

# BULLYING HURTS

TEACHING KINDNESS THROUGH  
READ ALOUDS AND  
GUIDED CONVERSATIONS

**Lester L. Laminack** and **Reba M. Wadsworth**

HEINEMANN  
Portsmouth, NH

**Heinemann**

361 Hanover Street  
Portsmouth, NH 03801–3912  
www.heinemann.com

*Offices and agents throughout the world*

© 2012 by Lester L. Laminack and Reba M. Wadsworth

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

“Dedicated to Teachers” is a trademark of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

The authors and publisher wish to thank those who have generously given permission to reprint borrowed material:

Excerpts from the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* © Hazelden Foundation, 2012. Used with permission from [violencepreventionworks.org](http://violencepreventionworks.org).

Excerpts from the *Bully Free Program* by Allan L. Beane, Ph.D. Copyright © 2012 Bully Free Systems, LLC, [www.bullyfree.com](http://www.bullyfree.com). Used by permission of the author.

Excerpts from the *Common Core State Standards* © Copyright 2010. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. All rights reserved.

“Sample Antibullying Pledge” adapted from *The Everything Parent’s Guide to Dealing with Bullies* by Deborah Carpenter with Christopher J. Ferguson. Copyright © 2009 by F&W Media, Inc. Published by Adams Media, an F&W Media, Inc. company. Used by permission of the publisher.

“Hello Neighbor” song movements from *Responsive Classroom Level I Resource Book*. Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children. Copyright © 2007. Used by permission of the publisher.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Laminack, Lester L.

Bullying hurts : teaching kindness through read alouds and guided conversations / Lester L. Laminack and Reba M. Wadsworth.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13: 978-0-325-04356-2

ISBN-10: 0-325-04356-6

1. Bullying in schools—United States—Prevention. 2. Bullying in schools—United States—Psychological aspects. I. Wadsworth, Reba M. II. Title.

LB3013.32.L36 2012

371.5'8—dc23

2012007927

*Editor:* Holly Kim Price

*Production:* Victoria Merecki

*Cover and interior designs:* Monica Crigler

*Typesetting:* Eric Rosenbloom, Kirby Mountain Composition

*Manufacturing:* Steve Bernier

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

16 15 14 13 12 ML 1 2 3 4 5

# Dedication



**F**or the victims of bullying behaviors, may you know your worth as a member of the human family, embrace your humanity, and see the good present in the world around you. May kindness heal your hurt.

For the bystanders who witness, may you find your voice, feel your worth, recognize the inherent worth of others, and find the strength to stand up for those in need of your support. May kindness encourage and embolden you.

For those who resist the bullying behaviors of others or defend the victims of that behavior, may you know the value of your strength and caring. May kindness continue to give you clarity to recognize the opportunity to support those in need.

For those who have, for whatever reason, come to believe that bullying behavior increases your dignity and worth, may you find value in your own humanity and come to recognize that all that makes you human is also present in every other person. May you find your identity in your strengths and talents, your power in the ability to control yourself and not in the control of others, and respect for yourself that will enable you to respect the humanity common among all people. May kindness be the light that shines in your darkest moments.



# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments .....	vii
Introduction .....	ix
<b>Chapter 1</b>	
Working Toward Kindness, Civility, and Human Compassion as an Integral Part of the Curriculum .....	1
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
Getting Started: We Have So Much in Common .....	12
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
Moving In: There Are Ways in Which We Are Different—Not Less Than Others, Not Better Than Others, Just Different .....	32
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
Inside the Circle: Thinking, Feeling, Acting .....	50
<b>Chapter 5</b>	
At the Core: When Others Are Not Thoughtful, Caring, and Kind .....	67
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
Getting Focused for Action: An Opportunity to Explore the Actions of Others, Reflect on Our Own Feelings, and Redirect Our Behaviors Toward Fellow Human Beings .....	87
<b>Chapter 7</b>	
Final Thoughts .....	108
Appendix A: Additional Texts to Support Working Through the Layers ..	113
Appendix B: Sample Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Letter .....	134
Appendix C: Sample Antibullying Pledge .....	136
Appendix D: Activities for Community Building .....	137
Appendix E: Resources for Educators .....	145
Bibliography .....	147



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The topic is a serious one. There are young people taking their own lives. Others are living with wounds and scars. Some may carry the burden for a lifetime. Bullying is a serious topic, and we do not take the responsibility of this project lightly. *Bullying Hurts* has been a work of passion and commitment evolving from years of living, teaching, thinking, and work.

We are grateful to the many people who have contributed to the conversations that shaped our thinking, to those who have suggested books, articles, and Web sites as resources. We are grateful to those who shared titles of picture books and novels to explore and to those who shared personal accounts, classroom stories, and words of encouragement as to the need for a project such as this one.

We are grateful to those teachers who opened their hearts and minds to new ways of thinking and opened their doors and schedules to allow us an opportunity to step inside their teaching and try our ideas on for fit. These teachers, from the Decatur school system in Decatur, Alabama, include Kristi Adams, Melissa Dickman, Janet Foster, Mary Kay Hodges, Christy Wadsworth, and Maria Garrison. And in Asheville, North Carolina, at the Francine Delaney New School for Children, our gratitude is owed to Roslyn Clapp, Naomi Marotta, Melissa Murphy, and Jessica Roberts.

We are grateful to Kate Montgomery whose immediate support for this idea never wavered. Your kind heart and generous spirit nurtured both the writing and the writers.

We are grateful to Holly Kim Price whose keen eye and insights helped us tighten the focus and bring greater clarity to each page. You made this process a joy.

And finally we are grateful to Lesa Scott who continues to believe in the power of teachers and their right to have access to the best. You create conditions that encourage us to create, to stretch, and to risk in that endeavor.



# INTRODUCTION

There has been tremendous attention given to bullying recently. National news coverage, documentaries and special reports, magazine and newspaper articles, and campaigns featuring high-profile individuals have been dedicated to confronting this plague. All this heightened awareness has brought much needed attention to an age-old problem. And this spotlight has helped us understand the scale of the issue.

Now let's zoom in and get a close-up view. Let's try to understand through an adult lens what life is like inside the mind and body of the bullied victim. Try to imagine the difficulty of shutting off your fear in order to find sleep. Try to imagine the anxiety of waking only to realize today is a school day and you can't escape. Try to imagine spending your day on guard, knowing it will happen, just not knowing when or where. We want to help you imagine what it may be like to be one of the 160,000 children in the United States who skip school daily out of fear of being bullied. Imagine that you experience the same sort of taunting, teasing, verbal, emotional, and physical bullying in your adult life.

