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**Title:** *Using Children's Picture Books to Promote SEL*

## **Using Children's Books in the Classroom in Order to Promote SEL Themes**

In order to promote the social and emotional well-being of all students, and to strengthen a sensitive and caring community of learners within our middle school, this research and development grant demonstrates how children's picture books can be used to promote teaching tolerance and acting morally. Lesson plans for various children's picture books address specific SEL themes such as developing empathy, appreciating diversity, working cooperatively with others, bystander responsibility, viewing situations through various perspectives, and avoiding stereotyping and prejudging others.

The ten enclosed lesson plans address the following ELA Standards as well in the following areas:

### **Standard 1**

- Students will use knowledge generated from texts to discover relationships and interpret information.

### **Standard 2**

- Students will read and listen to develop an understanding of the diverse social and cultural dimensions the texts represent.

### **Standard 3**

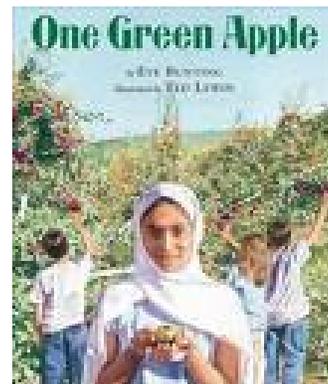
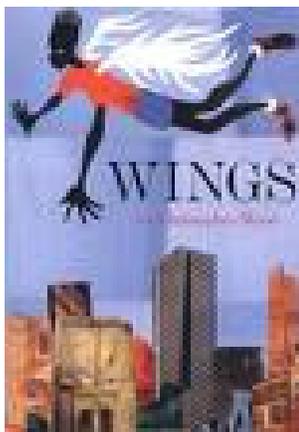
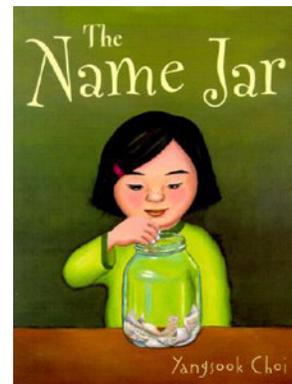
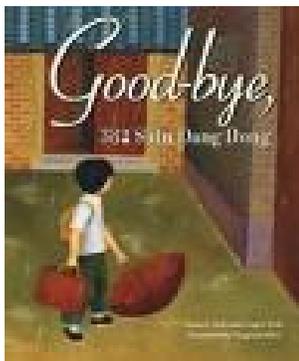
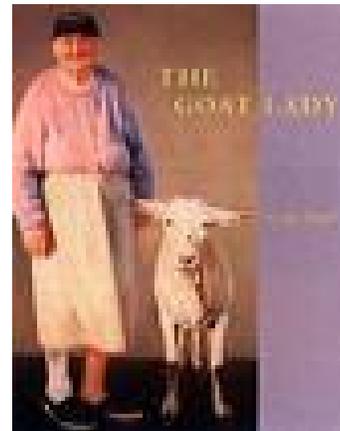
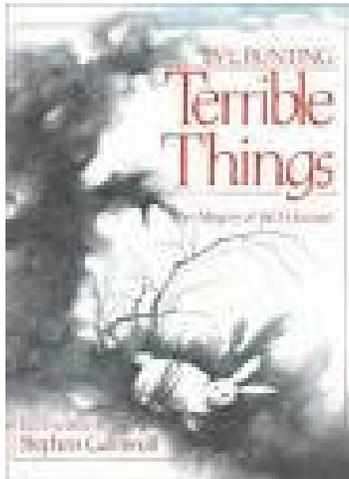
- As speakers and writers, students will form a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information, and issues.

