IT’S OK!! EVERYBODY’S DIFFERENT

GUIDE AND ACTIVITIES

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*We appreciate that you will modify the questions to meet the grade level of your child.*

*Please allow us to use “child” or “children” in our directions to also mean student/students/class.*
It’s OK!! Everybody’s Different

Guided Reading with Children

First Story  “The Purple Bottomus”

After reading the first story your child will be able to:

✓ Explain why differences are okay.
✓ List ways people are different from one another.
✓ Discuss why everyone should be treated with respect?

Read the story aloud to your child:

Step One: Take a trip around the story. After telling them the title of the book and asking them to look at some of the pictures in the story, ask your child to tell you what they think is going to happen in the story.

Step Two: Read the story aloud to your child. Before turning each page, ask about something you just read to them. For example, if you read about the Hippo’s purple “bottomus” ask you child to point to the hippo’s mouth and tell you whether he is happy or sad and how he/she knows that. Go one step further and ask, “Then how do you think he feels about his purple “bottomus?”

Step Three: Continue to ask simple awareness questions about each page as you read.

Step Four: At the end of the story ask your child how all the animals are different? Did the animals get along even if they were different? Are people different? How? Are your friends different? How? Do get along with your friends who are different? So what do you think? Is it okay to be different?
**It’s OK!! Everybody’s Different**

**Guided Reading with Children**

**Second Story  “Frightened Jack, the Yellow Jacket”**

After reading the second story your child will be able to:

- Explain what bullies are, how they act and what a swarm is.
- Describe a few qualities that will attract and keep friends.
- List things to do if he/she feels afraid of a bully.

**Read the story aloud to your child:**

**Step One:** Tell your child the title of the story and have him/her look at the pictures and tell you how he/she thinks the story got its name. Why is Jack crying? Why is he frightened? Is Penelope a good friend to Jack? Why or why not? What did she tell Jack to do? What did Jack’s Mother tell him to do?

**Step Two:** What did Jack learn in his dream about why Mr. Big Bully thought he himself should lead the swarm? What did Big Bully seem to be worried about?

**Step Three:** What things did Penelope like about her friend Jack? Why did she want Jack to always be her friend? What was the important thing that Penelope wanted in a friend that Jack had.

**Step Four:** In the end, what did Jack decide to do about Big Bully? What did Jack decide to do about joining the swarm again?
Third Story  “Teacher Katie”

After reading the third story your child will be able to:

- Identify different ways of learning.
- Tell which way he/she likes to learn about things; through pictures, hearing stories, repeating stories?
- Compare things about school that make you want to go to school and things that make you want to stay home.

Read the story aloud to your child.

**Step One:** Look at the pictures and have your child “guess” what is taking place in each one. Does Katie with the yellow hat look like she might be going to school? What things in that picture make you think Katie might be a teacher? Why do you think Katie is crying? What makes you cry sometimes?

**Step Two:** What did Katie’s mother think about Katie crying before school each day? Do you think Katie’s mother was right about not letting Katie stay home from school? Why or why not. What do you think Katie’s mother could have done to help Katie feel better about going to school?

**Step Three:** Did you like the teacher Katie grew up to be? Why-why not? What did Katie always think about when she was teaching her own class? (If the reader is in school ask...What kinds of things does your teacher do to make learning fun?)

**Step Four:** Did Katie like being a teacher? How do you know? How did the story and/or pictures tell you what her students thought about being in Teacher Katie’s class?
ACTIVITIES FOR

IT’S OK! EVERYBODY’S DIFFERENT

HAVE SOME MORE FUN AFTER READING
A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORD SEARCH

Directions to the Reader: On a sheet of paper write the letters of your first and/or last name going down the left hand side of your paper in a column; one letter at a time. Next to each letter, write or draw a word from one of the stories that start with that letter. Practice reading the words you write down.

Example:
S  swarm (From Frightened Jack)
A  animals (From The Purple Bottomus)
M  mail  (From Teacher Katie)

A WORK OF ART

Directions to the Reader: Create your own animal to add to the story of Purple Bottomus. It can either be a real animal or one you make up on your own. Select from the projects below or create your own.

- Draw and color a picture of your animal
- Make a collage of your animal.
- Make your animal out of play dough or clay.
- Build your animal out of Popsicle sticks or some other material.
- Paint a picture of your animal.
- Build your animal out of blocks or Legos.

TALK FOR THE ANIMALS

Read the story aloud again. If reading to your child, ask them to make the noise of the animal every time they hear the name of the animal; i.e. when they hear you read “lion” in the story they roar, or squeal when they hear “pig” etc.

If a class is listening to the story being read each child pretends to be one of the animals and every time they hear the name of their animal such as hippo and skunk they either make the noise that they think the animal would make or they can move around their seat as they think the animal would move. This might even lead to a fun discussion about how animals talk to one another and how animals move from place to place. Just as the animals look different they also sound different. The discussion could also focus on how each person could make the roar of a lion sound just a little different from someone else’s roar. No one should be afraid that the noise they make for the animal they are portraying is wrong. It’s just different! It’s OK to be different.
A SCHOOL FOR TEACHER KATIE

Ask your mom for a big piece of chart paper. Using your crayons and any other materials you may have such as scraps of material, buttons, old cards, etc. make a school for Teacher Katie. Remember it’s ok to be different so the school you make does not have to look like your school or a school near your home. Maybe you could draw the playground outside too. When you are finished ask your mom to please hang it up so you can tell her all about your drawing. You could also ask her if she would like to add anything to Teacher Katie’s school. If you are in a class of children the teacher can put you in groups to make a school for Teacher Katie. When finished each group hangs their picture on the wall and the entire class takes a walk around the room looking at all the different types of schools for Teacher Katie. When you sit back down everyone can talk about the differences and similarities.