Take a moment and just imagine . . .

Each morning as you come into work you find your personal things are in disarray. Each day there is something more. The first morning someone has drawn horns with permanent marker on the photo of you and a loved one. The next morning all your pens are gone and pencils are broken. If you leave for a break, you return to find files deleted from your computer screen. Each day there is something new, you never know what or when it will happen, but you are always tense just knowing it is going to happen again. Each day you go to work anxious, no one, not even your friends, step up to help. When you voice concern everyone says it's just a prank, someone is just having fun. Your supervisor tells you to grow up and get your work done.

Imagine . . .

At work you have a tight circle of friends who always gather in the break room for lunch. Lately a couple of them are pulling away from the others. They eat alone and

rarely join in the group conversation anymore. Then one day as you enter the break room you notice everyone is sitting together again. You smile and step toward the table to join them. Everyone stops talking and looks in the direction of those two who have rejoined the group. They give the group a look and everyone sits in silence when you join. No one looks at you. No one speaks to you. The next day as you enter, the room falls silent and you notice a chair missing from the table. There is no space for you to join. Everyone looks at his or her food and no one will make eye contact with you. The two begin to whisper with others and all of them chuckle while looking in your direction. This isolation escalates and begins to ooze out into the workspace until you have no one who will even look at you.

Imagine . . .

You are standing in line at a fast-food restaurant. You are rushed and eager to get back to work on time. You are reading the menu, trying to decide what you will order, when out of nowhere you feel a stinging pain, your head jerks violently to the left, sunglasses fly off your face, and pain throbs in the back of your head. The voice behind you booms, "Get out of the way, moron, it's the same damn menu they've had for twenty years. You ought to know what you want before you get in line. Move! I don't have all day." You bend down to retrieve your glasses, tears stream down your face. As you look up a few people are staring at you but say nothing, most people are looking away and no one is saying anything to the guy who whacked you and stepped ahead in line. No one comes to your aid. No one.

Imagine these are not isolated occurrences; rather they become a routine that you simply must adjust to. Imagine how your evenings would be spent worrying over getting through the next day. Imagine feeling so defenseless, so alone, so anxious and fearful. Imagine you actually come to believe that no one sees you as worthy of his or her assistance, or attention, or care. To others you are less than human. Just imagine . . .

How long could you endure?

As adults we know scenarios such as these are very unlikely to happen to us. However, there are students who can report similar scenarios happening every day in school hallways, stairways, cafeterias, playgrounds, gymnasiums, on buses and in classrooms everywhere. Wherever there are groups of children, bullying is likely to take place sooner or later.

Bullying, like bad weather, respects no boundaries. Bullying moves in on victims without regard for geography, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, religion, politics, age, gender, or sexual orientation. It is true that some groups are more likely to become a target than others. It is true that boys are more likely to participate in physical bullying and girls are more likely to engage in social and emotional bullying. However,

one Google search or one visit to YouTube will prove there are exceptions to every pattern you can identify among the behaviors of students who bully.

Bullying isn't a new phenomenon. In recent years, however, the world has witnessed an increase in the frequency and intensity of bullying in our schools. The increased incidence of bullying in all its forms (physical aggression, verbal abuse, emotional bullying, and cyberbullying) has resulted in psychological and physical harm to the victims and, in too many instances, the suicides of children and youth. Bullying, now in the spotlight, is receiving long overdue media attention. Perhaps this will help raise the public awareness necessary to bring this behavior to an end.

School leadership, classroom teachers, staff developers, and parents are searching for support. Adults in the lives of young people are searching for help, for what to do, and for how to intervene. There is general agreement in the professional community that a proactive stance is necessary. Waiting until an act of bullying has occurred is shortsighted, if not dangerous.

We are writing this book, *Bullying Hurts: Teaching Kindness Through Read Alouds and Guided Conversations*, in hopes that it will provide you with new insights and language that can help you lead your students toward kindness, civility, and human compassion as a way of being.

Data on bullying in the United States has been included to highlight the need to address the issue full on from the first day of kindergarten through the day of graduation from twelfth grade. There is information to assist you in identifying the various forms of bullying behaviors and to understand how and why the behaviors may arise. In addition, there is information to help identify children who may be either a bully or a victim of bullying.

We have deliberately connected this work to the anchor standards for reading in the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards document to demonstrate how teachers can legitimately engage students in the work as a part of the curriculum. We offer a format for focused read aloud experiences using thoughtfully selected picture books through a series of five layers of developing insight and empathy. Each of the five layers is presented in sequence and includes a set of essential understandings to be developed through the experiences and conversations within the layer. We present a guide for each of the five featured books within each layer and recommend a framework for moving through each book. There are also suggestions for building community and extending the thinking between focused read aloud experiences. Following the five layers of focused read aloud experiences and guided conversations, we include an extensive list of other picture books that may be used. We clustered them under the five layers for ease of use and as alternatives to the titles featured in each of the five layers. We also include appendices with a sample letter you



may wish to send to parents/caregivers as you begin the project, a sample antibullying contract, a list of community-building activities, a list of additional resources, and a bibliography.

*Bullying Hurts: Teaching Kindness Through Read Alouds and Guided Conversations* is written to assist you in leading your children to the threshold of their own understanding about the need for kindness and compassion, about the responsibility to self and others as members of the human family, and about developing an understanding of what bullying is and why it happens. We believe these insights can move us forward in bringing kindness, civility, and human compassion into the culture of school.

We believe focused read aloud experiences with carefully selected children's literature followed by guided conversations is one way you can create a climate in your classroom, school, or district where bullying is not an accepted or rewarded behavior. A climate where an individual's humanity and human dignity trump any difference(s) and kindness is the order of the day. A climate where students, all students, feel both physically and emotionally safe. A climate where students thrive physically, emotionally, and academically.

We hear a lot about bullying on the news and in conversations with colleagues and parents. So let's be clear about what we mean by the word *bullying*. The American Psychological Association (2012) defines *bullying* as "a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions. . . . The bullied individual typically has trouble defending him or herself and does nothing to 'cause' the bullying." Beane (2009) adds that in any bullying situation, there is an imbalance of power.

## What's at the core of this behavior?

---

Barbara Coloroso (2011) asserts that bullying is not about anger. Rather, it arises from feeling superior and seeing no value in selected others. "It is about contempt—a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. Bullying is arrogance in action. Once kids believe that someone is 'less than them' they can harm that child without feeling any empathy, compassion or shame" (52).

Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano (2009) report that "bullies can be socially skilled, have normal to heightened theory of mind, are in some cases viewed as popular in friendship groups, and are sought after as students begin dating relationships" (35).

Information about bullying suggests that there are three interrelated reasons why students bully (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program 2011):

1. Students who bully have strong needs for power and (negative) dominance.
2. Students who bully find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other students.
3. Students who bully are often rewarded in some way for their behavior with material or psychological rewards.

In kid-friendly terms, we might say,

The reason why one kid would want to bully another kid is this: when you make someone feel bad, you gain power over him or her. Power makes people feel like they're better than another person, and then that makes them feel really good about themselves. Power also makes you stand out from the crowd. It's a way to get attention from other kids, and even from adults. (PBS Kids 2009)

This information further suggests that the behavior of bystanders can actually build up the status of a bully. When a bully has an audience that doesn't intervene, the bully gains power both in the group and in his or her own self-image.

## How are acts of bullying manifested?

---

It's My Life, a website for kids funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and produced by Castle Works Productions, offers a very kid-friendly explanation of three forms of bullying: physical, verbal, and relationship. Additional information to support educators and parents can be found from Bully Free Program at [www.bullyfree.com/free-resources/facts-about-bullying](http://www.bullyfree.com/free-resources/facts-about-bullying). Bullying behaviors have been described as either direct or indirect. A few examples of these behaviors are:

### Direct Bullying Behaviors (Physical/Verbal)

#### **Physical bullying means:**

- ☉ hitting, kicking, slapping, elbowing, shouldering (slamming someone with your shoulder), or pushing someone . . . or even just threatening to do it
- ☉ shoving in a hurtful or embarrassing way
- ☉ cramming someone into his or her locker
- ☉ making someone do things he or she doesn't want to do
- ☉ restraining

- ⊗ pinching
- ⊗ flushing someone's head in the toilet
- ⊗ attacking with spit wads or food
- ⊗ taking, hiding, stealing, damaging or defacing belongings or other property.

**Verbal bullying means:**

- ⊗ name-calling
- ⊗ insulting remarks and put-downs
- ⊗ racist or bigoted remarks or other harassment with words
- ⊗ whispering behind someone's back, starting or spreading rumors with the intention to harm or embarrass
- ⊗ repeated teasing
- ⊗ threats and intimidation.

**Indirect Bullying Behaviors (Social/Relational)**

**Relationship bullying means:**

- ⊗ refusing to talk to someone
- ⊗ gossiping, spreading nasty and malicious rumors and lies about someone
- ⊗ excluding someone from a group or making someone feel left out or rejected (social rejection or isolation)
- ⊗ destroying and manipulating relationships (turning your best friend against you)
- ⊗ destroying status within a peer group
- ⊗ destroying reputations
- ⊗ humiliating and embarrassing
- ⊗ intimidating
- ⊗ spreading hurtful graffiti
- ⊗ stealing boyfriends or girlfriends to hurt someone
- ⊗ using negative body language (facial expressions, turning your back to someone) to hurt feelings or undermine confidence
- ⊗ using threatening gestures, taunting, pestering, insulting remarks and gestures
- ⊗ glaring and giving dirty looks, telling nasty jokes, passing notes around, anonymous notes
- ⊗ writing or signing hate petitions (promising to hate someone).

## Cyberbullying Behaviors

**Cyberbullying can be direct bullying and/or indirect bullying behavior that includes negative messages sent or posted via**

- ⊗ text messages on cell phones and other electronic devices
- ⊗ email
- ⊗ chat rooms
- ⊗ digital photos
- ⊗ voice mail messages
- ⊗ Web pages
- ⊗ social media sites.

Bullying occurs when any of these behaviors is done to another person more than once and usually repeated several times over a period of time.

As teachers we need to help students gain insight into the behaviors and attitudes of bullies. Understanding why an action takes place may be an important step toward preventing, or at least avoiding, the behavior.

## **So who bullies? And who gets bullied? And what about those who witness, but do nothing?**

---

Coloroso (2011) identifies three consistent players in episodes of bullying and one additional potential player. These players include the bully, the bullied, the bystander, and the potential for a fourth who becomes “the antithesis of the bully. . . . This character can appear in three different and vital roles—those of resister, defender and witness. He or she actively resists the tactics of the bullies, stands up to them and speaks out against their tyranny. The fourth character might also defend and speak up for those who are targeted” (52).

The bystander plays a much more significant role than anyone realizes. By being a witness and doing nothing, a bystander becomes a complicit character whose lack of action diminishes the worth of the victim, empowers and emboldens the bully, and, simply put, makes matters worse. This suggests the need to develop empathy among bystanders, to empower them with strategies of positive action and support for victims.

Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano (2009) report there is “convincing evidence that students do not remain ‘fixed’ in the dichotomous roles of ‘bully’ and ‘victim.’ In

fact, these labels have proven to be problematic in the search for effective bullying prevention and intervention. Too often, adults and students want to punish the bullies or blame the victims. The mind-set of ‘once a bully, always a bully’ or ‘once a victim, always a victim’ only serves to keep us stuck in thinking that these are fixed traits in individuals” (1). Although these roles may ebb and flow or even shift over time, Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano cite evidence that students who are aggressive in elementary school tend to be among the aggressors in middle and high school.

Research suggests that bullies are more likely than peers to experience conduct problems, be delinquent, and become involved in drug or alcohol use. Students who bully tend to exhibit the need to dominate others, to demand they get their own way; they are more likely to exhibit impulsive behaviors and are more easily angered. In addition, students who bully are more often defiant and aggressive toward adults and tend to show little or no empathy for the victims of bullying behaviors.

Olweus (2011) notes that students who bully others are more likely to:

- ⊗ get into frequent fights
- ⊗ steal and vandalize property
- ⊗ drink alcohol and smoke
- ⊗ report poor grades
- ⊗ perceive a negative climate at school
- ⊗ carry a weapon.

Further, Olweus notes that “[n]ot all students who bully others have obvious behavior problems or are engaged in rule-breaking activities, however. Some of them are highly skilled socially and good at ingratiating themselves with their teachers and other adults. This is true of some boys who bully but is perhaps even more common among bullying girls. For this reason it is often difficult for adults to discover or even imagine that these students engage in bullying behavior.”

## **How can we tell if a student is being bullied? What are the signs to look for?**

---

If you suspect someone you know is being bullied here are a few warning signs to watch for ([www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)).