### **Standard 4**

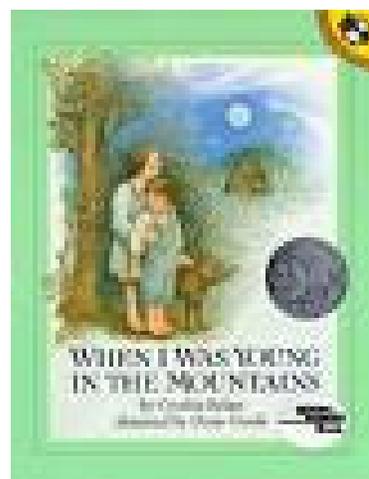
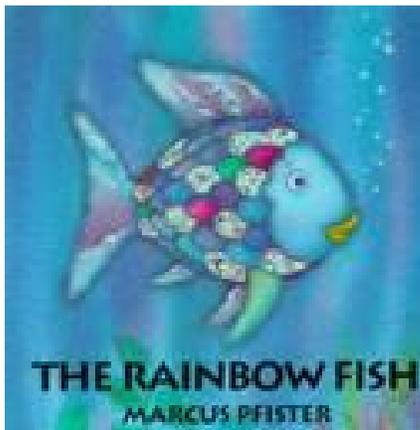
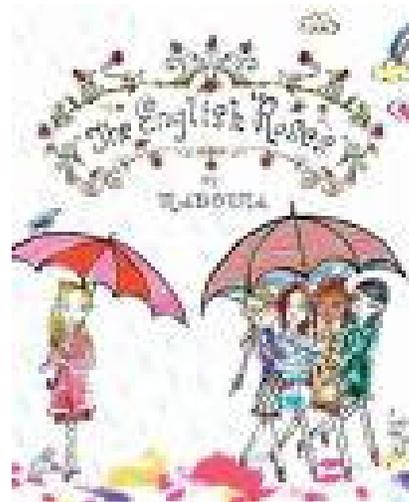
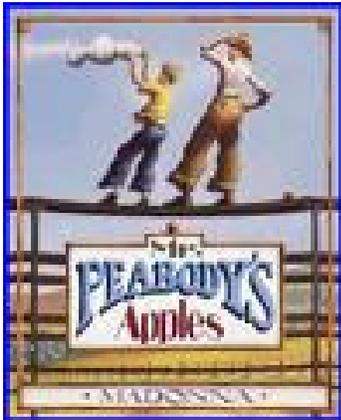
- Students will use oral and written language for effective social communication to enrich their understanding of people and their views.

Lastly, this grant offers a method to utilize the BRAVE Student Ambassadors as peer-instructors. All BRAVE Student Ambassador-led lessons could be adapted for elementary age students as well to be used during an elementary school visitation.

# Using Picture Books in an ELA Classroom



# Student BRAVE Ambassador Led Lessons



## **BRAVE Student Ambassador Lesson #1**

**SEL Objectives: Working Cooperatively with Others, Being Considerate to Others, Sharing with Others, Committing Small Acts of Kindness.**

**Aim:** Can we examine the power small acts of kindness can have on others?

1. **Motivation:** Student BRAVE Student Ambassadors will instruct the class to complete a T-chart with their group stating what makes them feel good and what makes them feel bad. Each group will have the opportunity to contribute items from their list as BRAVE Student Ambassadors create a T-chart on the board.
2. Each group will receive two statements. Student BRAVE Ambassadors will call students up from each team to place their statement on the board on the Happiness Scale of one through ten. Number one will indicate “not so happy” and number ten will indicate “extremely happy”.
  - a. My friends refused to talk to me.
  - b. Someone refused to share with me.
  - c. I helped someone succeed.
  - d. Somebody thanked me for something I did.
  - e. I gave someone a compliment and it made that person smile.
  - f. Someone told me I made their day.
  - g. My best friend told me he/she would not help me.
  - h. I offered my friends help.
  - i. I was having a great day, but my friend wasn't.
  - j. I made a positive difference in someone else's life.
  - k. My friend refused to share with me.
  - l. I was able to help someone understand the homework.
  - m. I had a fabulous party but my friends weren't there.
3. Student Ambassadors will ask the class to look at the Happiness Scale and make an observation. BRAVE Ambassadors will ask students to think about how doing something for someone else can have a positive impact on them.
4. Students will listen to the book, *The Rainbow Fish*, by Marcus Pfister as student BRAVE Ambassadors read the book aloud. The class will receive the following questions once the book is completed:
  - a. How did the Rainbow Fish earn his nickname?
  - b. Why did the other fish begin to shun him?
  - c. Why was Rainbow Fish so shocked when the other fish refused to speak to him or play with him?

