

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by **Judith Viorst** (in OverDrive)

Alexander goes through a range of emotions from being in a bad mood, to jealousy, frustration, anger, and rage. Alexander mentions moving to Australia which can lead to a discussion on whether it is appropriate to run away from problems. Making mistakes help us learn.

Questions to ask include: What is a mood? Have you ever woken up in a bad mood? How do you know you are in a bad mood? Do you let it affect your day? How might others be able to tell you are in a bad mood? Have you ever been jealous of something someone else had? Does being jealous aide in getting what you want? How did Alexander respond to his problem? Does treating someone badly in retaliation help problems? Can anger be a good thing? Is it possible to feel more than one emotion at once? How do we know when we are making mistakes? Can mistakes be good sometimes? How might it be possible to fix mistakes?

A Bad Case of Stripes by **David Shannon** (in OverDrive)

Camilla worries about what others think of her and whether she is liked. As a result, she tries to please everybody she meets. Teased by classmates and talked about on the news, Camilla's self-perception and identity are affected.

Questions to ask include: When we first meet Camilla, what is she doing? Is it important to care what other people think? Why do Camilla's classmates tease her? Is what the reporter does different from what Camilla's classmates do to her? Do we define ourselves based on who we think we are, or who others think we are? What does it mean to be yourself?

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by **Mo Willems** (in OverDrive)

A pigeon insists on driving a bus and offers many reasons why he should. The person who lets the pigeon drive is smarter and wiser than the pigeon. This picture book dives into topics related to responsibility, blame, and persuasion. Persuasion includes making promises, pouting, suggesting games, getting angry, and even offering a bribe.

Questions to ask include: Is it ever okay to do something even when it might hurt other people? What about if other people don't get hurt? Would you let the pigeon drive the bus? Why or why not? If someone tells you something, how do you decide whether you believe it?

Each Kindness by **Jacqueline Woodson** (in OverDrive)

Every action goes out like a ripple into the world. When a new girl (Maya) comes to school and tries to make friends, Chloe (the narrator), is unkind to her. Maya ends up being having no friends and then one day, she is gone. When Chloe's teacher gives a lesson about how even small acts of kindness can change the world, Chloe realizes she lost an opportunity to make a difference.

Questions to ask: What is kindness? Have you ever been treated unkindly? How did that make you feel? Why might someone be unkind? What may be a better response if you want to be unkind? Are you aware of any small acts of kindness that have impacted the lives of others?

The Emperor's New Clothes by **Hans Christian Andersen (or similar version)** (in OverDrive)

The theme of this story revolves around the dilemma of whether to tell the truth or lie to save oneself from social ridicule. Peer pressure often influences an individual to do or say something without believing it.

Questions to ask: Have you ever done something just because everyone else was doing it? What might happen if you decide to not do what everyone else is doing? How might you influence others to do good? What risk did the little boy take in telling the truth? Have you ever taken a risk knowing that it was the right thing to do?

Enemy Pie by **Derek Munson**

It should have been a perfect summer. My dad helped build a tree house in our backyard. My sister was at camp for three whole weeks. And I was on the best baseball team in town. It should have been a perfect summer. But it wasn't.

Enemy pie is not made from worms, rocks, and grass but from delicious ingredients. For enemy pie to work, the main character must spend the entire day with the one boy he doesn't like. The main message is that a friendship can be created from showing kindness.

Questions for discussion include: Why was Jeremy on the enemy list? What might be some explanations for Jeremy's behavior / decisions? The main character had to take what risk for enemy pie to work? (Go over to Jeremy's house and ask if he would like to play.) Have you ever taken the first step in being friendly to another? If so, why?

How to Heal a Broken Wing by **Bob Graham**

A city pigeon flies into a window and falls to a busy sidewalk. The bird has a broken wing and many people pass by not stopping to help. A young boy notices the injured bird and takes him home. With his parents' help, the bird is taken care of until its wing is healed and is then released.

Questions to ask: Why did so many people walk by the pigeon? Why might Will have been the only one to notice the bird? How did Will's parents help? Have you ever hesitated to stop and help another person in need? Why? Will went to his parents for help in taking care of the pigeon. Who might you contact if you see another person in need? How would you know when it's necessary to involve help from another person?