A child is likely the victim of bullying if he or she:

- ⊗ comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- ⊗ reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry

- ⊗ has unexplained injuries
- ⊗ complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- ⊗ has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- ⊗ has changes in eating habits
- ⊗ hurts themselves
- ⊗ is very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- ⊗ runs away from home
- ⊗ loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- ⊗ is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- ⊗ loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school
- ⊗ appears sad, moody, angry, anxious, or depressed when they come home
- ⊗ talks about suicide
- ⊗ feels helpless
- ⊗ often feels like they are not good enough
- ⊗ blames themselves for their problems
- ⊗ suddenly has fewer friends
- ⊗ avoids certain places
- ⊗ acts differently than usual.

## **Why don't victims speak up? Why don't they seek our help?**

---

School culture has taught children that telling is tattling and has many children convinced that telling anyone would only make matters worse. Beane (2009) offers these as possible reasons victims and bystanders remain silent:

- ⊗ They believe telling someone is wrong.
- ⊗ They believe nothing will be done or perhaps nothing can be done to help.
- ⊗ They fear that adult intervention will make the situation worse.
- ⊗ They are embarrassed.
- ⊗ They feel shame in not being able to stand up for themselves.
- ⊗ They do not want to worry their parents.
- ⊗ They fear losing friends.

Coloroso (2009) adds that students in a bystander role may not step up because:

- ⊗ The bully is their friend.
- ⊗ It's not their problem.
- ⊗ The victim is not their friend.
- ⊗ The victim is a loser.
- ⊗ The victim deserves to be bullied, or asked for it, or had it coming.
- ⊗ Bullying will toughen the victim up.
- ⊗ It's better to be part of the in-group than to defend the "outcasts."
- ⊗ It's too big a pain in the brain.
- ⊗ Kids have a deeply embedded code of silence. No one wants to be called a "snitch."

We must ensure that schools are places where children feel both physically and emotionally safe. They must feel free to report. Toward that end, we need to teach children the difference between tattling and reporting. "Tattling is telling an adult about another kid's actions with the one and only aim of getting that child into trouble. Reporting is telling an adult about another child's action in order to get help with difficult circumstances" (Dosani 2008, 31).

## **So what do we do? How can we help? Where do we begin to end bullying?**

---

As Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano (2009) explain, "We live in a society where punishment-based strategies are often the first line of defense against students' behavioral problems. A student bullies someone else, and we want to see that 'bully' punished for his or her behaviors." However, recent research suggests that punishment-based strategies such as zero tolerance, expulsion, or suspension may not be the most effective reaction. Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano contend that zero tolerance strategies "should be reserved only for the most severe aggressive and disruptive behaviors. Against this backdrop, we argue that students involved in bullying need to be taught relationship enhancement skills instead of being ostracized and punished for their lack of skills" (95).

So we begin day one with a new group of students coming together in a new year. We work with them, among them, to build community and establish relationship skills, build empathy, redirect their leadership skills in positive channels.

Perhaps it is useful to think of the classroom/school community as a garden. And as in any garden there are occasional weeds that find a way in. To do nothing could result in weeds growing out of control, taking over the garden, and destroying the flowers you have so carefully nurtured. To poison the weed(s) may endanger other healthy plants. Instead, let's work to keep the garden lush and healthy, leaving the weeds no chance for the nourishment they need to thrive. To be clear with this analogy it is the bullying *behavior* and not the student who bullies that we view as the weed. So we are not suggesting the removal of the student; rather, that we focus our attention on nurturing the positive aspects of all students, to empower each of them to recognize and support one another in ways that build community for all to thrive.





# CHAPTER 2

## Getting Started We Have So Much in Common

*As different as we are from one another, as unique as each one of us is, we are much more the same than we are different. That may be the most essential message of all, as we help our children grow toward being caring, compassionate, and charitable adults.*

*– Fred Rogers*

### Working Through Layer 1

---

It is our belief that the most basic understanding necessary for engaging in the ethical treatment of others is to recognize what is common among all human beings. Until children come to understand that other people living in a nearby city, across the country in another state, or in a country across the globe have all aspects of humanity in common, it will be difficult to move forward.

The purpose of Layer 1 is to lead children toward the development of those basic concepts and to help them develop the language to articulate their understandings and insights. Some children have more difficulty naming or articulating the commonalities shared by all humans than noticing the differences. We have chosen picture books that make our shared humanity the focus. It is necessary to be well grounded in

these essential understandings if we hope to have young people recognize the humanity in all others.

Open this layer with a general conversation about people. Choose a larger, well-known city in your region and ask your students to think about this: “Are people in (name your city or town) the same as people in (name the larger city)? Are we different from them? Are there ways we are like them or different from them? Just think. If you say we are alike, think about examples of how we are alike. If you say we are different, think about examples of how we are different.”

The idea here is to get them thinking. Some children will go immediately to the idea that we are alike in some ways and different in others. Other children will see some similarities and focus on the ways people in two locations in the same region are alike. But many children will begin with the differences, or perceived differences.

Allow a short amount of time for them to think, share their thoughts with a partner, and then report to the group. Make no comments that could be perceived as validation or negation of their ideas, simply repeat the thinking, “So far you are thinking . . .”

Push their thinking a bit further. Choose a foreign country with high visibility (China, for example) and pose the same question. “Are there ways that people in our town are like people in a faraway place such as China? Are there ways we are different? Are there ways we are like them and different from them? Think for a few moments. If you say we are alike, think about examples of how we are alike. If you say we are different, think about examples of how we are different.”

Once again, allow a short amount of time for them to think, share their thoughts with a partner, and then report to the group. Make no comments that could be perceived as validation or negation of their ideas.

In each situation, summarize their ideas and examples. Now move on to the first book in Layer 1 and begin with the Visual Tour/Reading the Art.

## Layer 1 in Action: Day 1

---

While developing the layers and selecting books, we visited a few schools in Decatur, Alabama, to work with students in kindergarten through fifth grades. During this process Lester introduced the read aloud of *Whoever You Are* with each group in a very similar way:

## Opening Conversation

*Lester:* Before we read this book, I'd like us to think about Birmingham and the people who live there. Birmingham is not too far away, but we don't go there very often. And Birmingham is a much bigger place than your town, right?

[Everyone nods in agreement.]

*Lester:* Are people in Birmingham like us or different from us? Are there ways we are the same? Think about that.

[I pause about thirty seconds for thinking.]

