

Mental Health Reading Activity for K-3 Grade

The Invisible String

This interactive reading activity is designed for students in grades K-3 and provides educators with opportunities to help students develop social-emotional intelligence and reduce mental health stigma by introducing mental health challenges that children sometimes face.

A link to purchase the book, the book's synopsis, and an activity guide with discussion questions have been provided to help facilitate the activity, create dialogue and teach strategies, tools and skills that help to develop resilience, mindfulness, positive self-talk, self-esteem, confidence-building, acceptance and compassion for oneself and others, as well as teach students how to be a supportive friend and that it's okay to ask for help.

BOOK DETAILS

[*The Invisible String*](#), by Patrice Karst

Frightened twins find reassurance in their mom's story of an invisible string that links loved ones across time and space. The book acknowledges fear, longing, and loss, without shame or judgment, while effectively scaffolding an internalized sense of attachment. The concept of connection being offered is playful, expansive, and unifying at the same time that it addresses practical questions, like does it work when you're angry or after someone has died.

Emphasis: Social-Emotional Development

Diversity Notes: Shows mostly Caucasian, able-bodied girl/boy twins and their mom. References non-stereotypical gender roles, and one page shows multiple characters who are ethnically diverse and one child using a wheelchair.

Relationships: Mom, cat, Uncle who passed, friends and their friends around the world

ACTIVITY + QUESTIONS

Read the Story:

1. Before you begin, introduce that this lesson is about knowing that no matter what happens or where we are, we are always connected with the people we love, and review your classroom's norms to ensure that students feel respected and safe.
2. Show students how to hold up an Invisible String each time it is mentioned in the story.
3. Invite students to point out all the connections they see on the page with the Earth.

4. Note from the author about: *Can my String reach all the way to Uncle Brian in heaven?*
 - “While there is only a single word on one page in the book that alludes to separation by death... the story [can] be used for coping with grief. That word, heaven, is not meant to impart any particular religious affiliation... For those that feel uncomfortable with that word, it is easily amended with whatever phrase feels more comfortable...”

Discussion + Activities:

1. Help students connect with the concepts to be explored by writing/drawing individually, or sharing aloud in pairs, small groups, or whole class, their responses to:
 - Who are the people that you love the most and who love you?
 - What feelings, sensations, or thoughts do you have when someone loves you?
 - Are there times when you miss someone you love?
2. Consider vocabulary that students might generate or that you might opt to introduce:
 - Feelings: scared, sad, lonely, anxious...
3. What is the Invisible String?
4. Who can we share Invisible Strings with?
5. Are there any places that Love can't reach or reasons it could go away?
6. Draw a picture or write a list of everyone the Invisible String connects you with.