggested activity:

Brainstorm together how your class can start a positive ripple effect within your school or community.



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Pies from Nowhere

Dee Romito, Illustrated by Laura Freeman

About

Georgia Gilmore was a cook at the National Lunch Company in Montgomery, Alabama. When the bus boycotts broke out in Montgomery after Rosa Parks was arrested, Georgia knew just what to do. She organized a group of women who cooked and baked to fund-raise for gas and cars to help sustain the boycott. Called the Club from Nowhere, Georgia was the only person who knew who baked and bought the food, and she said the money came from "nowhere" to anyone who asked. When Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested for his role in the boycott, Georgia testified on his behalf, and her home became a meeting place for civil rights leaders. This picture book highlights a hidden figure of the civil rights movement who fueled the bus boycotts and demonstrated that one person can make a real change in her community and beyond.

Significant Themes

Racism: "Because of segregation laws, the restaurant was divided into two sections. One side for white customers. One side for black customers."

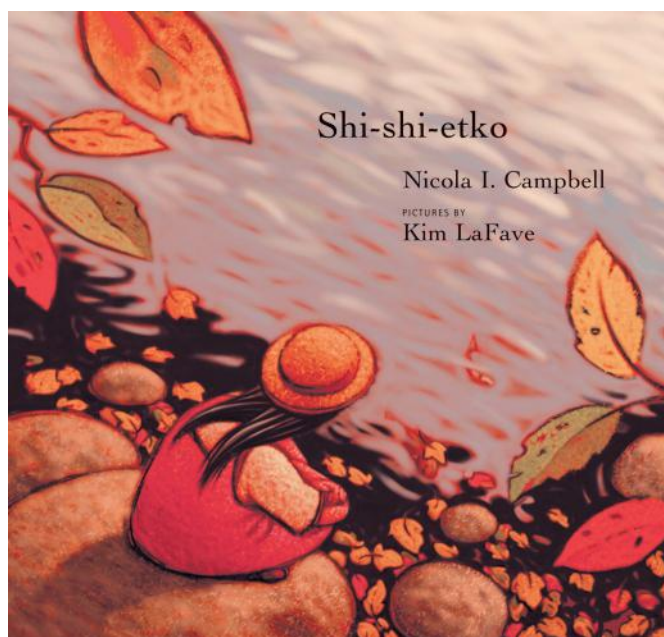
Activism: "We are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until just runs down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Advocacy: "Still, there would be more battles to fight... so Georgia Gilmore kept right on cooking."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Hold a class bake sale to raise money for a cause that you decide on together. Why is it important to stand up for causes we believe in? Work with students to research causes, plan the event, advertise your bake sale, and then carry the project through to completion. Assign students to count the money and then give your donation to the organization you've chosen



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

R | Lexile coded for adult-directed reading

Shi-shi-etko

Nicola I. Campbell, Illustrated by Kim LaFave

About

This vibrantly illustrated story tells of the last few days of Shi-shi-etko's time with her family, before she is sent off to residential school. She takes time to appreciate the natural world around her and also take in valuable teachings from her family.

Significant Themes

Appreciation: "Shi-shi-etko could not help herself. She looked at everything. She tasted the rain that fell on her face. She listened as the water washed every rocky beach."

Tradition: "This, my girl, is a bag for you to keep all your memories. No matter where you go, no matter what you do, remember to keep them safe."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

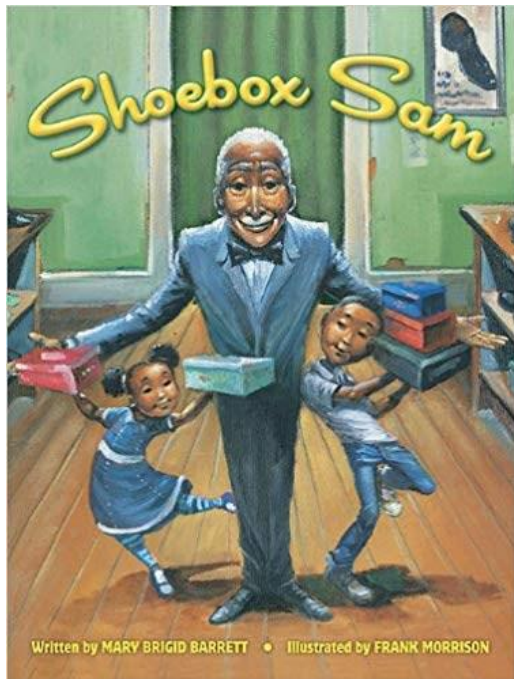
Before Reading: An understanding of residential schools is important for students to learn prior to this lesson. Read the foreword written by the author at the beginning of the book. For further information, read the [Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Teacher Resource Guide](#).

6-minute video: about the story of Shi-shi-etko <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKErhCGjSDE&t=16s>

Research: the various plants and animals mentioned in the story. What are you familiar with? What haven't you heard of before? Where do those plants grow? Are they native to Alberta?

Writing: Create a gratitude journal to keep your memories and a list of every day things you are thankful for

Classroom Discussion: What kind of school is Shi-shi-etko going to? What do we know about Shi-shi-etko's school from the story? Have students work in pairs or small groups to create questions about the school Shi-shi-etko is going to. Share the questions with the whole class and write them on a chart to post in the class.



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Q

Shoebox Sam

Mary Brigid Barrett, Illustrated by Frank Morrison

About

The story is about a shoe repair man named Sam that sells used shoes. In the process of helping community members with their shoes and other basic needs, Sam teaches children Delia and Sam about sharing and caring for others and the good feelings we feel when we practice altruism.

Significant Themes

Kindness, and sharing: *"That man has eaten near a dozen doughnuts..." "When you're hungry you eat."*

Service and Faith in action: *"Sam gently pulls off the man's ragged socks and puts on a new pair"*

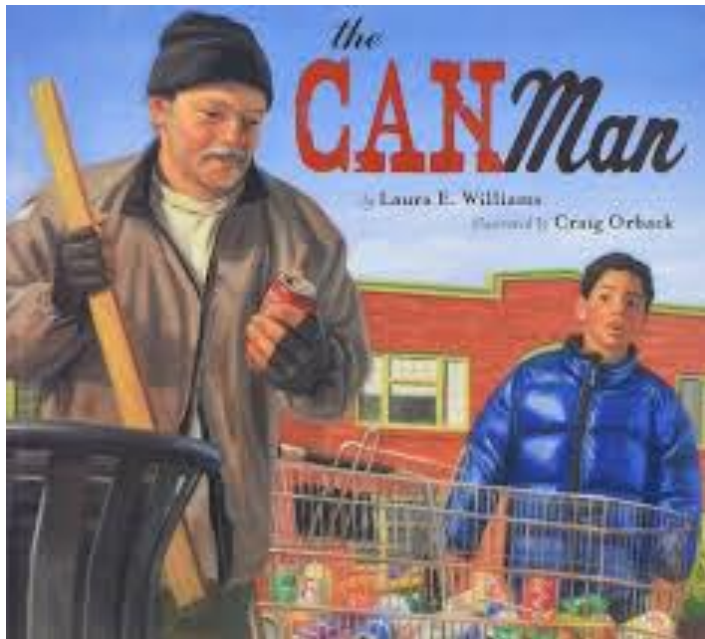
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Samaritan Purse Shoebox Drive: Discuss what items go into the box: why and how could they be chosen? Pack shoeboxes as a class and donate them!

Classroom Discussion: What item of clothing is the most precious to you and why? It doesn't have to be new, just important to you. Would you give this away? Why or why not? Sam has created a community in his shoe store; he helps to feed and clothe people, makes them feel special and valued. *Can you think of anyone in your community who does that?*

Religious Studies: As a class do a comparison of the Gospel passage of Jesus washing the disciples' feet with the acts expressed in this story.



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

P

The Can Man

Laura E. Williams, Illustrated by Craig Orback

About

Tim decides to collect cans, like the Can Man, to make money for a new skateboard. He's almost at his goal when he learns a valuable lesson that changes him.

