

Lesson 6: *Each Kindness*

THEMES: Choosing Kind/Empathy

BOOK: *Each Kindness* Written by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by E.B. Lewis

Note to Teacher: Please read this book all the way through before reading it aloud, and think about the discussion questions. It is very possible that it will bring tears to your eyes. It is heart wrenching, but children need to know how hurtful their actions can be to others and ultimately to themselves.

MATERIALS:

- **Poem to projected or printed on chart paper or Laminated Poster:** “A Habit to Embrace” or “Don’t Wait Until Tomorrow”
- **Copy of poem for each child**(To put in poetry book, if applicable)
- **Optional: Pointer** (to point to words on poem when read aloud in class activity)
- **Optional: Vis-à-vis Marker or Highlighter tape** (to mark word work on poster)
- **Optional: Writing Activity Sheet**

BEFORE READING THE STORY:

Read Title, author and illustrator’s name.

Show the book cover – Ask students if they can make any observations about the book cover illustration. - *More realistic than most of the others? Do they think this might be a true story just because the illustrations are so lifelike?*

The author does something interesting in this story. She writes in the first person. She is the narrator telling the story, but she is also part of the story, or inside the story. Authors who use this kind of writing use the words, “I, me, and my”. The narrator’s name is Chloe. Let’s see what Chloe has to say.

READ STORY: I would read the book all the way through and only stop if someone wants to raise their hand and talk about it. The young girls’ actions in the story will make an impact as you read along, and you can go back and revisit pages after you are finished reading.

AFTER READING OF BOOK/DISCUSSION:

Ask the students what the author’s purpose was in writing this story. *Did she have a message? What did you learn from this story?* Listen to their responses and then go back through the story

Let’s go back: *When the principal brought Maya into the classroom, it was winter. Maya’s clothes looked “old and ragged”. Maya’s “shoes were spring shoes, not meant for the snow.” It looks like Maya’s family did not have very much money---so she did*

not have any brand-new clothes. Is it Maya's fault that her parents do not make a lot of money and cannot afford to buy her the winter clothes? Should we ever look down on people because of the clothes they wear? Do nice clothes necessarily make nice people?

Go back through several of the passages where Chole acted unkindly and discuss.

Sample dialogue below:

"We all stared at her." Maya turned to me and smiled, but I didn't smile back." I moved by chair, myself, and my books a little farther away from her. "Whenever she asked us to play, we said no.

I would like you to try and put yourself in Maya's place. Can we all try to be empathetic and feel what Maya must have been feeling when she first entered class and what she must have felt when Chloe acted that way?

How did Chloe feel at the end of the story? She was unhappy with herself and with what she did. She realized how unkind she was to Maya, and that she could never make it up to her. Did Chloe call her names? Not to her face, but she whispered mean things that Maya could overhear. Her actions were unkind. Who was hurting in the end of the story? Not only Maya, but Chloe. Do you think Chloe learned a lesson? Can we learn a lesson from this book?

Here is my big question: When should we show kindness? Should we save our kind actions until later or should we do it when it is needed and speak up?

WRITING ACTIVITIES/DISCUSSION:

All Group Activity: Make a chart on white board or big sheet of paper showing things that Chole and the girls could have done "instead" to be kind. You can read the unkind things that she did from the book and write out: "INSTEAD" above your list. The chart below - column 1 shows some of the unkind things that Chloe did---but the first column does not have to be written. Chole's actions can be read aloud straight from the book, and the positive acts of kindness should be written.

Desk Activity: Students can use the activity sheet to write an answer to either question, or teacher can ask a question of their choice.

POEM / DISCUSSION: Look at both poems and decide which one would best help with your literacy goals...maybe some decoding skills or vocabulary words. If doing word work with poem, the children can come to board/poster to circle or highlight words or parts of words. Both poems have good messages about not waiting for tomorrow to be kind; about being kind today. Refer back to story and Chloe when discussing poem. She did not have the "opportunity to be kind again" to Maya.

<h2>What Chloe did:</h2> <p>(examples from the book)</p>	<h2>Instead, Chloe Could have</h2>
<p>Stared at her</p> <p>Didn't smile back</p> <p>Moved her chair, herself and Books farther away from Maya</p> <p>When Maya looked her way, Chloe turned to the window, And didn't smile back</p> <p>Walked together with her friends and whispered secrets And laughed at her clothes and the food she ate</p> <p>When Maya showed Chloe and her friends her jacks and ball, She wouldn't play with Maya</p> <p>"She's not my friend" she whispered</p>	<p>Smiled</p> <p>Smiled back</p> <p>Stayed in her place and smiled</p> <p>Looked at Maya and smiled back</p> <p>Introduced Maya to her friends and included her</p> <p>Stood up for her and ask her friends to stop and not joined them in their laughter</p> <p>Played Jacks and games with her</p> <p>Ignored the boy's whispering, or better yet--- Said "She's my friend"</p>

Each Kindness

By Jacqueline Woodson

What could Chloe and her friends have done differently to make Maya feel welcome?

Or What can you do to make a new student feel welcome?

Don't Wait Until Tomorrow

To show kindness, don't wait until tomorrow

For a new chance or a new campaign

Life may or may not be kind enough

To give you an opportunity to be kind again

Donating money to an organization

Can involve paperwork and legality

But showing kindness in everyday life

Only involves generosity and simplicity.

A Habit to Embrace

Poet: [Catherine Pulsifer](#), ©2021

Kindness is shown in many ways
It can make someone's day
It may be only a little thing
But sunshine to others it will bring.

Simple things, even a smile
Can brighten a day for others, while
It will come back to you
Show kindness in all you do.

Hold a door, help others
You will soon discover
Something that seems small to you
Can have a huge impact that is true.

Make kindness a habit today
Spread love and kindness in every way
You will find the world will be a better place
It is a habit we should all embrace.