

KINDNESS: A Few of My Favorite Picture Books

Compiled and Annotated by: [Maria Walther](#), Author of [The Ramped-Up Read Aloud](#)

Kerascoët. (2018). *I walk with Vanessa: A story about a simple act of kindness*. New York, NY: Schwartz & Wade.

While walking home, Vanessa, the new girl in school, is bullied. One of her classmates witnesses the bullying and Vanessa's ensuing tears. After sharing what she saw with her friends, they all go home feeling upset. That night, the witness has an idea. The next day she, her friends, and many others *walk with Vanessa* showing the bully the power of friendship.

Teaching Ideas: Wordless Books; Social Emotional Learning—Responsible Decision Making; Bullying, Kindness

Leannah, M. (2017). *Most people*. (J. E. Morris, Illus.). Thomaston, ME: Tilbury.

Most people in this world are helpful, kind, happy, and loving. Readers see examples of community members engaging in kind acts and learn that, although some people choose to do bad things, most folks want to do good things. After reading, ask children to have a conversation about the acts of kindness they saw in the book.

Teaching Ideas: SEL—Kindness, Community; Illustration Study

Miller, P. Z. (2018). *Be kind*. (J. Hill, Illus.). New York, NY: Roaring Brook.

A young girl witnesses her classmate, Tanisha, being laughed at for spilling grape juice. She tries to say something kind, but Tanisha runs away. This prompts the girl to question, "What does it mean to be kind anyway?" To explore this question, readers join her on a quest to find the answer while pointing out a variety of kind acts. In the end, the narrator gives Tanisha a painting which she takes home and hangs on her bedroom wall.

Teaching Ideas: SEL—Kindness

Murrow, E., & Murrow, V. (2020). *Zero local next stop: Kindness*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

A girl and her mother ride the Z train each weekday. On Monday, while her mom is busy working on her laptop, the girl notices an artist with a yellow bird perched on her shoulder drawing a thank you note for the conductor. The artist's act of gratitude continues each day until Thursday when the train is delayed and the artist is no longer there. On Friday, when a major delay occurs and tempers are rising, the girl creates paper sculptures to spread kindness. In this wordless book, the girl and the artist are pictured with yellow clothing and accessories and other items slowly change to yellow as the kindness spreads.

Teaching Ideas: Wordless Books; Days of the Week; SEL—Paying Kindness Forward, Gratitude; Inferring Big Ideas; Creativity

Nelson, K. (2015). *If you plant a seed*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. (See Read Aloud Experience on page 96 of *The Ramped-Up Read Aloud*)

Underwood, D. (2019). *Finding kindness*. (I. Chan, Illus.). New York, NY: Holt.

Simple acts of kindness throughout a community are portrayed in this rhyming book. Notice that each page connects to next one through someone or something in the illustrations. Readers will have to infer the act of kindness by combining the clues from the text with the clues in the illustrations.

Teaching Ideas: SEL—Kindness, Community; Illustration Study

Vaught, S. (2020). *Together we grow*. (K. Murphy, Illus.). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

The story begins on the front end papers as a storm is approaching and the farm animals are heading toward the barn. Then, on the copyright page, a mother fox peeks out looking for shelter. She approaches the barn but is told to go away. As the storm brews, a duckling leaves the safety of the shelter to protect and calm the fears of the mother fox and her pups. When the other animals witness this act of kindness, they invite the family into the barn. Take time to study the glowing illustrations in this book.

Teaching Ideas: SEL—Kindness, Inclusion; Illustration Study; Vocabulary (asunder, brindle, prevails)

Woodson, J. (2012). *Each kindness*. (E. B. Lewis, Illus.). New York: Penguin.

Chloe learns a life lesson when her teacher points out the power of kindness. After this compelling lesson, Chloe wishes she would have shown kindness to the new girl, Maya, instead ignoring her. Unfortunately, Chloe never gets the chance to show kindness because Maya moves away.

Teaching Ideas: Comprehension Conversations—Inferring Big Ideas; SEL—Celebrating Differences, Friendship, Kindness