Significant Themes

Identity: *"Almost everyone called him the Can Man, but not Tim's parents."*

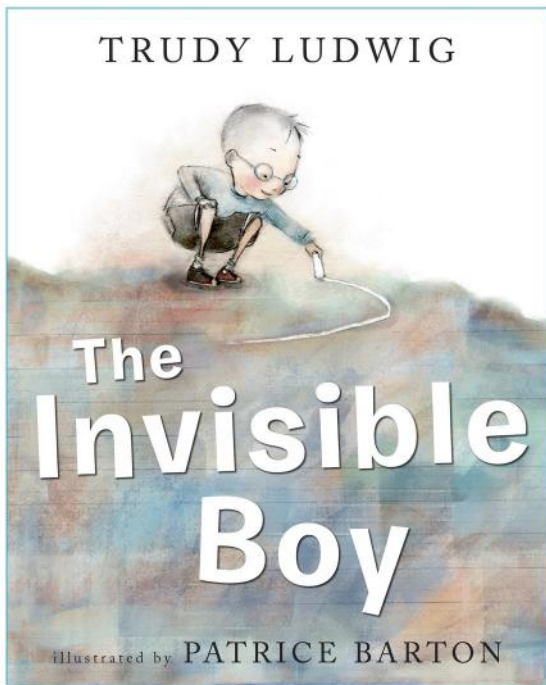
Homelessness and people's stories: *"My mom and Dad remember you from when you lived in your building"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Although this is a children's fiction book, the ideas are higher level and can be used with older students to facilitate discussion, practice writing, and encourage citizenship through community projects and volunteerism.

Suggested activity:

Classroom Recycling Project: Lead the class in collecting cans and then use the money for a donation to a local helping agency. What are some things you can recycle aside from bottles? Can you collect gently used coats for the winter? What about gently used or new shoes and boots, hats, and scarves? Plan and organize a supply drive to donate to an organization. Discuss how your contribution will help others. Design fliers to advertise your project at school and in the neighbourhood and write letters to local businesses inviting them to help.



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L—M | Lexile coded for adult-directed reading

The Invisible Boy

Trudy Ludwig, Illustrated by Patrice Barton

About

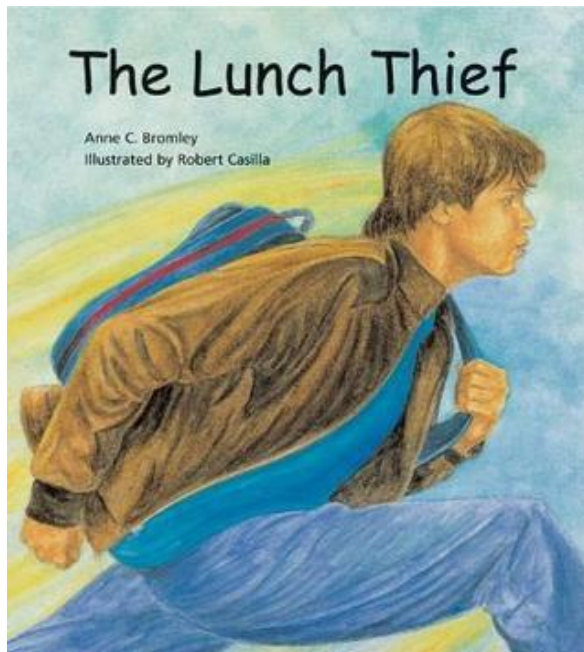
Meet Brian, the invisible boy. Nobody ever seems to notice him or think to include him in their group, game, or birthday party . . . until, that is, a new kid comes to class. When Justin, the new boy, arrives, Brian is the first to make him feel welcome. And when Brian and Justin team up to work on a class project together, Brian finds a way to shine.

Significant Themes

Exclusion: *"He sits there wondering which is worse—being laughed at or feeling invisible"*

Inclusion: *"Mrs. Carlotti said we can have up to three people in our group. We're only two. C'mon, Emilio, let him work with us"*

Belonging and Acceptance: *"Brian turns and sees Justin waving him over. Emilio nods at Brian as he makes room for him at the table. Maybe, just maybe Brian's not so invisible after all."*



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

O

The Lunch Thief

Anne C. Bromley, Illustrated by Robert Casilla

About

Rafael Munoz is frustrated because his and his classmates' lunches keep getting stolen by Kevin Kopeck, the new kid. But, his mama told him, "Use your mouth before your fists." So, instead of getting angry, Rafael talks to Kevin and learns that he lost everything in the wildfires. Rafael shares his lunch with Kevin and gains a new friend.

Significant Themes

Problem solving: "I should report him, but he'll figure out who did it and pick a fight after school. I may be big for my age, but I'm not a fighter."

Homelessness from a fire: "Half of Jacinto valley was burned down by wildfires that spread all over the country. Kevin doesn't want to talk about the fires"

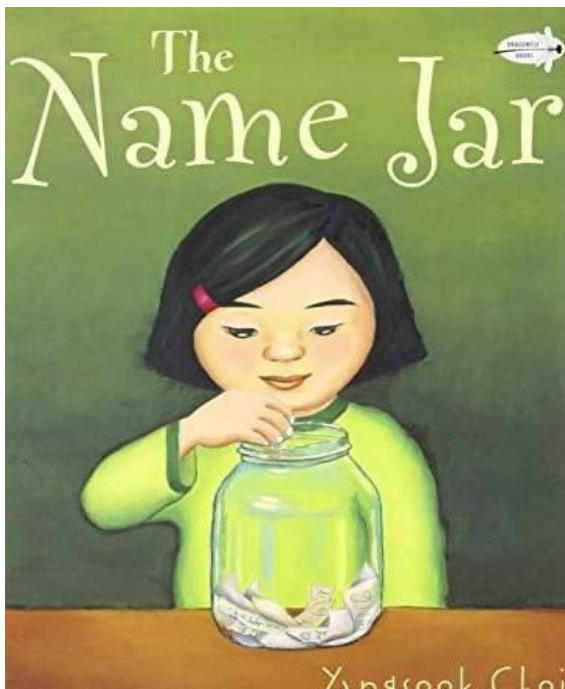
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Classroom fundraiser: As a class raise money and buy supplies to make lunches for an organization that helps people experiencing food insecurity in your city.

Start a school food/supply pantry for students and their families who might not have enough. Collect dry/canned goods and hygiene supplies to stock the area and let your school know that the supplies are accessible to anyone who needs them.

Additional Resources [here](#)



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

J-K

The Name Jar

Yangsook Choi

About

The new kid in school needs a new name! Or does she? Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. But while Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, one of her classmates comes to her neighborhood and discovers her real name and its special meaning. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar has mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it—Yoon-Hey.

Significant Themes

Bullying: *"You-hey, bye-bye! The kids yelled as she left. Unhei felt herself blush."*

Inclusion: *"I took the name jar because I wanted you to keep your own name. And you did!"*

Acceptance of culture: *"I realized that I liked my name best, so I choose it again. Korean names mean something. Unhei means grace."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

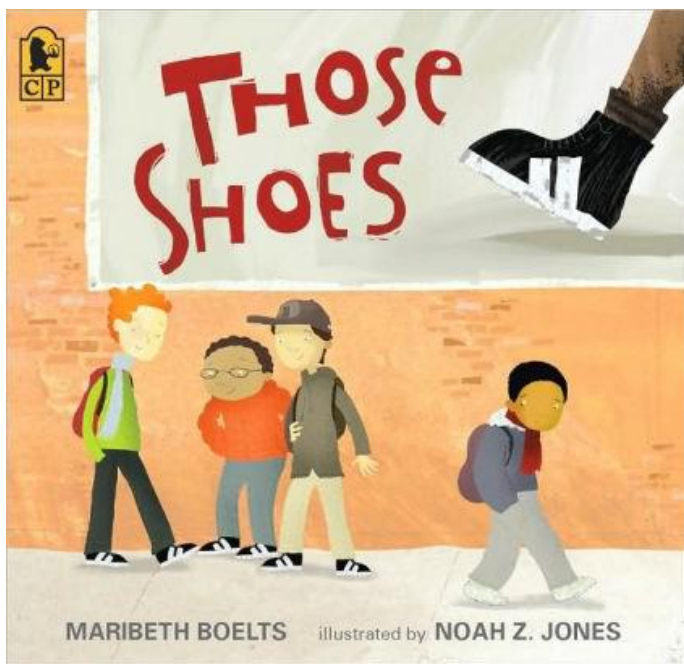
Suggested activity:

Classroom Discussion: What did Unhei's grandmother give her before the family left Korea? Why was it important to both the grandmother and Unhei?