- d. Why was the Rainbow Fish so happy at the end of the story?  
What lesson did he learn?
5. Student RAVE Ambassadors will then distribute a shiny scale and a marker to each student. Students will be instructed to write on the scale one way they can demonstrate kindness and consideration to their peers.
6. Each student in the class will be invited to share his/her scale's act of kindness with the class.
7. Each student will be invited to paste his/her scale onto a large fish to be displayed in the classroom.

## **BRAVE Student Ambassador Lesson #2**

*This lesson plan should be led by approximately four BRAVE Ambassadors.*

### **SEL Objective: Appreciating Diversity, Perspective Taking**

**Aim:** Can we address the dangers of labeling people based on their appearance?

1. **Motivation:** Students should form groups of three. Each group will be given an envelope containing questions for the group to answer. The questions will be:
  - a. What does a popular person look like?
  - b. What does an athlete look like?
  - c. What does a geek look like?
2. Each group will be given a different color marker. Once the groups are finished answering the questions, student BRAVE Ambassadors will invite one person from the group to come up record their responses to the first question on the chart paper labeled “POPULAR PERSON”.
3. The second member of the group will then write a description of an athlete on a second chart paper labeled “ATHELETE”.
4. The third member of the group will then write a description of a geek on a third piece of chart paper labeled “GEEK”.
5. Student BRAVE Ambassadors will review the lists with the class by reading aloud the various descriptions.
6. BRAVE Ambassadors will inform the class that they are to listen closely to a story entitled, *The English Roses*, by Madonna. Students should pay close attention to how the character Binah is judged.
7. Student Ambassadors will distribute questions for students to ponder during the Read-Aloud. They will then begin reading the story.
8. After reading page 12, student Ambassadors will instruct students to answer the question to numbers 1 and 2.
9. After reading page 17, student Ambassadors will instruct students to answer the question to number 3.
10. After reading page 38, student Ambassadors will instruct students to answer the question to numbers 4,5, and 6.
11. Finally, once the student BRAVE Ambassadors finish reading the book, they will instruct students to finish answering the questions.
12. The questions will be reviewed as a class.
13. Students will think-pair-share the dangers of using labels to determine a person’s personality.

14. Student BRAVE Ambassadors will then distribute “roses” to each student – a cut-out of a rose. On the rose, students will write something about themselves that makes them special. They can paste a picture of themselves on the rose as well and then it may be displayed on a bulletin board which poses the question, “Do You Know Me?”.
15. Ambassadors will remind students that before they judge someone, they should remember Binah and get to know that person first.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The English Roses*, by Madonna



1. Why did the English Roses dislike Binah?

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2. Why was Binah always alone? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What did the girls decide to do to Binah because they thought she was too full of herself? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. When the girls had the chance to spy on Binah, what did they learn about her? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How did their experience being invisible change their opinion of Binah?

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6. What lesson do the English Roses learn from their Fairy Godmother?

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7. When the girls gave Binah a chance to spend time with them, what did they learn?

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8. Why did people say the English Roses would grow up to be incredible women someday? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Have you ever judged someone before getting to know that person?

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What lesson can you learn from this book? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Classroom Lesson #1

### SEL Objective: Perspective Taking, Dispelling Stereotypes

**Aim:** Why may seeing situations through a different lens open us up to humankind?

#### Enabling Activities:

1. **Motivation:** In small groups of three or four, students will create a list of “negative” stereotypes for the elderly. The lists will be shared with the class.
2. Students will write in their journals about an older person who has had a positive influence on their lives. This person could be a teacher, a grandparent, a neighbor, a family friend, etc.
3. Students will be given the opportunity to share their responses with the class.
4. Together, the class will create a web specifying how a close relationship with an elder could be beneficial.
5. Students will listen to the picture book, *The Goat Lady*, by Jane Bregoli as it is read aloud.
6. Groups will answer the questions for the book together before the answers are reviewed as a class.
7. Students will begin reading the novel, *The Pigman*, by Paul Zindel. Special attention should be given to John and Lorraine’s initial impression of “The Pigman”, and also to what they say to indicate how much of an impact this elderly man had made on their lives.

