



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: 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 parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



The Breaking News

Sarah Lynne Reul (Author and Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1250153562

Publisher: Roaring Brook Press

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 4–8

Book Themes

Current events and news, Feelings, Taking action

About the Book

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.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What is the book about?

- Why are the parents in the story watching television and checking their phones all the time?
- Can you relate to that? How so?
- Why are the children scared? Have you ever felt that way?
- Why do you think so many of the characters in the story are feeling sad?
- What does the teacher mean when she says to “look for the helpers?” Has your teacher ever said something like that?
- Can you remember a time when something scary or upsetting happened? Did you see any “helpers?”
- 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?”
- Why do the children say “I feel small?” Have you ever felt like that?
- How did you feel when the book ended?
- What do you think is the message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Talking about News with Young Children

In discussing this book with your child, explain that sometimes adults are distracted and upset by what they see on the news (current events) and children notice. Ask if they have ever felt like that and discuss with them what happened and how they felt about it. The news is all around us and despite our best efforts, sometimes difficult news reaches our youngest children directly or as they watch adults watch the news, talk and express their own feelings about it. In helping children deal with upsetting things in the news, be mindful that they are often aware of what's happening even if they don't talk about it. You can help in the following ways:

- Provide age-appropriate information that answers their questions.
- Give them opportunities to express how they feel.
- Reassure them that adults in their lives are working to make the world a better place and that they are safe.
- Help them channel their feelings into positive actions.

In discussions about the news, you can start by asking open ended questions such as: *What do you know about what happened? How do you feel about it? What questions do you have?* Allow your children to express their feelings and answer their questions with clear honest answers. If you don't know the answer, find out together. You can also find ways to engage with your child age-appropriate action to make a difference. Use ADL's [*Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate*](#) (in English and Spanish) for more information. Remember too, that young children will not be able to fully understand some truly upsetting current news events. Therefore, be mindful about what news stories you examine together so as not to unnecessarily expose your child to a topic they can't understand or handle emotionally.

2. Feelings

In the book, there are various feelings expressed through words, facial expressions, body language and illustrations. These feelings include fear, sadness, confusion, hope, loneliness and more. With your child, examine the words and pictures that convey those emotions to help your child understand how feelings are expressed, expand their feelings vocabulary and build empathy. If the conversation opens up, talk about your own family and how people express feelings. As you read the book, ask your child how different characters feel and how they know the character feels that way. To build empathy and understanding, ask your children how they might feel in a similar situation or if they have had similar feelings. Because the book delves into the news and potentially difficult current events, be sure to ask them how they feel about what they are reading and give them ample time to express their own feelings. Your child may express a variety of feelings or very little emotion, which should all be accepted and affirmed. Sometimes feelings can develop later after children have had time to process them.

3. Actions We Can Take

Remind your children about the last part of the book where the children want to do something. At first they want to do something big but then they realize they can also do something small and that makes a difference too. Talk about things you have done as individuals or as a family to make a difference in the world (e.g., helping out at home, working on a community garden, giving your seat up for someone on a train/bus who needs it, volunteering at a soup kitchen, going to a protest march) and make sure to provide a range of examples—some small and some large. Explain that part of being a member of a family, school or community means taking action and helping when you see problems, unfairness, bias or injustice. Talk with your children about other things that concern them and identify a child appropriate action they can take or something you can do as a family.

Other Books You May Like

Change the World Before Bedtime by Mark Kimball Moulton, Josh Chalmers and Karen Good,

www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/change-the-world-before-bedtime

Lend a Hand: Poems about Giving by John Frank, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/lend-a-hand-poems-about-giving

One by Kathryn Otoshi, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/one

The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade by Justin Roberts, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-smallest-girl-in-the-smallest-grade

ADL Additional Resources

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

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.

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying

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

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.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

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.

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources.

Children's Books

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

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://10=1&tid[231]=231&tid[232]=232&tid[233]=233&tid[234]=234&tid[235]=235&tid[236]=236&tid[237]=237)