Unhei was teased on the bus to school. Why do you think this happened? Is there more than one reason? How can you tell by the drawing that Unhei is feeling uncomfortable on the bus? If you noticed this in real life, what would you do?

Has anyone ever had trouble pronouncing your name? Have you ever had trouble pronouncing someone else's name? What should we do when this happens?

Unhei's mother says that being different is a good thing. Do you agree? Why or why not?



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L

Those Shoes

Maribeth Boelts, Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

About

Jeremy wants a pair of shoes to fit in with current fashion. Grandma says they don't have room for "want," just "need." Jeremy is determined, but he soon sees that the things he has — warm boots, a loving grandma, and the chance to help a friend — are worth more than the things he wants.

Significant Themes

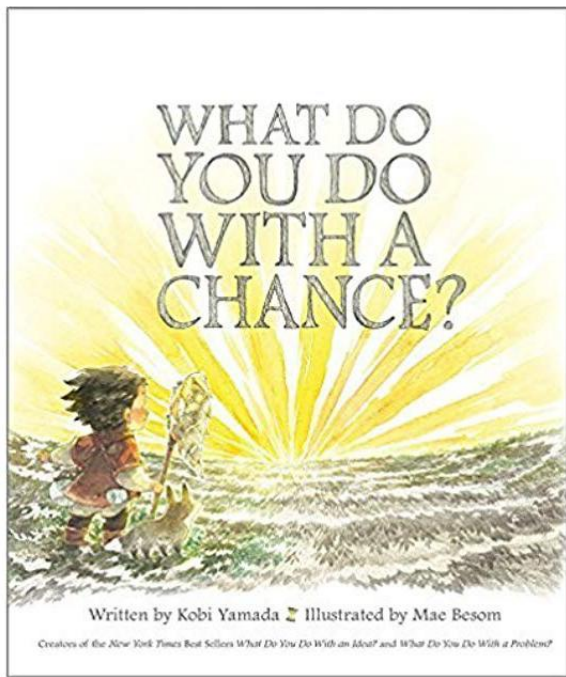
Wants vs. needs: *"There's no room for 'want' around here— just 'need,' Grandma says."*

Generosity: *"Before I can change my mind, the shoes are in my coat. I put the shoes in front of his door, push the doorbell and run."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Help students make lists of wants vs. needs. What belongs in each category? How can we make sure that everyone in our community has everything in the needs column?



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

What Do You Do With A Chance?

Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom

About

A child is visited by his first chance and, unsure what to do with it, he lets it go. Later on, when a new chance arrives he reaches for it, but this time he misses and falls. Embarrassed and afraid, he begins ignoring each new chance that comes by, even though he still wants to take them. Then one day he realizes that he doesn't need to be brave all the time, just at the right time, to find out what amazing things can happen when he takes a chance.

Significant Themes

Failure: *"I went to reach for it, but I missed and fell. I was embarrassed."*

Risk-taking, courage, letting go of fears: *"When another chance came around, I wasn't so sure. But I decided to try"*

Bravery: *"Maybe I don't have to be brave all the time. Maybe I just need to be brave for a little while at the right time"*

Discovery and growth: *"I know see that when I hold back, I miss out. And I don't want to miss out. There's just so much I want to see and do and discover."*

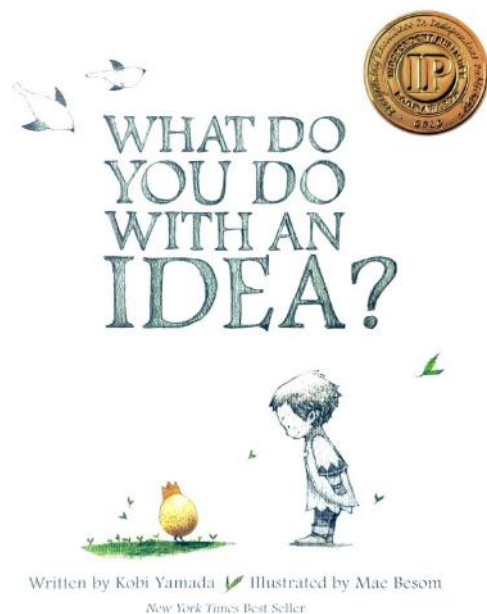
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Grade 1-6 Health: What does taking calculated, thoughtful risks look like?

Suggested activity:

Classroom Discussion:

What kind of things might be risks? What are risks we should take? What about risks we shouldn't take? Have you ever been too scared to take a chance? Has there been a time that you took a chance even though you were scared? What happened? How did you feel? What opportunity currently exists in our lives/community/school? How can we make the most of these opportunities? What advice would you give to others when presented with a specific opportunity?



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

K

What Do You Do With An Idea?

Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom

About

What do you do with an idea? Especially an idea that's different, or daring, or a little wild? This is the story of one brilliant idea and the child who helps to bring it into the world. It's a story for anyone, at any age, who's ever had an idea that seemed too big, too odd, too difficult. It's a story to inspire you to welcome that idea, to give it space to grow, and to see what happens next.

Significant Themes

Innovations and inspiration: *"I decided to protect it, to care for it."*

Confidence: *"This is MY idea, I thought. No one knows it like I do. And it's okay if it's different, and weird, and maybe a little crazy"*

Perspective: *"It showed me how to walk on my hands... it is good to have the ability to see things differently"*

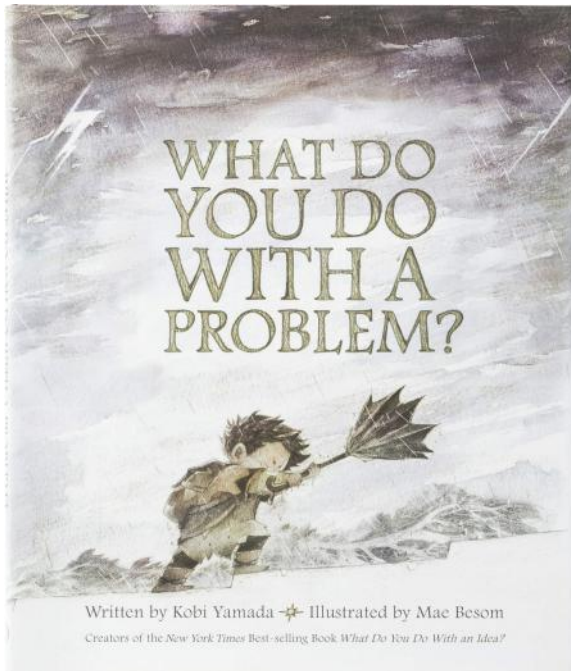
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Art: Sketching with black/white and some color, self-portrait

Resources for Portrait Activity: http://www.lincolncottage.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/idea-portrait_web.pdf

Classroom Discussion: What are ideas? Why are ideas important? Where do ideas come from? Why do we have ideas? What do you do with an idea? How can we see things from different perspectives?



Grade Level
Grade 1+
GRL [Guided Reading Level]
K

What Do You Do With A Problem?

Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom

About

A unique perspective on identifying how a problem can seem so huge it threatens to swallow you up but when you tackle it, you may find a golden opportunity to learn and grow.

