

Book Talk Guide

for caregivers

*A comprehensive book guide from
The Conflict Center's
Reading for Peace program*



BOOK BASICS

The Boy with Big, Big Feelings

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Beaming Books, 2019

Recommended for grades 1-3

ABOUT THE BOOK

The main character has feelings so big that they glow from his cheeks, spill out of his eyes, and jump up and down on his chest. When he hears a joke, he bursts with joy. When a loud truck drives by, he cries. When his loved ones are having a hard day, he feels their emotions as if they were his own. The boy tries to cope by stuffing down his feelings, but with a little help and artistic inspiration, the boy realizes his feelings are something to be celebrated.

“MIRROR & WINDOW” BOOKS

Children's books are often referred to as “mirrors and windows.” Coined by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop in 1990, “mirrors” refer to books where children can see themselves in the characters and stories; those mirrors reflect various aspects of their identity. “Window” books help children look “outside,” to learn about other people, identities and experiences of those who are different from them, helping children learn more about the world outside themselves. Reading for Peace understands the importance of mirrors and windows when selecting books to read with children.

ABOUT READING FOR PEACE

Reading for Peace is a volunteer-led program that brings small-group storytime to elementary schools across the Denver metro area. Each week, volunteers read and discuss books with students that are thoughtfully chosen to support social-emotional learning and build connection. The experience is deeply meaningful for both children and volunteers alike.

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WHAT THE BOOK TEACHES - BIG IDEAS!

We all have feelings. Feelings are what happen in your body, heart and mind when something happens or when you react to someone saying or doing something that affects you.

We can have “big feelings” like the boy in the book and others have. This means we feel things strongly, which can feel exciting and great. At other times, having “big feelings” can feel difficult and painful.

While big feelings might feel scary or upsetting at times, **you don’t have to push your strong feelings down, pretend or “control” those feelings.** Feelings make us who we are, make us human, help us connect with others and make friends.

QUESTIONS TO SPARK CONVERSATIONS

- (Pre-reading) Let’s look at the cover. What do you see and what do you think the book will be about?
- What happens in the story? What is the main message of this book?
- What are some of the feelings described in the book? Have you ever felt that way?
- What are some other feelings?
- How did you feel while reading the book?
- What do you think the boy means when he says, “*Why me? Why this big, giant heart in a world that’s so heavy and kind?*”
- What did you learn about feelings that you didn’t know before?
- Why does the boy think he has to stuff all his feelings deep down?
- How do you think the boy felt when he made a new friend who also has big, big feelings?
- Do you think it is helpful (or not) to share your feelings with others? Please explain.
- How did you know how the boy was feeling?

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NUGGETS FOR LEARNING

FIND: Identify the feelings in the book

Talk with your child about what feelings are, using language like “feelings are what happens in your body, heart and mind when something happens or when you react to someone saying or doing something that affects you.”

Re-read the book together and when you come to a feeling word, stop and talk about what that feeling is, how you might be able to tell when someone has that feeling, and why the person is feeling that way in that situation.

Together, come up with other feeling words by asking about words that are similar to the ones in the book and then brainstorm other feelings words. If you think it would be helpful, write all the feelings words down somewhere and continue to add to it as your child learns other feeling words.

CREATE: Make a feelings book

Following up on the activity above, with your child create a feelings book. You can use a notebook or staple/fasten pieces of paper together to create a book. Start with the feelings you identified from the book and devote one page to each feeling.

On each page, write the feeling word and then add other words, images, colors, symbols, emojis, etc. to help illustrate that feeling. Add as many feeling words as you like and make sure to have extra pages for new feelings discovered by your child.

Create a cover and share it with others in your family or friends.



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NUGGETS FOR LEARNING

DISCUSS: Incorporating feelings' talk into daily lives

Talk with your child about what happens in the book and how the boy has “big feelings.” Elicit/explain that the boy says he has “big feelings” to describe his feelings that are strong, powerful, mighty and deeply felt. Ask your child if they ever feel this way and what they do.

Engage in a discussion about feelings and make it a practice to elicit feelings as much as possible throughout the day. Some ideas include: (1) at the beginning of the day, ask how they feel and why, (2) when they get home from school ask how they felt instead of what they did (you can ask what they did after!), (3) when you read books together, ask how the different characters are feeling, (4) when they are doing activities including activities with friends, elicit how they felt afterwards, etc.

Engaging in conversations about their feelings will help them reflect on how they feel in situations, expand their feelings' vocabulary and will help them determine what they want to do about the feelings they have.

MORE BOOKS LIKE THIS

- *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain
- *There Might be Lobsters* by Carolyn Crimi
- *When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang
- *You are a Burst of Color* by Sook-Hee Choi