*Lester:* Take a few seconds to tell your partner what you are thinking. If you think of ways we are different, tell your partner how we are different. If you think of ways we are the same or alike, tell your partner how we are alike.

[I pause about forty-five seconds for sharing.]

*Lester:* I can tell you had a lot of thoughts about this idea. Let's hear from a few of you. Would you tell us something your partner told you, please?

[I pause about forty-five seconds for sharing.]

*Lester:* Now I'm going to stretch your brain a bit. I want you to think about people in a place that is very far away from here, someplace like China. Think about people in China. And think about people here. Are we different from them? Are there ways we are the same as people in China? Let's sit with those thoughts for a moment. That's a lot to think about.

[I pause about thirty seconds for thinking.]

*Lester:* Now tell your partner what you are thinking. And listen to your partner's thoughts as well.

[I pause about forty-five seconds for sharing.]

*Lester:* We have a lot of thinking going on. Let's hear from a few of you. Would you tell us something your partner told you, please?

*Kindergarten:*

My eyes are a different color from them.

Their eyes look like this (pulls at the corner of her eyes).

They put, um, chopsticks in their hair in China.

*Lester:* So you think people in China are different from us? Tell me any ways we are the same as people in China.

*Kindergarten:*

We got the same shoes.

We all like football stuff.

All of us wear clothes but they might not be the same color.

We all got feelings.

*Lester:* So we can be like other people in some ways and different from them in other ways. Is that correct?

[Most children nod in the affirmative.]

### Visual Tour/Reading the Art

*Lester:* Let's take a look at this book, *Whoever You Are*. It is written by Mem Fox and the illustrator is Leslie Staub. Take a look at the cover. This man is holding four children. They are flying around something. What is that circle they are flying around?

*Kindergarten:* The world. The earth.

*Lester:* It is the earth and what are all these little dots on the earth? Look closely, what those are?

*Kindergarten:* Lots of kids standing on the earth. They are watching him fly.

*Lester:* I'm wondering why that man would fly those children all around the world. What would he want them to notice?

*Kindergarten:* He wants them to see all the boys and girls all over the world.

*Lester:* Hmm. Perhaps that is what he has in mind. Let's take a look at the pages inside. As we turn the page, we can see everyone up close; perhaps the man is going to take those children on a journey. And

did you notice all those houses? On the next page, the man and the four children are flying across the sky. And here in the center is another little girl. Notice all the houses again, even on her dress.

*Kindergarten:* All the houses are the same. They are the same on her dress, too.

*Lester:* And here the girl with houses on her dress is standing in the middle of the world; other children are all around her smiling. Their skin is different colors, and their hair is different colors, and they are in different places on the world, but they share the same world. And the sun shines on all of them and the moon is there for each of them all over the world. Think about that for a moment. Let's pause to look at this page and think a little longer.

*Kindergarten:* They all live in the world, but they got different color skin like us. Yeah, we don't have the same color. Some of us are black and some is white and some of us is mixed.

*Lester:* On this page the man and the four children are standing on top of this building. It seems they are going around the world searching. We can see different kinds of houses and we can see four children up close. Notice how they are the same—they each have a nose and eyes and a smile and hair and skin and they all live together on one earth.

*Kindergarten:* We have a nose and two eyes. Everybody has a nose. But some people's eyes are a different color. My eyes are brown, everybody in my family's eyes are brown but my brother. He has green eyes. His eyes are beautiful.

*Lester:* I'm thinking this book is helping us see all the ways we are alike, even if we are different in some ways. On this page there is a group of children.

*Kindergarten:* They're at school. Yeah, but it's not like our school. They all wear the same kind of clothes. And they are reading those boards. We don't read boards. We got books in our room.

*Lester:* Yes, these children are reading something different from our books and their school looks different from ours. But, they are in school just like us. Hmm, I think I am getting an idea from this book. Take a look. These children are riding a donkey. What do we ride to get where we are going?

*Kindergarten:* Cars! We ride on the school bus. I ride on my bike.

*Lester:* Let's think about that. These children are riding a donkey and they are wearing clothes that are very different from ours. But they are doing their work and taking care of the animals just like us. The flying man and the four kids are seeing children all over the world. What do you suppose he wants them to understand?

*Kindergarten:* We all wear clothes. Children go to school everywhere in the world.

*Lester:* We are getting some big ideas from thinking about these illustrations. On this page a family has a cart of vegetables. In the hills we can see rows of crops growing. They have vegetables and fruits in very large baskets. Perhaps this is where they buy food.

*Kindergarten:* We buy food at the grocery store. And Wal-Mart. We go to Kroger.

*Lester:* Now the flying man is looking in the window at a child and a mom in a rocking chair. I wonder what he wants us to think about.

*Kindergarten:* Moms rock their babies all over the world. And grandmas, too. Moms love babies.

*Lester:* Take a look at these pages. We see three people with big smiles here and on this page three boys laughing at the monkey on one boy's head.

*Kindergarten:* 'Cause people smile and laugh all over the world. I would laugh if you had a monkey on your head.

*Lester:* We are getting big ideas from reading the art. I'm wondering what big message we are going to get when we read the words. Let's take a look at this next page. Two people are waving good-bye, they are crying. That bus is filled with people and luggage. Why do you suppose they are crying?

*Kindergarten:* Because they are leaving their family. I would cry if I had to leave my family. He is sad. They don't want to go. He wants to go with them.

*Lester:* Do you suppose that people all over the world feel sad when someone in their family is leaving for a while?

*Kindergarten:* Yes, everybody all over the world. It's sad when you leave.

*Lester:* Look, the flying man is holding a birthday cake. There are lots of birthday cakes all around him. I suppose people all over the world have birthdays, eh? This girl is grown up now and she is a doctor. And these people look like the four kids all grown up.

*Kindergarten:* Everybody grows up all over the world. And that one has a baby. Yeah, she's writing a note. You can grow up and be anything you want. Like that girl is a doctor. She was a little girl and she "grewed" up to be a doctor.

*Lester:* Let's turn the page. There are four people with cuts and bandages and drops of blood. Their skin is different colors, but look at the blood. What do you notice about the blood?

*Kindergarten:* If you get a cut, you get blood. Blood is red. It don't matter what color your skin is, everybody's blood is the same. Everybody's blood is red on the inside.

*Lester:* And the little boy in the center is holding his knee and crying.

*Kindergarten:* It hurts if you get cut. And we cry no matter how big we are.