Significant Themes

Worry and anxiety: *"The more I worried the bigger my problem became"*

Courage: *"I got ready and I tackled my problem"*
"I'm not afraid of them because I know their secret"

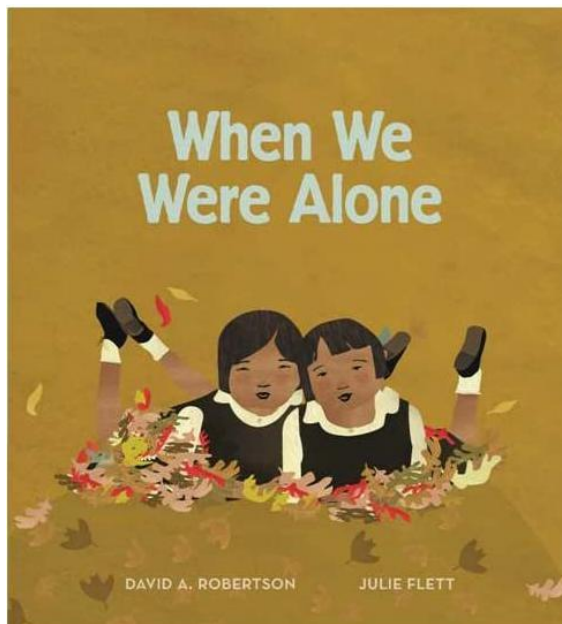
Resolution and resilience: *"My problem held an opportunity... for me to learn and to grow"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activity:

Classroom Discussion: As a class spend some time looking for opportunities that can be found in problems. Revisit the book and talk about how the boy discovered opportunity hidden behind his growing problem. Ask students to think of and share some examples of opportunities that might be hiding in every day problems. Share a couple of examples to get them started. For example, you might discuss:

- If I run out of a certain ingredient I need to make what I planned for dinner, the hidden opportunity would be that I'll create something new and exciting to cook.
- If I have the problem that my car has run out of gas, the hidden opportunity would be that I'll get some good exercise walking or biking to work.



Grade Level

K—4

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

O

When We Were Alone

David Robertson, Illustrated by Julie Flett

About

A young girl notices things about her grandmother that make her curious. Why does her grandmother have long, braided hair and beautifully coloured clothing? Why does she speak Cree and spend so much time with her family? As she asks questions, her grandmother shares her experiences in a residential school, when all of these things were taken away.

Significant Themes

Residential Schools
Cree Culture

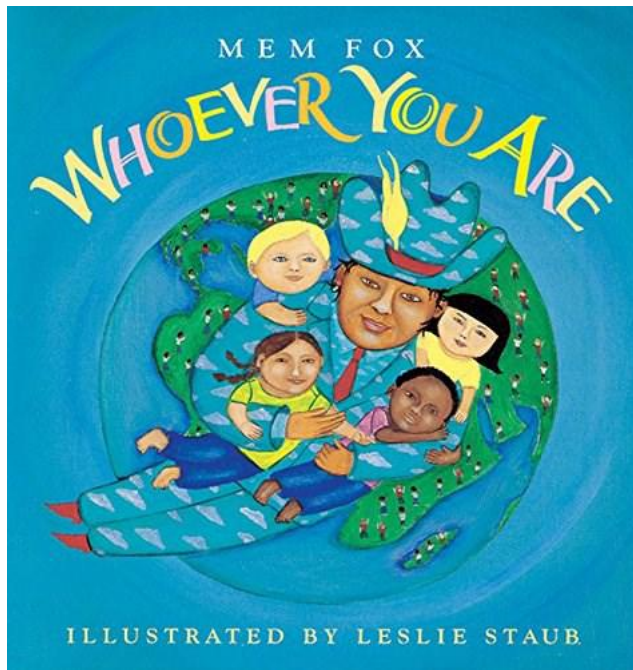
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Social Studies/ Language Arts/ Art

Discussion: Who is part of your family? What family traditions do you have? How do you connect with your culture?

Activity: List important things and then illustrate what would happen if they were taken away.

Activity: Create an art piece inspired by the book's art [Julie Flett](#)



Grade Level

Grade 1+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

1

Whoever You Are

Mem Fox, Illustrated by Leslie Staub

About

Every day all over the world, children are laughing and crying, playing and learning, eating and sleeping. They may not look the same. They may not speak the same language. Their lives may be quite different. But inside, they are all alike. Stirring words and bold paintings weave their way around our earth, across cultures and generations.

Significant Themes

Diversity (difference): *"Whoever they are and wherever they are"*

Similarity: *"but inside their hearts are just like yours."*

Universality: *"Joys are the same, love is the same. Pain is the same, and blood is the same. Smiles are the same, and hearts are just the same."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Grade 1 Social: Students will work to understand the benefits and responsibilities of living in a community, while appreciating the differences in others

Focus on seeing things from different perspectives & practice open-mindedness

Suggested activity:

Venn Diagram: Make a class VENN diagram and identity the following;

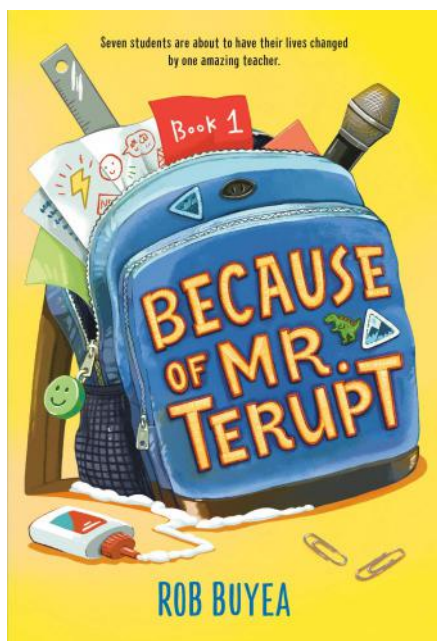
Types of communities or groups students belong to and their similarities and differences

What helps us to recognize different groups or communities?

In what ways do we belong to more than one group or community at the same time?

In what ways do we benefit from belonging to groups and communities?

Minimum
Grade Level:
Grade 3+



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Y

Because of Mr. Terupt

Rob Buyea

About

It's the start of fifth grade for seven kids at Snow Hill School. There's Jessica, the new girl, smart and perceptive, who's having a hard time fitting in; Alexia, a bully, your friend one second, your enemy the next; Peter, class prankster and troublemaker; Luke, the brain; Danielle, who never stands up for herself; shy Anna, whose home situation makes her an outcast; and Jeffrey, who hates school. Only Mr. Terupt, their new and energetic teacher, seems to know how to deal with them all. He makes the classroom a fun place, even if he doesn't let them get away with much until the snowy winter day when an accident changes everything-and everyone.

Significant Themes

Kindness: *"Mr. Terupt turned out to be different.... He wasn't going to let me hide all year. This made me nervous, but it turned out to be a good thing in the end."*

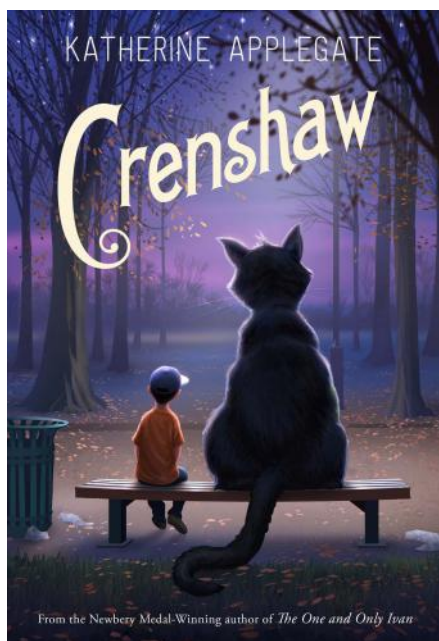
Empathy and Forgiveness: *"If you love someone, you don't quit on them just because they made a mistake."
"We watched, and he taught us like he did every day we were with him. He showed us how to forgive."*

Hope: *"Maybe you just do the best you can, 'cause you can't control what happens in the end. I guess it's okay to hope for things. Sometimes it works out."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested Activities:

A wonderful year-long book study for "Because of Mr. Terupt" has been created by a teacher and can be accessed [here](#)



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Q

Crenshaw

Katherine Applegate

About

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent. And not much for food, either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan. Again. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he's imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is an imaginary friend enough to save this family from losing everything? Beloved author Katherine Applegate proves in unexpected ways that friends matter, whether real or imaginary.