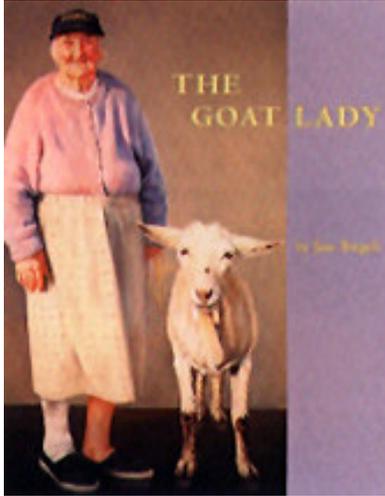
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ms. Gallagher

ELA 8-\_\_\_\_\_

*The Goat Lady*, by Jane Bregoli



1. Describe the appearance of the house on Lucy Little Road. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are some of the complaints the people had about the house on Lucy Little Road? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What was the speaker's first impression of Noelie? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. List three behaviors that set Noelie apart from others- what made her unique?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Why did Noelle own so many goats? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. To where did Noelle send some of her goats? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Why did people become more accepting of Noelle after the art show? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Classroom Lesson #2

**SEL Objective:** Appreciating Diversity, Working Cooperatively with Others, Avoiding Stereotypes

**Aim:** Can we develop an appreciation for diversity?

*To be done within the first week of school.*

Enabling Activities:

1. **Motivation:** Students will receive a piece of paper on which they are to write about a time when they were teased – it could be they were teased because of their name, race, religion, sex, financial status, or for doing well in school or for not doing well in school. All papers will be placed into a jar.
2. Students will then listen to the children's book, *The Name Jar*, by Yangsook Choi as it is read aloud.
3. After the book is read, students will ponder the following questions to respond to in a think-pair-share format:
  - a. What prompted Unhei to want to change her name?
  - b. Why was it difficult for Unhei to change her name?
  - c. Why did Unhei feel comfortable in Mr. Kim's store?
  - d. Why does Unhei ultimately decide to keep her true name?
  - e. How was Joey able to make Unhei feel more comfortable being herself?
4. After students share their responses/reactions to the story, they will be invited to select one of the papers from the class' jar of instances of teasing.
5. A large bowl filled with M&Ms will be placed on a desk in the front of the room next to a fresh, empty jar. Students will be asked how the different colored M&Ms could represent people: they may look or seem different, but are all the same inside.
6. Each student will read aloud what is on the piece of paper he/she pulled out of the teasing jar. As each experience is shared, any student who has shared a similar experience will come up to the front of the classroom to select an M&M from the bowl to place into the jar.
7. Once each student has shared the experience from the teasing jar, the students will observe the multitude of M&Ms in the jar. The class will keep the jar of M&Ms to serve as a reminder of how they should always respect each other's differences.
8. Students will write a reflection on the activity, paying special attention to the message taught through the book and jar of M&Ms.

### **Classroom Lesson #3**

**SEL Objective:** Bystander Responsibility, Developing Empathy, and Perspective Taking Skills.

#### **MATERIALS:**

*Wings*, a picture book, by Christopher Meyers

Pre-reading worksheets

Post-reading worksheets

Quality Circle questions

**Aim:** How can being a responsible bystander make a difference in a bullying situation?

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. **MOTIVATION:** “Respond to the enclosed “DO NOW.”
2. The children’s book, *Wings*, will be read aloud to the class.
3. Students will complete the enclosed questions.
4. Students will then share responses with the class.
  - The emphasis is placed on bystander responsibility.

#### **CLOSURE:**

Students will apply what they learned to their own experiences.

Exit cards will be distributed for students to write about a particular group that they feel gets targeted in our school. The responses will be anonymous.

#### **FOLLOW-UP:**

A quality circle will be conducted based on the student responses.