*Lester:* This book is helping us think about important ideas. Let's look at the last pages and think about the message there. Here's a group of people and it looks like the children are back with their families. Everyone is waving and smiling and hearts are falling like raindrops. And over here the flying man is dropping hearts on everyone. Then on this last page the flying man has a string of hearts circling the earth.

*Kindergarten:* He is dropping love on everybody. 'Cause everybody needs love all over the world. You need love when you are sad and if you get cut.

*Lester:* We have read the art on every page and now we have some ideas about the big message in this book. We have noticed that there are children all over the world who have friends and families, that people all over the world laugh and cry and play. We noticed that people all over the world have houses and food and work. People all over the world are alike in many ways, no matter where they live.

## Read Aloud

*Lester:* Let's go back to the beginning and read the words this time. I'm going to read all the way through without stopping. Think about what you noticed when we read the art and listen for new ideas. Remember, we can always go back to any page if you have something to say after we finish the book. Listen now as I read.

[I read the book in a slow, deliberate pace with attention to meaningful phrasing. I occasionally pause to draw attention to the ways we are all alike as members of one human family.]

## After the Read Aloud

*Lester:* Remember, readers and writers are people who think, so let's take a moment to think about this book. After we read the art, we were thinking about all the ways people are alike all over the world. Mem Fox also gives us a message with her words. Let's just pause and think about that for a moment. What is the message of this book?

[I allow a period of silence.]

*Lester:* Would you share your thinking with your partner now, please?

[I allow about forty seconds.]

*Lester:* Now let's hear what your partners shared with you.

*Kindergarten:*

We all fall and get hurt.

We all bleed when we get cut.

We all have to go to doctors.

We all need food.

Children can't go places without their momma.

Children get hungry everywhere.

We need to be kind to people even in Florida and Texas.

We can share and we can help them get back to their spot.

We can play nice.

No matter where you live, everybody needs love.

Everybody got red blood no matter where you live.



*Lester:* Now let's take a look at our list. [I read through the list, noticing aloud how there is overlap.] On another day, you and your teacher will visit this book again. I'd like you to try to come up with a "bumper sticker" that can say one big message from this book.

As we play with each other and work with each other, let's be mindful of the messages in this book. Let's promise to remind each other about all the ways we are like people all over the world.

NOTE: Comments from older children, though more sophisticated, follow a similar pattern. Prior to the Visual Tour/Reading the Art and read aloud, their comments tended to go to the obvious differences. Following the read aloud, the comments moved to exploring our common humanity.

NOTE: The idea of a "bumper sticker" for each book helps move the thinking toward big ideas within the layer. We find it helpful to have a conversation about bumper stickers to set up the expectation. When everyone is gathered in the circle, show the group an appropriate bumper sticker. The one we like to use features a drawing of the globe in the center being embraced by two arms. The caption reads, "Love Your Mother." Read the bumper sticker to the group and give them time to think about the message. Then with a puzzled look on your face, ask, "Hmm, I wonder what this means? What is this message asking us to do?" Children almost always go immediately to the core of this message with comments like, "Take care of the earth, Mother Earth. Get it?" Ask them for examples of how we can do that. Typical responses include a list of conservation tips: turn off the lights, don't litter, don't pollute, recycle, compost, plant a garden. Connect this insight to the work ahead: "Wow, all those ideas are in that one small bumper sticker? I wonder if we could read this whole book and come up with a bumper sticker to remind us what messages are here. Let's give that a try. Listen as I read . . ."

### **Essential Understandings for All Books in Layer 1:**

- As human beings, we are more alike than different.
- Those things that make each of us human are present in every other human across the globe.

**LAYER 1: BOOK 1 (WHOEVER YOU ARE)**

**Title:** *Whoever You Are*

**Author:** Mem Fox

**Illustrator:** Leslie Staub

1997, 2001 Voyager Books ISBN 0–15–216406–5

*This simple text, with vibrant illustrations attending to the nuances of meaning, will focus attention to the ways each of us is like every other human across the globe.*

**DAY 1: INTRODUCE THE BOOK****VISUAL TOUR/READING THE ART**

Present the book so that it is visible to everyone. Tell your students what you would like them to focus on. Then slowly move through the images. Point out a few subtle details as examples of those aspects that may build meaning.

*As we view the art I'd like you to look for:*

- evidence of the many different ways each of us is like every other person in the world
- details included in the art that cause you to wonder or have a question.

*As we view the art I'd like you to think about:*

- why this man in the blue suit is flying these children around the world
- what these children are seeing as they travel with the man
- what these children may be thinking as they travel from place to place
- what this may mean and what we should listen for when we read the text.

**READ ALOUD**

Read the book aloud with careful attention to pacing, tone, intensity, and mood. Let your voice convey the essence of the text. Read the complete text without stopping.

*As I read I'd like you to listen for:*

- evidence of how each of us is the same as every other person in the world
- evidence of how life may be different in other places in the world.

*As I read I'd like you to think about:*

- what this means to you
- any messages you think the book has for us
- ideas you would like to talk about
- a bumper sticker (the big message) for the book.

### **AFTER THE READ ALOUD**

Close the book and sit with the language for a few seconds. Resist the urge to tell your students what they are supposed to understand. Sit in silence and expect them to do the same. After ten to fifteen seconds, speak in a quiet voice to gently move the conversation forward.

- **Think on your own:** *Let's pause here and think about the meaning of this book. What does this text suggest for you?* [Think/Write]
- **Stretch your thoughts with a partner:** *Now let's take about forty-five seconds to think together. Talk quietly with your partner, listen to your partner's ideas, share your thoughts, and think of a bumper sticker for this book.* [Share/Expand]
- **Share your new thinking:** *Let's share a few of your bumper stickers.* [Collaborate/Synthesize]

### **DAYS 2–3: EXTEND THIS THINKING UNTIL THE NEXT BOOK**

**Option 1:** Have students get to know their classmates. Using an icebreaker exercise, find ways each student is like three other classmates. Search for ways beyond the obvious ones (two eyes, two hands, etc.).

