



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

The Breaking News

Sarah Lynne Reul (Author and Illustrator)

When devastating news rattles a young girl's community, her normally attentive parents and neighbors are suddenly exhausted and distracted. At school, her teacher tells the class to “look for the helpers”—the good people working to make things better in big and small ways. She wants more than anything to help in a big way, but maybe she can start with one small act of kindness instead... and then another, and another. Small things can compound, after all, to make a world of difference.

ISBN: 978-1250153562

Publisher: Roaring Brook Press

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 4–8



Book Themes

Current events and news, Feelings, Taking action

Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of words' meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point

out to students when they appear in the story. See also ADL's [Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying for Elementary Age Children](#).

- behavior
- glued
- helpers
- invent
- news
- notice
- pretend
- scary
- solve

Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask these questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- Who and what do you see on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask questions periodically throughout reading to check for comprehension and to keep the students engaged. Below are some sample questions that correlate to specific page numbers.

- How is everyone feeling? (page 5)
- What does their teacher tell the students to do? (page 14)
- What are some of the small things the students can do? (page 26)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What is the book about?
- Why are the parents in the story watching television and checking their phones all the time?
- Do your parents or family members ever do that? How do you feel when they do?
- Why are the children in the book scared?
- Why do you think so many of the characters in the story are upset or feeling sad?
- What does the teacher mean when she says to "look for the helpers?"
- When scary or upsetting things have happened in the past, can you think of "helpers" that you remember? What did the "helpers" do?
- Why do you think the girl says she wants to help "in a big way?"
- Have you ever wanted to help "in a big way?" What happened to make you want to help?
- When the children try to cheer up their parents, what happens?
- Why do the children say "I feel small?" Have you ever felt like that?
- What do the children decide to do to help?
- Do you think it helps? How do you know?
- How did you feel when the book ended?

- What do you think is the overall message of the book?

Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with students to extend their learning from the book.

1. What is News?

Ask students: *What is "news?" What is "breaking news?"* Elicit/explain that **news** is a report about recent events seen on television, in a newspaper, on the radio or online. **"Breaking news"** is news that is happening right now. Ask students: *Do you ever listen to or read the news? Do your parents listen to or read the news? Do you talk about it with each other?* Remind students about what happens in the book when the children see their parents watch the news and read the news on their phones: the children feel their parents are upset and distracted. Explain to students that sometimes news is interesting and fun and sometimes news is scary or upsetting. Ask if they have ever heard about those different kinds of news stories.

As a homework assignment, have students find a piece of news they want to learn more about (with their parents' or family members' help). In class, show them online news sources that are geared towards children such as [Newsela](#), [Time for Kids](#) and [NBC Learn](#) and explain they can also find articles in the newspaper. [Note: You can find news sources on Common Sense Media's [Best News Sources for Kids](#)]. Check that the students' news stories are age-appropriate and have context so students are not frightened.

Instruct students to read their selected story at home and discuss it with their parents/family members; they should discuss what happened and how they feel about it. Tell students to bring in their news stories and be prepared to do a short presentation sharing what they learned and how they feel about it.

2. Feelings

Have students explore and reflect on the different feelings that are illustrated throughout the book. As you read the book aloud, ask questions about the different feelings characters' have and ask students how they know the characters have those feelings. You can also build empathy by eliciting how children might feel in similar situations. After reading the book, have students brainstorm a list of feelings that are expressed in the book which might include: worry, fear, sadness, loneliness, hope, disappointment, love and others. Go to those pages and look at the images, asking if the picture matches the feeling. You can also create a page of emojis (or print them from an online site), give each student a set and have them reflect on which emoji best matches the feeling expressed in the book as you read it. An additional activity to explore feelings is to have students select one feeling identified from the book and either write a poem about that feeling or draw a picture of the page and write "_____ was feeling _____ because _____." I can tell because _____.

3. Small Things Make a Difference

Remind students about how the children in the story wanted to "help in a big way" and ended up doing something small instead. On pages 28-34, the book says, "Small things don't solve everything. The bad news is still there, after all. But then again, so are we." Ask students: *What does this mean? Have you ever done something either big or small to help change things or improve your home,*

school, community or world? Have you seen anyone else do something to help? Brainstorm a list of examples and record them on the board/smart board. These could include things like:

- I helped my brother with his homework.
- My family planted flowers in the community garden.
- Our school had an bullying awareness assembly.
- My family attended an anti-violence protest.

Ask students if there is something they would like to do—either big or small—to improve their school, community or world. If time permits, have students engage in service learning or social action projects to match their interests.

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and other resources on current events/news, feelings and taking action.

Curriculum Resources

Diverse Books Matter, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter.

Responding to Hate and Violence, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/responding-to-hate-and-violence.

School Lunch Policy: Kids Can Make a Difference, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/school-lunch-policy-kids-can-make-a-difference.

Who Am I? Identity Poems, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems.

Websites

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism

A list of ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls. These strategies can be acted upon individually, organized together as a group and young people can join with a larger effort that is taking place locally or nationally.

Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/empowering-young-people-in-the-aftermath-of-hate.html

A guide for educators and families that provide the tools they need to help young people confront hate effectively in the aftermath of hate violence or terrorism in their community.

Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/helping-students-make-sense-of-news-stories-about-bias-and

Provides suggestions, strategies and resources to help make discussions about national news stories that involve incidents of bias and injustice rich and productive for students.

Talking to Young Children about Bias and Prejudice

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/talking-to-young-children-about-prejudice

The process of countering negative attitudes with positives begins at an early age. Louise Derman-Sparks, an educator and specialist on child development, points to three major issues that are important to keep in mind when talking to children about prejudice and discrimination.

The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity & Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid\[201\]=201&tid\[202\]=202&tid\[203\]=203&tid\[204\]=204&tid\[205\]=205&tid\[206\]=206&tid\[207\]=207&tid\[208\]=208&tid\[209\]=209&tid\[210\]=210&tid\[211\]=211&tid\[212\]=212&tid\[213\]=213&tid\[214\]=214&tid\[215\]=215](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid[201]=201&tid[202]=202&tid[203]=203&tid[204]=204&tid[205]=205&tid[206]=206&tid[207]=207&tid[208]=208&tid[209]=209&tid[210]=210&tid[211]=211&tid[212]=212&tid[213]=213&tid[214]=214&tid[215]=215)

Social Justice, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-10=1&tid\[231\]=231&tid\[232\]=232&tid\[233\]=233&tid\[234\]=234&tid\[235\]=235&tid\[236\]=236&tid\[237\]=237](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-10=1&tid[231]=231&tid[232]=232&tid[233]=233&tid[234]=234&tid[235]=235&tid[236]=236&tid[237]=237)