The enclosed questions may be used to guide the group discussion.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**DO NOW:**

What do you think it would be like if you had wings?

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Would it make a difference if you were the only person to have wings?  
Explain.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

After reading *Wings*, by Christopher Myers, answer the following questions.

1. How does Ikarus feel about everyone whispering about him?

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2. How does the narrator compare himself to Ikarus?

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3. At one point, the narrator states, “At recess the snicker grew into a giggle and spread across the playground.” Why do you think more kids joined in?

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4. How did the narrator make a difference in Ikarus’ life?

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5. What could some of the other children have done differently?

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## Questions to address in a Quality Circle

1. Pretend you are a character in the book. What could you do to make the situation better for the main character?

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2. How do you think people in this school treat others who are considered different?

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3. What could you do to make our school a more accepting community?

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## **BRAVE Student Ambassador Lesson #3**

### **SEL OBJECTIVES:**

Develop empathy, perspective-taking, and cooperative learning skills.

### **Materials:**

Picture book – *When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant

Copies of the story

Writing Journals

**Aim:** How can learning about others generate acceptance?

### **Activities:**

- 1. Motivation:** Reflect upon a time in your life that was special to you. Think about who you were with, where you were, and what you were doing. Describe this time by using sensory images including sight, sounds, smell, taste, and touch. Write this time of your life in your writing journal and then share with your partner.
2. The BRAVE Student Ambassadors will read aloud from the picture book stopping at key points so the students can note connections in their journals.  
Volunteers will be called on to share their connections.
3. Using the story as a model, the students will create a poem about a special time in their lives. Students can use their reflection they wrote during the motivation, review their connections, or think about another time that is special.

### **Day 2**

1. Students will complete and share their poems with their partners.
2. Students will reflect upon the similarities and differences in their poems.
3. Students will then culminate the activity with a joint project demonstrating what they have in common and what makes them unique. Projects can incorporate art, poetry, song, the internet, drama, etc.

**Day 3**

1. Students will take part in a literary celebration where they can display their work and receive feedback from the other students.

**Closure:**

Students will evaluate the various activities that they participated in by writing a reflective piece which will include what they learned as well as ideas they have for future activities.

## **Classroom Lesson #4**

### **SEL OBJECTIVE:**

Develop empathy and bystander responsibility

Aim: How can we help people who are being bullied?

### **MATERIALS:**

Copies of *Terrible Things*, by Eve Bunting

Copies of Response Questions

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Copies of *Terrible Things* and Response Questions will be distributed. The students will be asked to think about the questions as they listen to the story.
2. The teacher will read the story to the class.
3. After reading the story, the students will answer the questions in groups.
4. Responses will be shared with the class.
  - **Emphasis should be placed on how each group justified why the other groups were taken.**
  - **This story is an example of an allegory. What do you think an allegory is? An allegory is a form of an extended metaphor, in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative, are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance.**

**CLOSURE:** How can we make a difference?

***Terrible Things***

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group members:

\_\_\_\_\_

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did the Terrible Things take one group at a time?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What were the animals' reactions after each group was taken?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think the theme of this story is?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Think about times in our history where people were treated like the animals in the story. Provide at least two examples.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How does this relate to our lives?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Classroom Lesson #5**

**To be assisted by BRAVE Student Ambassador**

**SEL OBJECTIVE: Appreciating Cultural Differences**

### **MATERIALS:**

*One Green Apple*, by Eve Bunting

Post-its

Journals

**Aim: How can we develop an appreciation of cultural diversity?**

### **ACTIVITIES:**

#### **1. MOTIVATION:**

Write about a time in your life when you felt uncomfortable. This could be a time when you moved or joined a club/sport not knowing anyone. How did you feel? Did anyone help to make you feel more comfortable? Share responses.

2. The teacher will read *One Green Apple*, while the students use post-its to indicate each time they can make a personal connection to the story.

3. After reading the book, the students will write about one of the connections they made to the book.

4. The students will meet in groups with a BRAVE Ambassador assigned to each group. They will share their responses.

5. The students will meet as a class and discuss what they learned from one another.

### **CLOSURE:**

Students will write something they could do to help a new person adjust to school.