**Option 2:** Create a bulletin board with cells for family, favorite food, hobbies, and so on.

**Option 3:** Chart the ways we are all alike in our class.

**Option 4:** Reflect and write: *What will you try to do differently now that we have shared this experience?*

**LAYER 1: BOOK 2 (SKIN AGAIN)**

**Title:** *Skin Again*

**Author:** bell hooks

**Illustrator:** Chris Raschka

2004 Jump at the Sun (Hyperion) ISBN 0–7868–0825–X

*On the surface, this is a very simple book about race, though it can be the springboard to important conversation. Through minimal text and lively art, this book reminds us that skin is merely the wrapper we arrive in and what truly counts is within us. Yet another reminder of how, as human beings, we are more alike than different.*

**DAY 1: INTRODUCE THE BOOK****VISUAL TOUR/READING THE ART**

Present the cover, making sure the art is visible to everyone. Tell your students that the text in this book is large, bold, and very visible. Assure them that you will return to the text and read the book aloud after you examine the art. Remind them that their focus at this point is to closely examine the art, to look with attention to detail, thinking about what the art conveys. Encourage them to think about what the artist may want viewers to think about. As you move slowly through the pages, pause at selected points to allow them to think about what they have seen and what the images are evoking for them.

*As we view the art I'd like you to look for:*

- images of a snake, an onion, and a heart shape that Chris Raschka includes
- examples of how the artist draws our attention to contrasts
- details used by the artist to help us see how we are alike and different.

*As we view the art I'd like you to think about:*

- why the artist chose those specific images
- how we can be alike, but also different.

**READ ALOUD**

Read the book aloud with careful attention to pacing, tone, intensity, and mood. Let your voice convey the essence of the text. This is a simple text with a big message; take your time. Read the complete text without stopping.

*As I read I'd like you to listen for:*

- examples of the ways we can get to know a person
- reasons why we can't really know someone just by their skin.

*As I read I'd like you to think about:*

- how the words written by bell hooks sparked the images made by Chris Raschka
- the idea that skin is just the "wrapper" we come in
- what things really matter about a person
- what things make no difference
- what are those things that make each of us the same
- what is the message this book holds for us
- a bumper sticker (the big message) for the book.

### AFTER THE READ ALOUD

Close the book and sit with the language for a few seconds. Resist the urge to tell your students what they are supposed to understand. Sit in silence and expect them to do the same. After ten to fifteen seconds, speak in a quiet voice.

- **Think on your own:** *Let's pause here and think about the meaning of this book. What does this text suggest for you?* [Think/Write]
- **Stretch your thoughts with a partner:** *Now let's take about forty-five seconds to think together. Talk quietly with your partner, listen to your partner's ideas, share your thoughts, and think of a bumper sticker for this book.* [Share/Expand]
- **Share your new thinking:** *Let's share a few of your bumper stickers.* [Collaborate/Synthesize]

### DAYS 2–3: EXTEND THIS THINKING UNTIL THE NEXT BOOK

**Option 1:** Bring a bag of identical individually wrapped candy (peppermints, Hershey Kisses, etc.) and count out enough for each student to have one. Equally distribute the candy in four identical boxes. Wrap each box in four different types of wrapping paper ranging from newspaper to gift wrap. Place the four wrapped boxes in a location where they are highly visible as the children enter the classroom.

Gather the class in a circle and return to the book. Revisit the bumper stickers from the previous visit with the book and place the four boxes in the center of the circle. Tell the group: "I brought a small treat for each of you today. Each box has the

same treat inside, but notice how the boxes look different on the outside. The only difference is the paper, or ‘the skin,’ each is in. So if you get to choose, will it matter which box your treat comes from?” Pause here and let them think about the connection to the book. Encourage conversation about how we sometimes make decisions based on the “wrapping” without knowing what’s inside. Then, of course, open the boxes and enjoy.

**Option 2:** Reflect and write: *Let’s make a page in our notebook for this book. Continue thinking about the ideas from this book and what the candy boxes help us think about. Jot down your thoughts on your Skin Again page. Look for ways we can see this happening not just with the candy boxes but also with people we have met.*

**Option 3:** Reflect and write: *What will you try to do differently now that we have shared this experience?*

### LAYER 1: BOOK 3 (WE SHARE ONE WORLD)

**Title:** *We Share One World*

**Author:** Jane E. Hoffelt

**Illustrator:** Marty Husted

2004 Illumination Arts ISBN 0–9701907–8–6

*Through the eyes and thoughts of one young boy, we visit children across the globe, attending to the many ways we share one world as members of one human family. Though the text is simple and the art portrays some stereotypes of the lands and cultures visited, the book does provide an opportunity for thinking about the essential understandings.*

### DAY 1: INTRODUCE THE BOOK

#### VISUAL TOUR/READING THE ART

Present the book so that it is visible to everyone. Tell your students what you would like them to focus on. Then slowly move through the images. Point out a few subtle details as examples of those aspects that may build meaning.

*As we view the art I’d like you to look for:*

- evidence of how each of us is like every other person in the world
- the boy in the corner of each page (Notice what he is doing and how it is very much like what other children in other parts of the world do as well.)
- details included in the art that cause you to wonder or have a question.

*As we view the art I'd like you to think about:*

- ways the message in this book is like the message in *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox
- the message these illustrations send to you
- what this boy notices and understands as he looks in on the lives of other children around the world
- what this may mean and what we should listen for when we read the text.

### READ ALOUD

Read the book aloud with careful attention to pacing, tone, intensity, and mood. There is very minimal text in this book. Don't rush. Move slowly, allowing children to concentrate and take in all the detail in the art while thinking about the single focus in the text of each page. Note the cumulative effect of the single focus on each spread and revisit all we share in this one world as you reach the end.

*As I read I'd like you to listen for:*

- evidence of how each of us is like every other person in the world
- the ways life may be different in other places in the world, yet we have so much in common.

*As I read I'd like you to think about:*

- what this means to you
- any messages you think the book has for us
- ideas you would like to talk about
- a bumper sticker (the big message) for the book.

### AFTER THE READ ALOUD

Close the book and sit with the language for a few seconds. Resist the urge to tell your students what they are supposed to understand. Sit in silence and expect them to do the same. After ten to fifteen seconds, speak in a quiet voice.

- **Think on your own:** *Let's pause here and think about the meaning of this book. What does this text suggest for you?* [Think/Write]
- **Stretch your thoughts with a partner:** *Now let's take about forty-five seconds to think together. Talk quietly with your partner, listen to your partner's ideas, share your thoughts, and think of a bumper sticker for this book.* [Share/Expand]

- **Share your new thinking:** *Let's share a few of your bumper stickers.* [Collaborate/Synthesize]

### **DAYS 2–3: EXTEND THIS THINKING UNTIL THE NEXT BOOK**

**Option 1:** Get to know your community. Explore the idea that your class shares one community [classroom for K–1 children, school for grades 2–3, neighborhood/town/city for grades 4–5] and consider all the ways individuals may bring diversity while the group shares so much in common.

**Option 2:** Launch a campaign for awareness and collect evidence of the ways we share our community (as defined above).