Significant Themes

Imagination: *"Imaginary friends don't come of their own volition. We are invited. We stay as long as we are needed. And then, and only then, do we leave."*

Loss of control: *"What bothered me most, though, was that I couldn't fix anything. I couldn't control anything. It was like driving a bumper car without a steering wheel. I kept getting slammed, and I just had to sit there and hold on tight."*

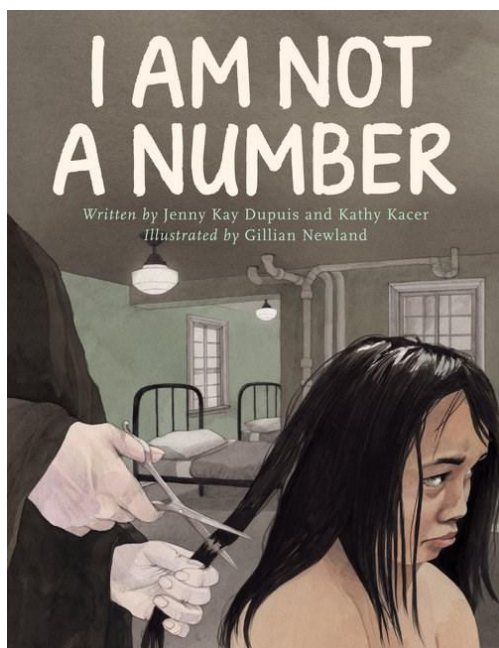
Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested Activities:

[Teacher's guide](#)

[Book guide](#)

[Photo essay project on child/youth hunger](#)



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

V

I Am Not a Number

Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer, Illustrated by Gillian Newland

About

When eight-year-old Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school she is confused, frightened, and terribly homesick. She tries to remember who she is and where she came from, despite the efforts of the nuns who are in charge at the school and who tell her that she is not to use her own name but instead use the number they have assigned to her. When she goes home for summer holidays, Irene's parents decide never to send her and her brothers away again. But where will they hide? And what will happen when her parents disobey the law?

Significant Themes

Residential Schools: *"My father pulled my two brothers and me into a semicircle before him, saying This man will take you to live in a school far from here. We don't want to let you go, but it's the law; we have to."*

Loss of culture: *"Look after each other, she cried. Never forget home or our ways. Never forget us. Never forget who you are!"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

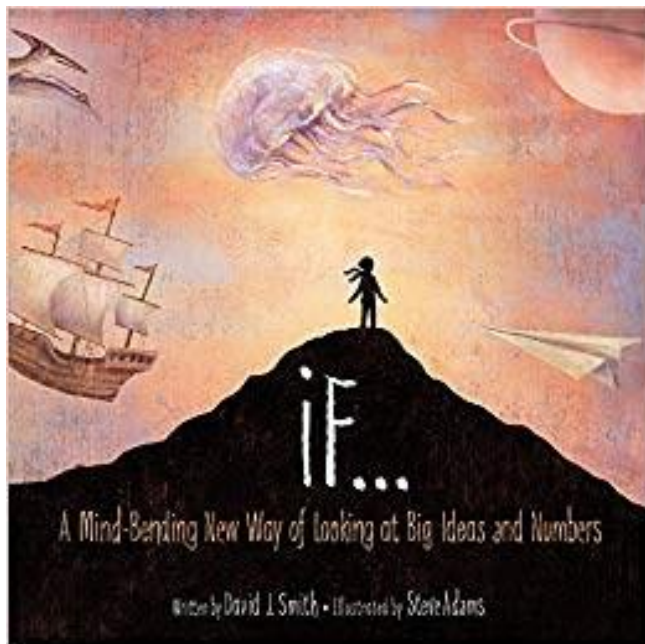
Social studies: This book is based on the true story of the author's grandmother's residential school experience. Use the information in the back to learn about the residential school system and its impacts.

Before Reading: Please note that this book describes children being hurt by adults both physically and emotionally, and may not be appropriate for younger or more sensitive students. An understanding of residential schools is important for students to learn prior to this lesson. For further information, access the [Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Teacher Resource Guide](#).

Suggested activities:

Classroom Discussion: What kind of school is Irene going to? What do we know about Irene's school from the story? Why is Irene being sent there? What is the purpose of this school?

Journaling: Prompt students to reflect on what they see in their world and the experiences they notice in the story. Power, privilege, and bias are among the themes that are examined.



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

N/A - High Interest | Good for reluctant readers

IF: A Mind Bending New Way of Looking at Big Ideas and Numbers

David Smith, Illustrated by Steve Adams

About

If the Solar System's planets were shrunk down to the size of sports balls, and Earth were the size of a baseball, what size would the other planets be? If your lifespan was represented by a pizza divided into twelve slices, how many slices would represent your time spent in school? These questions and more are explored in this innovative and visually appealing book about very big concepts made accessible when scaled down to kid-friendly size.

Significant Themes

Natural resources: *"If all the water was represented in a 100 glasses; 97 of the glasses would be filled with salt water from the oceans and some lakes; 3 of the glasses would represent fresh water and only one of these three glasses would represent the fresh water available to us."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Science and Social: Cross curricular topics on planets/earth/history/timelines

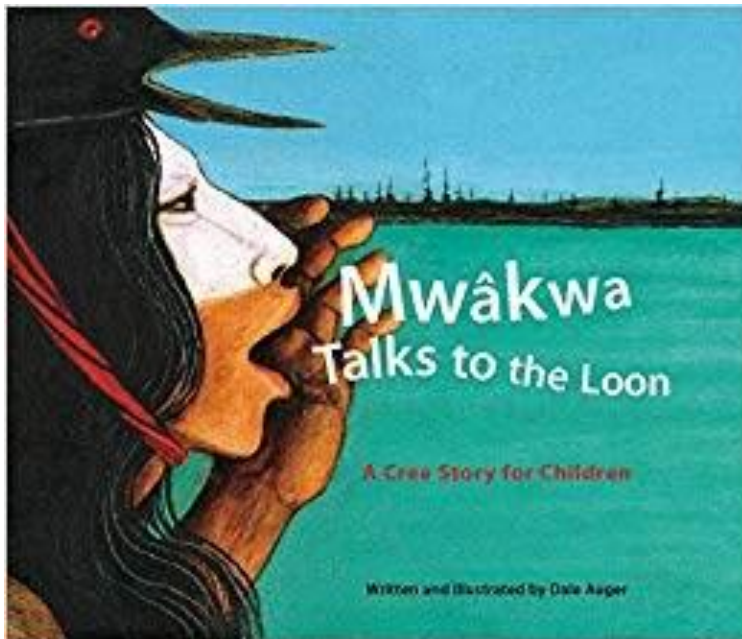
Math/Social: Understanding the concepts of scale and timelines

Suggested activity:

Make a Big Idea Small: Have students poll one another or several other classes about demographics; ask about gender, age, background, family structure, etc. Have students map out these demographics on charts; what percent of our class was born in Canada? How many students are female?

Work with the class to reduce information to a smaller number, e.g. "If all the grade 6 students at our school were represented by 10 people..."

Use this concept to create infographics about global poverty, homelessness in Canada, food insecurity, or other social issues.



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Mwâkwa Talks to the Loon

Dale Auger

About

Kayâs is a young Cree man who is blessed with a gift that makes him a talented hunter. He knows the ways of the animals he hunts and can even talk with them in their own languages. But when he becomes proud and takes his abilities for granted, he loses his gift, and the people grow hungry.

With the help of the Elders, Kayâs learns that in order to live a life of fulfillment, he must learn to cherish and respect the talents he has been given. A glossary with a pronunciation guide to Cree words and phrases.

Significant Themes

Pride, listening, valuing our gifts and talents, Cree culture, animals, nature & land

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Note: This book has many Cree words with an index at the back with definitions and pronunciations. This may pose a challenge to younger students for independent reading, but can help build skills of inference and guessing based on context for more advanced readers.

