



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 Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade

Justin Roberts (Author), Christian Robinson (Illustrator)

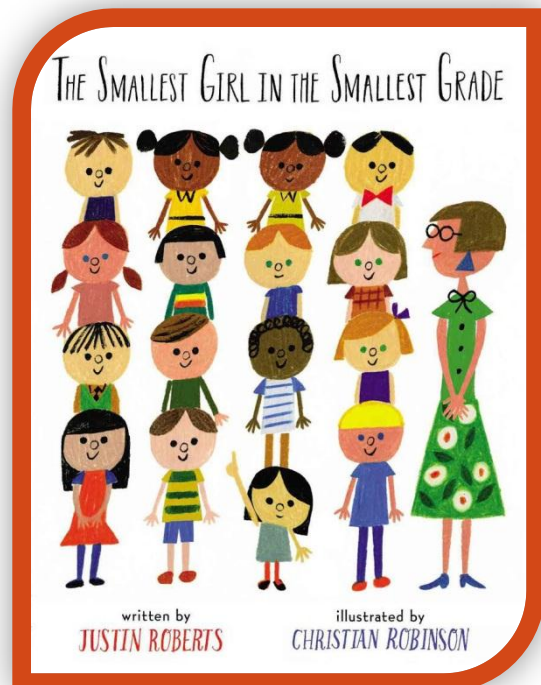
Hardly anyone noticed young Sally McCabe. She was the smallest girl in the smallest grade. But Sally notices everything—from the twenty-seven keys on the janitor's ring to the bullying happening on the playground. One day, Sally has had enough and decides to make herself heard. And when she takes a chance and stands up to the kids who are bullying others, she finds that one small girl can make a difference.

ISBN: 978-0399257438

Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons

Year Published: 2014

Age Range: 3–6



Book Themes

Bullying, Mean behavior, Standing up, Being an ally

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 their 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](#).

- abandoned
- attention
- cower

- crushing
- difference
- discarded
- dragged
- noticed
- observant
- secrets
- stares
- transform

Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- Can you find the smallest girl in the smallest grade?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout the reading to check comprehension and keep the students engaged:

- Why didn't other students notice Sally McCabe? (page 6)
- What did Sally notice happen to Kevin on the playground? (page 13)
- Why did Sally step out of the lunchroom line? (page 23)

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

- What is the story about?
- What words would you use to describe Sally McCabe?
- What kinds of things did Sally notice?
- Have you ever noticed the kind of behavior that Sally noticed? Can you describe what you have seen?
- How do you think Sally felt when she stepped out of the lunchroom line to make her announcement?
- Why do you think she decided to do it?
- Why did everyone put their fingers in the air like Sally did?
- How were things different after that?
- Why do you think Sally was so observant?
- What do you think might happen next in the story?
- What message do you think the author is trying to convey?
- What can we do as individual people or as a community when we see mean or bullying behavior?

Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with children in order to extend the learning from the book.

1. Draw a Scene

Have students select a favorite scene from the book and draw that scene, giving it a title or quote.

First brainstorm the different parts of the book or scenes by asking: *What was your favorite scene of the book? What part really grabbed your attention or surprised you?* (i.e. when Sally was walking in the hallway, the cats having a “meeting,” when Sally saw Kevin get pushed off a slide, when Sally stood up at lunch and said “This is enough!”). Make a list of scenes on the board and have students choose one. Instruct them to draw a picture of the scene and write a title, caption or quote that goes with it. Allow them to write the title, caption or quote themselves using invented spelling or help them to write it if necessary. As students share their drawings with the class, ask them to share what happened and how the person(s) feels. Create a gallery and invite parents/family members to view it.

2. Teasing, Name-Calling, Bullying and Being An Ally

Talk with students about mean behavior that includes teasing, name-calling and bullying. First, ask them to identify when in the book they saw mean and hurtful behavior. In context, provide definitions of some of the following terms:

Name-calling: Using words to hurt or be mean to someone or a group.

Teasing: Laugh at and put someone down in a way that is either friendly and playful or mean and unkind.

Bullying: When one person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.

Ask students: *What did Sally do about the mean behavior she noticed in school? Have you ever seen anyone do something like at school or you have done that yourself?* Explain that Sally was acting as an ally. Ask: *What is an ally?* Come to a definition of **ally** as someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied. Ask: *What are some other ways to be an ally?* Brainstorm a list of other ways, recording the student’s responses on the board. If these are not mentioned you can also include the following ways: be nice to the person who was hurt or bullied, tell the person to stop or ask them why they did that, tell a teacher, ask someone else what I should do, ask the person to play with me at recess. Challenge the students to identify an ally behavior that feels right for them and use it next time they see mean or bullying behavior.

3. “Noticing” and Observations

Sally McCabe, the main character in the book, is very observant and notices things that many people do not. It is because of her keen observation skills that she spots all the mean and hurtful behavior happening in school. Have students practice their observations skills in a variety of ways. One way to do this is to go on a silent walk around the block/neighborhood. Challenge students not to talk and instead really take in what’s going on, paying attention to nature, people, stores, etc. When you return to the classroom, have students draw a picture or write about something they observed that they didn’t know was there before. Another idea is to have students take turns and be the observers during class time, in the lunchroom or at recess. For the students who are observing, have them be quiet and watch how people treat each other, notice words, facial expression, body language, etc. and “report back” to the class with their observations.

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and other educational resources on bullying and social justice.

Curriculum Resources

"Identity-Based Bullying," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/identity-based-bullying.pdf

"We Can All Be 'Kid President'," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/we-can-all-be-kid-president.html

"School Lunch Policy: Kids Can Make a Difference," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/school-lunch-policy.html

Websites

Anti-Bias Education

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

Bullying/Cyberbullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/bullying-cyberbullying

Anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying training program offerings, curriculum and resources for youth, educators, youth providers and adult family members.

Be An Ally: Six Simple Ways

www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Be-an-Ally-Six-Ways-online-version.pdf

This resource provides simple things youth can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying.

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-bullying.html

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

The Question Corner

www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html

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.

Being an Ally, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/bullying-books.html?bullying_sub=being-an-ally

Bullying Awareness and Prevention, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/bullying.html

Child and Youth Activism, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice-books.html?subsocial=child-and-youth-activism