The Invisible Boy by **Trudy Ludwig** (in OverDrive)

Nobody seems to notice Brian or think to include him in their group or game. While other classmates are loud and misbehave, Brian is quiet – almost invisible. When a new student arrives at his school, Brian experiences the joy of being included.

Questions to ask: Do you think the kids purposefully excluded Brian from their activities? Why or why not? Have you intentionally excluded other kids from joining your group, game, activity? If so, why? Why was Brian invisible even though he was surrounded by other kids? How many kids in this story did it take to help Brian become less invisible? What are some simple ways you can help another student feel less invisible?

Just My Friend and Me by **Mercer Mayer**

A male “little critter” wants to have friend visit because he’s bored and doesn’t want to be alone. During their playtime, his friend breaks a lot of his toys and is not very nice.

Questions to ask: What makes a good friend? Have you ever felt lonely? Is it possible to be lonely when you are surrounded by people? Did the boy truly enjoy the company of his friend or did he simply fill a void to prevent him from feeling lonely? What is friendship? What makes a good friend? Why did the boy feel the need to compare himself to his friend? Is the boy’s friend using him? What is the difference between a want and a need? Will you ever have everything you want? Why do we sometimes fail to appreciate what we have? At the end of the book, the boy was happy to be alone. Why do you think this is?

Lily's Purple Plastic Purse by **Kevin Henkes** (in OverDrive)

Lily loves going to school. After a weekend shopping trip with her grandmother, Lily couldn’t wait to share her new purse with her classmates on Monday. Mr. Slinger, her teacher, told her he would let her know when it was time to share. Lily decided she could make that decision and the day did not go well for her. Use this picture book to lead a discussion on being considerate and apologizing when in the wrong.

Questions to ask: What did Lilly do to apologize? What makes a good apology? Is accepting an apology the same thing as forgiving? Was Mr. Slinger right to tell Lilly to wait? Should Mr. Slinger have allowed Lilly to show her purse to the class when she wanted? Why is it okay for Mr. Slinger to take Lilly’s purse away but not another student (to take it away)? How is having power different from being in charge?

Mufao's Beautiful Daughters by **John Steptoe** (in OverDrive)

An African tale about two outwardly beautiful sisters with opposite personalities. When faced with challenges, each sister’s response is different. Discussion can include the nature of worth and its relation to beauty.

Questions to ask: What does it mean to be worthy? Must one be attractive/handsome to be worthy? Can one be truly happy if living a lie? Do you think someone who is selfish is worse than someone who is self-effacing/altruistic/kind to others? Why? Would you rather have happiness by believing lies or unhappiness in knowing the truth?

Sam and the Firefly by **P. D. Eastman** (in OverDrive)

Freedom of speech is valued in our country, but what happens when one's speech impacts others in a negative way? The theme of this story is listening to others. Gus the firefly uses his light to cause havoc on others.

Questions to ask: Gus feels sad after being caught, however, it's not clear why. Is Gus sad because he was caught or because he realized he did something wrong? Does freedom of speech mean that anyone can say anything at any time? Why or why not? Have you known someone who used words to cause hurt to others and then said it was just a joke? When is a joke not funny? What advice would you give to someone who wanted to use their words to hurt another person?

Sam's Pet Temper by **Sangeeta Bhadra** (in OverDrive)

Sam found his new pet on the playground. At first, Temper was fun but then it started to get out of control. Sam eventually realizes he must take action to control Temper.

Questions to ask: What is a temper? Is it acceptable to have a temper? When is a temper harmful? How did Sam control his temper? What are some suggestions for controlling a temper? What should you do if you notice someone else's temper?

The Sneetches by **Dr. Seuss** (in OverDrive)

The sneetches are distinguished by two groups, those with stars and those without stars. Sylvester McMonkey McBean arrives with a machine that can remove stars from bellies or stamp bellies with stars, for a fee of course. This story can be used to discuss self-perspective and self-worth, prejudice and discrimination.

Questions to ask include: What makes a star-bellied sneetch distinct from a plain-bellied sneetch? How do the sneetches treat those who are different from them? It is ever acceptable to treat others differently based on outward appearance. If so, explain. What about those who act differently from you? What messages do advertisements convey about our images? What are character traits? How would you describe your character? How would your peers describe your character? Compare and contrast character traits and outward appearances.