Suggested activities:

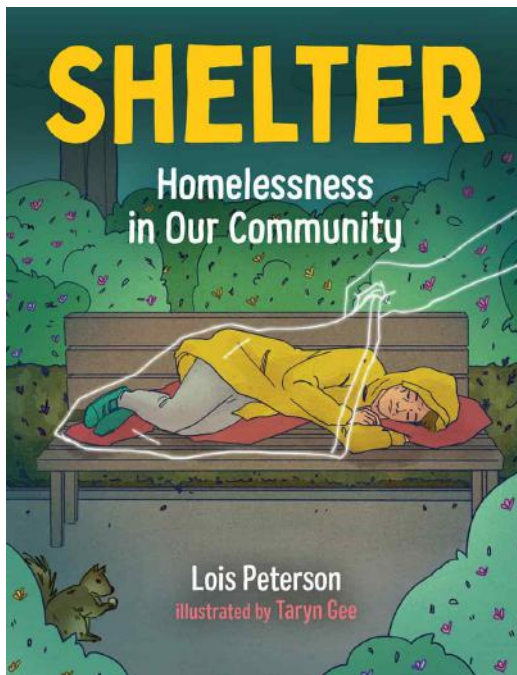
Categorization: Use the story to stimulate a sorting activity of animals based on characteristics (two-legged, four-legged, winged, swimmers etc.). This can be done by cutting and gluing pictures from magazines.

Make a mural: that represents the village of Kayâs. Label all the characters of the story in the mural.

Discuss commonalities: between Kayâs (the hunter) and Mwâkwa (the loon). Although they are distinctly different in real life, they are “same-spirits” in the story.

Theatre time: Act out the story! The class can do it as puppetry or convert to Readers Theatre.

Write the story: from the point of view of one of Kayâs’ brothers or sisters.



Grade Level

Grade 4-9

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

T-Z

Shelter: Homelessness in our Community

Lois Peterson, Illustrated by Taryn Gee

About

Shelter answers the often difficult questions young people have about homelessness in a straightforward, compassionate and age-appropriate way.

The author brings personal stories from her experience working at a homeless shelter and introduces us to some of the people who live on the street.

The book challenges young readers to think about homelessness from a different perspective and gives them examples and practical ways they can take action and help in their own communities.

Significant Themes

Homelessness

Addiction

Discrimination

Poverty

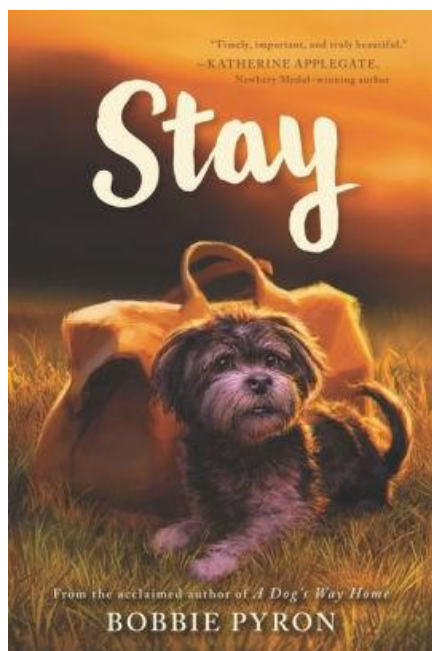
Mental Health

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Language Arts/ Health/ Social Studies/ Math

Discussion: Put up Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. What do you notice? What do you wonder? Should the hierarchy exist?

Connections: UN Sustainable Development Goals, UN Rights of a Child, and UN Resolution on Homelessness.



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Stay

Bobbie Pyron

About

Piper's life is turned upside down when her family moves into a shelter in a whole new city. She misses her house, her friends, and her privacy—and she *hates* being labeled the homeless girl at her new school.

But while Hope House offers her new challenges, it also brings new friendships, like the girls in Firefly Girls Troop 423 and a sweet street dog named Baby. So when Baby's person goes missing, Piper knows she has to help. But helping means finding the courage to trust herself and her new friends, no matter what anyone says about them—before Baby gets taken away for good.

Told in alternating perspectives, this classic and heartfelt animal tale proclaims the importance of hope, the power of story, and the true meaning of home.

Significant Themes

Identity: *"Don't let nobody tell you who you are because of where you live."*

Pets & homelessness: *"Our animals always, and I mean always, come first. They eat first. They share our blankets when it's cold. If they're sick, we get them help... Because we love them, and they love us back no matter what."*

Hope: *"I never realized until it was gone how something as normal as hope lights up your world."*

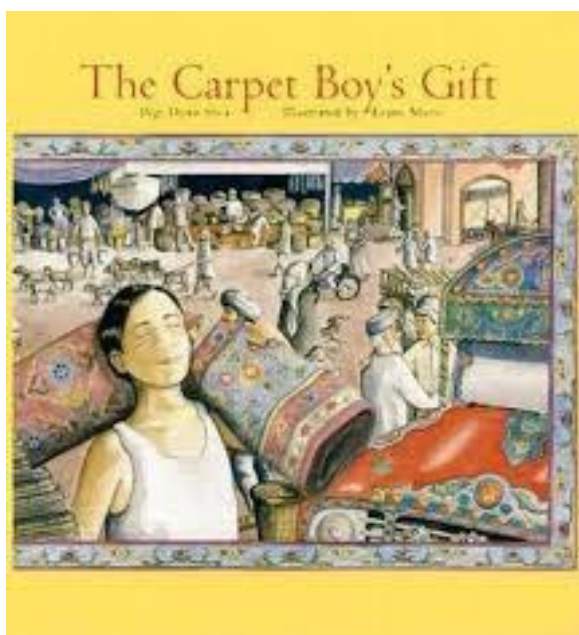
Empathy: *"Yes, but you, you saw. Not just with your eyes, but with your heart."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Research local organizations like PALS or Parachutes for Pets to learn more about what they do and how they help people in need. Invite a guest speaker to share with your class about their work.

Class discussion: What would you do if you had to choose between keeping a pet outside with you, or giving up your pet so you can stay warm inside? What would be some challenges in making a shelter for pets and humans together? What can we do to help people experiencing homelessness who have pets?



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Q

The Carpet Boy's Gift

Pegi Deitz Shea, Illustrated by Leane Morin

About

Nadeem and his fellow workers are bonded laborers, children who work day and night to pay off loans their families have accepted from a factory owner. Although Nadeem and his cousin Amina take pride in helping their poor families, they yearn to go to school and to have time to play. One day a former carpet boy named Iqbal Masih leads a parade in the village. New laws have abolished bonded labor! Iqbal urges Nadeem to fight for freedom and to lead the children to a new school in town.

Significant Themes

Child Labour
Justice
Equal rights
Education
Advocacy
Protest

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

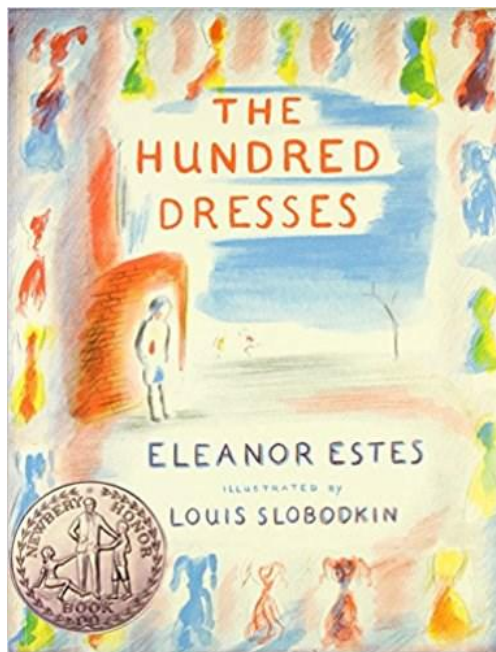
Making a Difference: Create a display which celebrates the lives of heroes who have dedicated themselves to making life better for others.

International Aid: Build a class directory with information in it about the different programs of charitable organizations to help children and families in developing countries.

Make a Play: Write and produce a play which envisions Nadeem and Amina's future where they attend school. Encourage the children to write the dialog, and develop dramatic scenes.

Explore the Rights of Children: Brainstorm a list of "rights of child" then compare with the U.N.'s own declaration on the Rights of the Child.

Introduce students to what it means to work with and without wages: Explain that The Carpet Boy's Gift depicts the realities of oppressive child labor. Ask readers to discuss what types of work are acceptable and unacceptable for children. Discuss the idea of a living wage.



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

P

The Hundred Dresses

Eleanor Estes, Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin

About

Wanda Petronski wore the same faded-blue dress to school every day. It was always clean, but it looked as though it had never been ironed properly. One day when a classmate showed up wearing a bright new dress that was much admired, Wanda said suddenly, "I have a hundred dresses at home." That had started the teasing game of dresses, which Peggy and Maddie played with Wanda. It was fun to stop Wanda on the way to school and ask, "How many dresses did you say you had?" Wanda did have the hundred dresses, and this is the story of how Peggy and Maddie came to understand about them and what the game meant to Wanda.