**Option 3:** Reflect and write: *What will you try to do differently now that we have shared this experience?*

### **LAYER 1: BOOK 4 (ALL THE COLORS OF THE EARTH)**

**Title:** *All the Colors of the Earth*

**Author:** Sheila Hamanaka

**Illustrator:** Shelia Hamanaka

1994 Mulberry Books/Morrow ISBN 0–688–17062–5

*This lyrical, poetic text is brief and focused. Paired with rich oil paintings, the language gently reminds us that color is everywhere in the world and that love (and people) come in all colors.*

### **DAY 1: INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

#### **VISUAL TOUR/READING THE ART**

Present the book so that it is visible to everyone. Tell your students what you would like them to focus on. Then slowly move through the images. Point out a few subtle details as examples of those aspects that may build meaning.

*As we view the art I'd like you to look for:*

- evidence of the many ways color is part of the world around us
- examples of how all our skin tones are found in the world around us
- details included in the art that cause you to wonder
- any ways we are all alike.



*As we view the art I'd like you to think about:*

- the message the illustrator seems to present
- how the message in this book is like the message in *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox
- what this may mean and what we should listen for when we read the text
- any questions the art makes you want to ask.

### READ ALOUD

Read the book aloud with careful attention to pacing, tone, intensity, and mood. There is very minimal text in this book. The language is rhythmic and poetic. Move slowly, allowing children to hear the comparisons and concentrate and take in all the detail in the art while thinking about the bigger message.

*As I read I'd like you to listen for:*

- evidence of the many ways color is a beautiful part of the world around us, even in the people we know
- the many beautiful ways people can be different and still be part of the human family.

*As I read I'd like you to think about:*

- what this means to you
- any messages you think the book has for us
- ideas you would like to talk about
- a bumper sticker (the big message) for the book.

### AFTER THE READ ALOUD

Close the book and sit with the language for a few seconds. Resist the urge to tell your students what they are supposed to understand. Sit in silence and expect them to do the same. After ten to fifteen seconds, speak in a quiet voice.

- **Think on your own:** *Let's pause here and think about the meaning of this book. What does this text suggest for you?* [Think/Write]
- **Stretch your thoughts with a partner:** *Now let's take about forty-five seconds to think together. Talk quietly with your partner, listen to your partner's ideas, share your thoughts, and think of a bumper sticker for this book.* [Share/Expand]
- **Share your new thinking:** *Let's share a few of your bumper stickers.* [Collaborate/Synthesize]

## **DAYS 2–3: EXTEND THIS THINKING UNTIL THE NEXT BOOK**

**Option 1:** Explore the comparisons made in the book between people and the world around them. Examine those same connections in the classroom, school, or civic community. Initiate a conversation around what these insights can mean for the ways we think and behave within our community. Invite their thoughts on the implications for how we treat one another within our community (classroom, school, civic, world).

**Option 2:** Reflect and write: *What will you try to do differently now that we have shared this experience?*

### **LAYER 1: BOOK 5 (SAME, SAME BUT DIFFERENT)**

**Title:** *Same, Same but Different*

**Author:** Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

**Illustrator:** Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

2011 Henry Holt ISBN 978–0805089462

*Two young boys become pen pals exchanging both letters and drawings. Elliot, who lives in America, and Kailash, who lives in India, recognize how much their lives are the same even though there are obvious differences. There is a focus on family and play, home and food, and school. The boys begin to comment how they are the “same, same but different.”*

## **DAY 1: INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

### **VISUAL TOUR/READING THE ART**

Present the cover, making sure the art is visible to everyone. The art in this book represents the lives of two boys. One lives in America and the other lives in India. On the cover we see both boys. Rotate the book so each is seen clearly.

*Think about the title, Same, Same but Different, and think about what we have learned from the other books we have studied in this layer. Remember, we have been thinking that no matter where people live, or what they look like, or what they eat, or how they celebrate, people are still human beings just like us. We are all alike in so many ways, even if some things in our lives are different. This book invites us to notice how one boy in America and one boy in India are the same but different. Let’s have a look.*

*As we view the art I’d like you to look for:*

- examples of what the artist does to help us see how the characters are different

- examples of what the artist does to help us see how the characters are alike
- evidence of the message you think the artist wants us to think about.

*As we view the art I'd like you to think about:*

- how we can be both the same and different.

### READ ALOUD

Read the book aloud with careful attention to pacing, tone, intensity, and mood. As you read, remember this is an exchange of letters between two boys. Let your voice reflect the rhythm and intonation of that exchange.

*As I read I'd like you to listen for:*

- examples of the ways we can get to know another person
- how two people in different parts of the world can have much in common
- what the two boys learned about each other.

*As I read I'd like you to think about:*

- why people around the world have so much in common
- what are those things that make each of us the same
- what is the message this book holds for us
- a bumper sticker (the big message) for the book.

### AFTER THE READ ALOUD

Close the book and sit with the language for a few seconds. Resist the urge to tell your students what they are supposed to understand. Sit in silence and expect them to do the same. After ten to fifteen seconds, speak in a quiet voice.

- **Think on your own:** *Let's pause here and think about the meaning of this book. What does this text suggest for you?* [Think/Write]
- **Stretch your thoughts with a partner:** *Now let's take about forty-five seconds to think together. Talk quietly with your partner, listen to your partner's ideas, share your thoughts, and think of a bumper sticker for this book.* [Share/Expand]
- **Share your new thinking:** *Let's share a few of your bumper stickers.* [Collaborate/Synthesize]

**DAYS 2–3: EXTEND THIS THINKING UNTIL THE NEXT BOOK**

**Option 1:** Over the next several days, begin to notice and make note of the ways we are the same, same but different in the classroom and in the school. Expand this to include a larger worldview for older students. Encourage them to observe the comparisons/contrasts on news, in life, in their reading, and so on.

**Option 2:** Set up digital pen pals with students in other classrooms within the school, with a class from another school within the district, or with a class from another state or region of the country. As a class, collect digital photos and video clips to exchange. Keep a class journal (or chart) of the ways students in your class and the pen pals are the same, same but different.

**Option 3:** Reflect and write: *What will you try to do differently now that we have shared this experience?*



---

**DEDICATED TO TEACHERS**

Thank you for sampling this  
resource.

For more information or to  
purchase, please visit  
Heinemann by clicking the link  
below:

<http://www.heinemann.com/products/E04356.aspx>

Use of this material is solely for  
individual, noncommercial use and is  
for informational purposes only.