Stellaluna by **Janell Cannon** (in OverDrive)

Stellaluna is just a young fruit bat when she is tragically separated from her mother mid-air. Unable to yet fly, she finds her way to a bird's nest. Stellaluna learns to adapt to her new environment by trying to fit in but does not quite understand why she is different. This story will aide discussion on personal identity including adoption, making promises, the difference of feeling and being, and family since figuring out one's

identity is often the most complicated process children go through. Identity is shaped through discovering one's strengths, limitations, and influence of others.

Questions to ask: How was Stellanuna similar to her bird family? What promise did she make to the mother bird? What might Stellanuna not have understood about herself? Have you ever found a friend that may have been different but was fun to be with? How might the differences between Stellanuna and a bird put each in danger? How might a friend put us in danger? Do you know with whom to speak if you sense danger?

Thanks a Million by Nikki Grimes

What makes you thankful? This picture book features a short poem on each page that demonstrates thankfulness. Students may be inspired to create a gratitude journal of their own.

Questions to ask: What are some common ways to show thanks to others for a kind deed? Do you know how to write a thank you card? Do you know how to address an envelope and send in the mail? In this book, what were some examples thankfulness was shown? What does thankfulness look like in our classroom? Lunchroom? Hallway? Sporting event? In our community and home?

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts (in OverDrive)

The main character, Jeremy, wants a specific pair of laced high-top sneakers like many of his classmates have. When one of his sneakers falls apart, Jeremy's guidance counselor gives him a pair of sneakers with Velcro. Learning the difference between want and need, Jeremy demonstrates generosity and selflessness.

Questions for discussion include: What is the difference between wants and needs? Is it ever a bad thing to be generous? Should we try to help poor people? Why? Do you budget for wants and needs and if so, how? Name some wants that seem like needs. What would society be like if we only had enough money to purchase needs? When was there a time when people had to focus on needs?

Waiting by Kevin Henkes (in OverDrive)

Waiting in line, waiting to grow up, waiting for something special to happen. Discussion questions can focus on what we observe by waiting.

Questions to ask: How might waiting be difficult? What would life be like if no one had to wait for anything? How does society make it easy for us to not wait? What do we learn from getting what we want, when we want it? What do we learn from waiting? Share an experience from a time you had to wait. What did you learn, if anything, from the experience?

Wemberly Worried by **Kevin Henkes**

Wemberly worries about many things! On the first day of school, she worries: What if no one else wears stripes? What if the teacher is mean? What if the room smells bad? What if the other students make fun of my name? What if I can't find the bathroom? This story will provide an opportunity for students to share what they worry about, as well as discussion on when it's appropriate to worry. Define worry: "give way to anxiety or unease; allow one's mind to dwell on difficulty or troubles."

Questions to consider: What is something you worry about? How much of what you worry about can you control? What advice would you give Wemberly? Do you tend to dwell on difficulty or troubles? How might being kind to others minimize your own worries?

Zen Shorts by **Jon J Muth** (in OverDrive)

This story has nothing to do with shorts but instead, several short stories which challenge habits, desires, concepts, and fears. Stillwater, a giant panda, moves into a neighborhood and tells amazing stories; a poor man who give away gifts to a robber, a farmer who knows that luck can not be judged or predicted, and a monk who carries the weight of a burden long past.

Questions to ask: Story 1. Why might the robber not have been satisfied with the moon had he been given it? What is the difference between a want and a need? Was there a time when you gave someone an item to just make them go away? If so, why?

Story 2. How would you define luck? Is being lucky or unlucky in this story real or just consequences from actions? If it's true that good luck and bad luck are mixed up, what might you be able to control if the results will be good or bad?

Story 3. What is a grudge? What are some reasons the young woman may have had for not thanking the monk? Even though the younger monk did not carry the woman across the water, the older monk stated that the younger one was still carrying her. What did he mean by this? When do we let others bad attitudes ruin our day? What are some helpful ways to calm our hurt feelings? What would you say to a friend who is hurt by a comment?