Significant Themes

Inaction: "... But she had said nothing. She had stood by silently, and that was just as bad as what Peggy had done. Worse."

Compassion and Integrity: "After a long, long time she reached an important conclusion. She was never going to stand by and say nothing again."

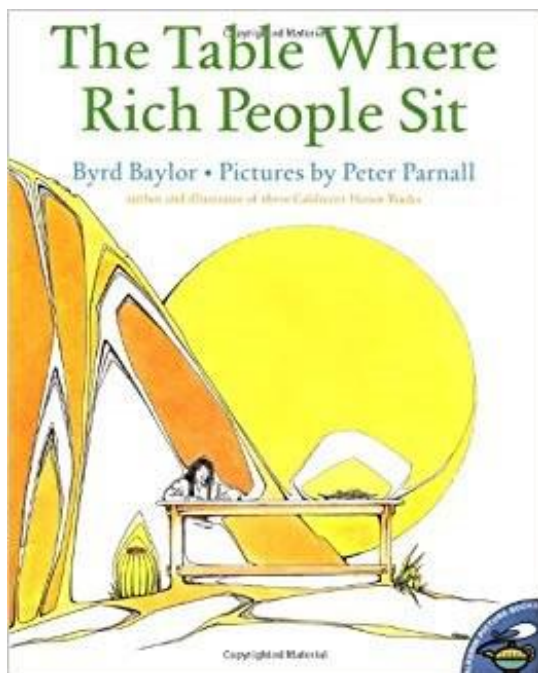
Consequences of actions: "Maddy was beginning to wonder how she could bear the hard fact that... she might never be able to make amends"

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Writing: Have students write a sequel to *The Hundred Dresses*. They can think about Wanda's life in the new city. Is it different from living in Boggin Heights? Do the children tease her there? Does Wanda want to return to her old home and be friends with Maddie and Peggy?

Theatre time!: Reader's Theater is a great way for students to practice reading fluently. Break the class into small groups of 3–5 children. Give each group an important scene or event from the story to create into a Readers Theater script. Students can then perform their scripts for students in the school or other grade level classes.



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

T

The Table Where Rich People Sit

Byrd Taylor, Illustrated by Peter Parnall

About

A young girl debates the argument of what makes you rich – money or the things around us like family, freedom, the nature that we see in our communities, friendship, etc. They embark on a budgeting exercise to see just how rich they really are.....and the results are quite surprising!

Significant Themes

Material desires: *"The subject is money; and I say we don't have enough of it."*

Lack of appreciation: *"I tell my parents they should both get better jobs so we could buy a lot of nice new things."*

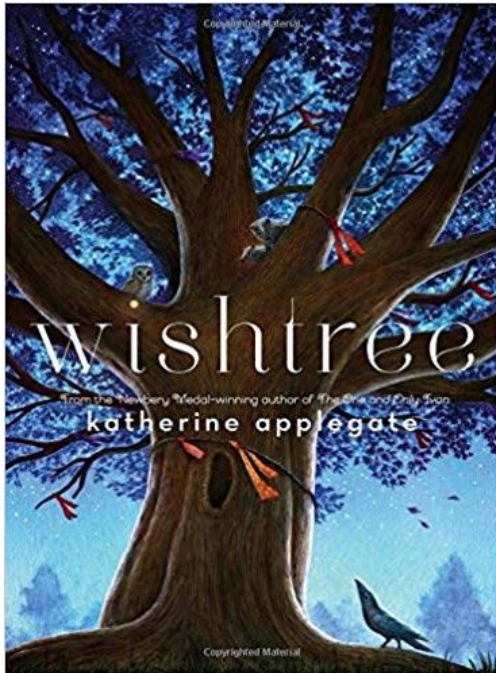
Appreciation for the gifts of nature and day-to-day blessings: *"But Mountain Girl, I thought you knew how rich we are"*
"To tell you the truth, the cash part doesn't seem to matter anymore."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Keep a journal: List all the things that money cannot buy, e.g. fresh air, sunrises, friendship, and discuss all the ways that we are rich.

Find Out How Rich You Are: In their journals, have students list all the things that money cannot buy (e.g. fresh air, sunrises, friendship,..) and discuss all the ways that we are rich. What amount of money do you think those things worth? Add up suggestions from your class and see how rich you are.



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

L—M

Wishtree

Katherine Applegate

About

Red is an oak tree who is many rings old. Red is the neighborhood "wishtree"—people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. Along with her crow friend Bongo and other animals who seek refuge in Red's hollows, this "wishtree" watches over the neighborhood. You might say Red has seen it all. Until a new family moves in. Not everyone is welcoming, and Red's experiences as a wishtree are more important than ever.

Significant Themes

Immigrant families, multiculturalism: *"Different languages, different food, different customs. That's our neighborhood: wild and tangled and colorful. Like the best kind of garden."*

Friendship, kindness, loyalty, empathy: *"Making others feel safe is a fine way to spend your days."*

Confidence: *"It is a great gift indeed to love who you are."*

Resilience: *"But sometimes things happen that aren't so good. When they occur, I've learned that there's not much you can do except stand tall and reach deep."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Imagine Your Tree's Story: Red shares an abundance of experience and knowledge in this volume. Pick a special tree near your home, your school, or within your community. What stories would it tell? Support your story with truths related to your family or community history.

Write a New Ending: In *Wishtree*, the community designates Red a Heritage Tree. What could have happened if Red was cut down? How would that have changed Samar and her family's relationship with their community? Imagine Red was cut down and was transformed into a large pavilion for a local park. Could Red still have brought the community peace in a new way? What other tree products bring people and communities together?

Additional resources [here](#)



Grade Level

Grade 3+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

V

Wonder

R. J. Palacio

About

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. WONDER, now a #1 New York Times bestseller and included on the Texas Bluebonnet Award master list, begins from Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. These perspectives converge in a portrait of one community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.

Significant Themes

Kindness & acceptance

"Kinder than is necessary. Because it's not enough to be kind. One should be kinder than needed."

"When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind"

Bullying & friendship

"It's not enough to be friendly. You have to be a friend."

Taking risks & facing fears

"Now that I look back, I don't know why I was so stressed about it all this time. Funny how sometimes you worry a lot about something and it turns out to be nothing."

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

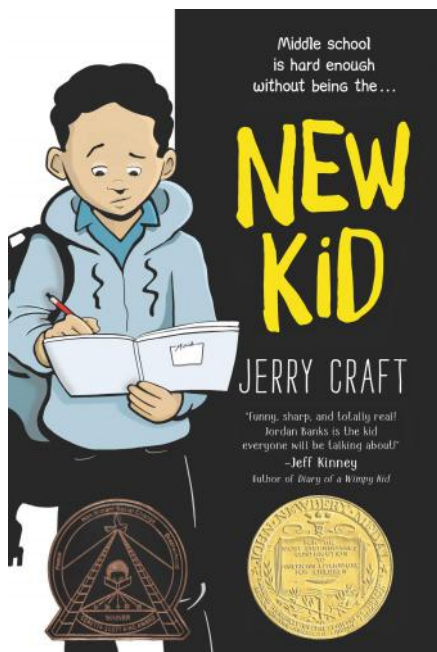
Give the class an overview of Treacher-Collins Syndrome using information from [this website](#)

Suggested activity:

Classroom Discussion: Overcoming challenges—Auggie's attendance at Beecher Prep creates issues for students, parents, teachers, and the principal. What are some of the challenges that arise? How does each group of individuals overcome the challenges? What role does Auggie play in either helping or hurting the situation? What lessons are learned because of Auggie's attendance at the school?

Additional resources [here](#)

Minimum
Grade Level:
Grade 6+



Grade Level

Grade 6+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

S

New Kid

Jerry Craft

About

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade.