### **FOLLOW-UP:**

Students will read *Good-bye, 382 Shin Dang Dong*, which is about a girl's life before she moves to this country.

### **ELA OBJECTIVE:**

Students will make personal connections and answer questions in order to enhance reading comprehension.

## **Classroom Lesson #6**

### **SEL OBJECTIVE:**

Students will develop a greater understanding of people from different cultures.

### **MATERIALS:**

*Good-bye, 382 Shin Dang Dong* by Francis Park and Ginger Park

Post-its

Worksheets

### **ACTIVITIES:**

#### **1. MOTIVATION:**

Students will be asked to share a lesson they learned from *One Green Apple* with a partner.

2. The students will answer the pre-reading question in their worksheet.
3. The teacher or a BRAVE Ambassador will read the book to the class and the students will once again use post-its every time they make connections to the book.
4. The students will complete the enclosed worksheet.
5. The students will meet in groups with a BRAVE Ambassador assigned to each group. They will share their personal connections and responses to the questions.

### **CLOSURE:**

Students will meet as a class and discuss what they learned from one another.

### **FOLLOW-UP:**

Students will work in groups led by BRAVE Ambassadors to create various scenarios depicting the way(s) people could be helpful to new students.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-reading:**

Based on the title and cover of the book, predict what you think the book will be about.

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**Post- reading:**

1. What do you think the first line means?

“My heart beats in two places.”

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2. How do you think you would feel if you woke up knowing that you had to say good-bye to your home?

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3. Do you have a family tradition where everyone celebrates an occasion together?

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4. If you moved, what do you think you would miss the most?

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5. How do you think you would feel if you were asked to change your name? What name do you think you would choose?

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6. What do you think helped Jangmi to feel more comfortable in her new home?

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## **BRAVE Student Ambassador Lesson #4**

### **SEL OBJECTIVE:**

To promote harmony, acceptance, and understanding among people. Students will develop and incorporate an understanding of their feelings and the feelings of others.

### **MATERIALS:**

*Mr. Peabody's Apples* by Madonna

Apple activity sheets

Markers

**Aim:** How can we prevent rumors from spreading?

### **ACTIVITIES:**

#### **1. MOTIVATION:**

The BRAVE Student Ambassadors will ask the class to raise their hands if they have ever played a game called or similar to “Telephone.” As students raise their hands, the ambassadors will call on some volunteers to share how the game is played.

2. Ambassadors will then introduce *Mr. Peabody's Apples* and explain that this is a story about spreading rumors. Ambassadors will explain that the students' job will be to listen to the story to learn the meaning of the expression, “words have power.”

3. After the story is finished, the ambassadors will discuss the following ideas and questions with the class:

- Why do you think Tommy rushed to tell his friends that Mr. Peabody had stolen an apple? (Jealousy, attention, to get Mr. Peabody in trouble)
- What happened as a result of the rumor being spread? (people believed he was a thief, the town ostracized him, people didn't want to spend time with him)
- How did the rumor or problem get solved?
- How did Tommy try to make the situation better?
- What did the pillow and the feathers have to do with the story?

- What was Mr. Peabody's point in spreading the feathers in the wind? (you can never bring back all those feathers or words when you spread rumors)
- How do you think Mr. Peabody felt in this story?
- How do you think Tommy felt before AND after he spread the rumor about Mr. Peabody?
- Has anything like this ever happened to you?

### **CLOSURE:**

The BRAVE Student Ambassadors will then explain how important it is to understand the power of words. Each member of the class will receive a paper apple on which they will write one way to prevent the spread of rumors.

### **Examples of Apples:**

- **Remember the power of your words!**
- **Don't be so quick to judge a person.**
- **If you don't have all the facts, don't spread the story!**
- **What matters is the truth.**
- **Things aren't always what they seem.**
- **Don't spread rumors!**
- **Stick up for a friend.**
- **Squash the rumor!**
- **If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything!**
- **Be kind to others.**
- **Respect the feelings of others.**
- **Do the right thing.**
- **A person is a person, no matter what...**