As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Significant Themes

Race: *"What are you anyway?"*

Inclusion: *"Yeah it nice.. But it still doesn't seem to have much, you know diversity."*

Bullying: *"Why do they call him Maury-O? It's because it rhymes with Oreo. Oh I get it, unfortunately. It's because he's black on the outside and white on the inside."*

Consideration: *"You don't have to like everyone, but you don't have to be a jerk about it, either."*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Suggested activities:

Comic time!: Work individually or in small groups to create comics about a time each student was a new kid somewhere. Imagine alternate storylines where someone had reached out or been mean. How can we make sure no new kid is ever left out?

Class committee: Create a class committee for welcoming new kids to the school

Additional resources:

[Discussion guide from publisher](#)

[The Classroom Bookshelf activities](#)

[Teaching guide from the author](#)



Grade Level

Grade 7+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

No Fixed Address

Susin Nielsen

About

Felix Knuttson, twelve, is an endearing kid with an incredible brain for trivia. His mom Astrid is loving but unreliable; she can't hold onto a job, or a home. When they lose their apartment in Vancouver, they move into a camper van, just for August, till Astrid finds a job. September comes, they're still in the van; Felix must keep "home" a secret and give a fake address in order to enroll in school. Luckily, he finds true friends. As the weeks pass and life becomes grim, he struggles not to let anyone know how precarious his situation is. When he gets to compete on a national quiz show, Felix is determined to win -- the cash prize will bring them a home. Their luck is about to change! But what happens is not at all what Felix expected.

Note: This novel contains mature themes and we recommend an adult reads first before deciding if it is appropriate for their class/child

Significant Themes

Homelessness, poverty,
family, friendship

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

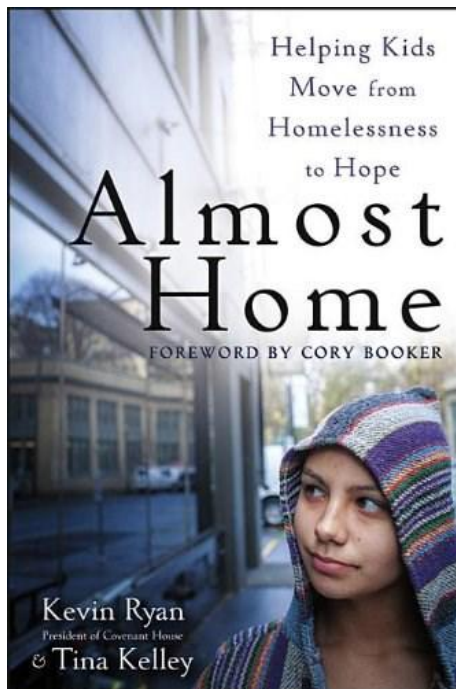
Suggested activities:

Classroom Discussion: Discuss the themes of shame and guilt in No Fixed Address. No Fixed Address takes a look at the lives of the 'hidden homeless' – the people who are without a permanent home and are just about finding alternatives to sleeping rough on the streets. What aspect of Felix's precarious existence would you find hardest to deal with?

Tour or volunteer at Inn From The Cold. Many shelters exist in Calgary, but Inn From the Cold is the only family shelter in all of Alberta – this impacts family separation and makes an already hard situation even harder. Tour IFTC, have them come speak in your class, book a volunteering shift (ages 8+), or facilitate a fundraiser to support kids and families experiencing homelessness.

Book a Speaker: At The Mustard Seed, we have engaging speakers that are happy to share with students about our upcoming family housing build.

Minimum
Grade Level:
Grade 9+



Grade Level

Grade 9+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Grade 7+ [Contains mature content]

Almost Home

Kevin Ryan and Tina Kelley

About

This book shares the stories of six young people from across the United States and Canada as they deal with life alone on the streets. These 6 children find their way to Covenant House, the largest charity serving homeless and runaway youth in USA and Canada.

Significant Themes

Hope, identity, and belonging. Resiliency, confronting loss and grief, pain and fear.

Empathy, judgment & stigma.

"Real heroes are the ones concerned with the least glamorous things"

"Homeless young people need to know that someone believes in them"

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

Grade 10 - 12 — *Essays, presentation, book reviews, do a prezzi, etc.*

NOTE – Sensitive and adult themes and topics

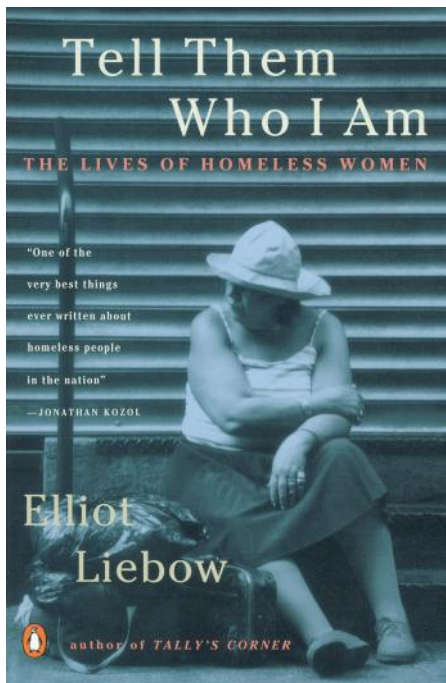
Paulie: *Abusive parents*

Muriel: *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome*

Benjamin: *Abusive parents*

Creonia: *Pregnancy at age 16, Jim and Keith: Neither are homeless but help out at Covenant; it is a sad story as their parents were killed, leaving the sons alone*

Meagan: *Was kicked out of her home when she admitted she was gay*



Grade Level

Grade 9+

GRL [Guided Reading Level]

Easy vocabulary, contains mature content

Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women

Elliott Liebow

About

Liebow (Talley's Corner) here succeeds in demolishing the anonymity of the homeless. Skillfully blending a social scientist's objectivity with humanitarian concern, he observes women who live in a variety of shelters near Washington, D.C.--how they interact with one another, family and shelter staff; pass their days; and struggle to retain their dignity in the face of rejection by society. Liebow's probing and morally honest report reveals hard truths about the humanity and inhumanity of us all.

Significant Themes

Dynamics of shelter life: *"The atmosphere of the shelter is at once relaxing and stifling – things are easy and relaxed but every exit or entry...is documented in the log book."*

"...defined by where we sleep at night"

"...they wanted to be borrowers, not beggars"

Low income: *"How will I ever get out of here if I can't save?"*

Family dynamics: *"I felt like I was getting smothered and didn't have much chance to prove myself"*

Curriculum Links & Classroom Activities

There are some difficult and sensitive topics in here (teen pregnancy, abortion, rape, job loss, mental health, disability, abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc.) so please be mindful of this as you share with students

Suggested activities:

Research: *"The number of people experiencing homelessness is going up. And just as clearly, supportive public sentiment toward the homeless is going down."* Is this true in Calgary or Canada? Use this quote as a starting point for a research paper, PowerPoint presentation, or use it as a catalyst to begin a volunteer/education project

Budgeting: Some of the women received welfare and support cheques in the sum of \$600

Do a budgeting exercise with your group and see how they could afford to live on \$600 a month in Calgary. Think about rent, transportation, food, utilities, clothing, medication, etc.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

GRADE SCHOOLS



SEED SCHOOL

A 5-day field study program through Campus Calgary/Open Minds. Classes of Gr. 3-12 students can attend SEEDschool for an entire week of study to learn about social issues, empathy, and how we can create healthy communities together. During this week, students will learn from experts, explore the Beltline and Downtown neighbourhoods, hear real stories of resilience and hope, and work together to find ways to make their own communities safer, more inclusive, and more vibrant.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Our presentations focus on understanding why homelessness and poverty are challenges in our city today and encouraging students to find ways to engage with their community. We present to individual classes as well as entire schools and can tailor a presentation to your classes' learning or specific topics if requested

TEACHER TOOLKIT

A curriculum resource to guide teachers in educating students about homelessness, poverty, and empathy.

THE SEED'S ECONOMY GAME

A hands-on learning opportunity for Gr. 6-12 students that demonstrates how prejudice and discrimination have a negative effect on individuals and communities. Students are tasked with building communities and face challenges and roadblocks along the way.

For more information and to book in with our team, please contact
CommunityEngagement@theseed.ca or visit our website TheSeed.ca/engagement.