MAKE WORDS

Directions to the Reader: Write Teacher Katie across the top of your paper. Write down all the words you can make out of Teacher Katie or say them aloud to your mom or teacher.

Example: Tea out of the TEA in Teacher.
Let’s Compare

Describe Katie’s teacher when she was a little bear.

Describe how they were alike.

Describe Katie as a teacher.

In what way did Teacher Katie want to be different from her teacher when she was a little bear cub?
Camera, Lights, Action

**Directions to Parents or Teachers:** Before starting this activity gather lots of materials to make puppets; old shirts, sheets, or pillow cases or some construction paper, buttons, yarn, felt, sequins, etc. Don’t forget the glue stick. Ask your child to invite some friends over (or if a teacher, your class) to make up a story about their favorite animals and how each animal is different which makes them special; the more animals the more fun it will be. Each child can make a puppet for each animal. They can even find old boxes and make a puppet stage. After all their work is complete and they have practiced their lines be sure to invite an audience to watch the performance.

Charades

**Directions to Parents or Teachers:** Invite some friends over and divide them into two teams. Place slips of paper in a bowl with different teacher behaviors or teacher supplies written on the slips. When the child selects one he/she acts it out for his/her team and they try to beat the clock and guess the correct answer. For kindergarten or even first grade students you may need to discuss the meaning of teacher behaviors and give some examples.

Name that Character

**Directions to Parents or Teachers:** Ask your children to brainstorm all the television or book characters they know that remind them of any of the characters in the three stories. Give each student a “story map” (on following page) to fill in as you write the names they give you on a large piece of chart paper with the story map on it. In the center you could write “Bottomus, Jack and Katie”
The next step is to use the information on the story map to have the children write a story on their own, as a class or with their parent.
Story Scrapbook

Directions to Parents or Teachers: Ask your children to select one of the characters from one of the three stories. They are to make a scrapbook about that character’s life. Ask them to draw pictures of family members they think this character would have and draw scenes of your character’s life; where they go to school, their home, a celebration etc. Perhaps there could be some drawings of some of the other characters in the book. Cutting out pictures from magazines can also be used. Then ask them to write short captions to describe the drawings. When all the drawings are finished give them two pieces of card board; one for the front cover and one for the back cover. They are to make the front cover and decorate the back cover as well. When they are finished punch three holes in all the pages and cardboard and help your child/students tie ribbon or string in each hole making a bow that will hold the book together. They can then sit with you, other family members or another friend or student and go through the scrapbook explaining each picture. Note: If this activity is done in a class, ask students to pair off with another student who has made their scrapbooks about the same character. After they each have shared their book ask them to talk about the differences in the way each child portrayed the main character. Guide them to talk about the differences in people and were differences right or wrong; was it ok to be different?

Advertise!

Directions to Parents or Teachers: Talk with your child/students about the advertisements they see on television or in magazines. Show them many examples; if they have a laptop or iPad look at some real children’s commercials. Ask them what they all have in common and list those things on a piece of paper or chart paper. Talk about how ads make you want to buy the product or read the book. Together make an advertisement or a commercial for one of the stories in the book. The object of the activity is to have students see what the main idea of the book is, identify why they liked the story and entice other children to read the story.

Sit and Share

Directions to Teachers: Ask the class to sit in a big circle. Going around the circle one student at a time, each student shares a favorite experience they had in school or their favorite school activity. Remind them to tell why it was and/or is their favorite school experience or activity.
Bully Be Gone!

Directions to Parents or Teachers: Talk about these five smart strategies to keep them from becoming targets — and stop bullying that has already started:

1. **Talk about it.** Talk about bullying with your kids and have other family members share their experiences. If one of your kids opens up about being bullied, praise him or her for being brave enough to discuss it and offer unconditional support. Consult with the school to learn its policies and find out how staff and teachers can address the situation.

2. **Remove the bait.** If it's lunch money or gadgets that the school bully is after, you can help neutralize the situation by encouraging your child to pack a lunch or go to school gadget-free.

3. **Buddy up for safety.** Two or more friends standing at their lockers are less likely to be picked on than a child who is all alone. Remind your child to use the buddy system when on the school bus, in the bathroom, or wherever bullies may lurk.

4. **Keep calm and carry on.** If a bully strikes, a kid's best defense may be to remain calm, ignore hurtful remarks, tell the bully to stop, and simply walk away. Bullies thrive on hurting others. A child who isn't easily ruffled has a better chance of staying off a bully's radar.

5. **Don't try to fight the battle yourself.** Sometimes talking to a bully's parents can be constructive, but it's generally best to do so in a setting where a school official, such as a counselor, or your teacher, can mediate. (Ask the counselor to talk with the child who was bullied and his/her parents too.)

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Discuss with your child/students if Jack in the story, *Frightened Jack* tried any of the tips listed above when dealing with Mr. Big Bully? Which one(s)? Did they work? Did Jack feel better at the end of the story? Why or why not?

What do you think Teacher Katie would have done about Mr. Big Bully if he had been in her class? Would she have helped Jack not be afraid or sad? Draw a picture of Jack in Teacher Katie’s class.

Teachers, you might want to invite the school counselor into your class to talk to the children about some of the things that might make someone act like a bully; i.e. want to be the leader, want to show they are more important than others, might be jealous of someone, want to appear “tougher” than others etc. and what they should do if a bully is bothering them. Assure students that if they are having trouble with a bully they should tell them or their teacher or parent about the problem so that it won’t continue.
Credits to our References:

- American School Counselors Association
- International Reading Association
- KidsHealth.com
- National Reading Association
- Scholastic Book Company
ABOUT OUR AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATOR

Paula E. Gelbach, author of It’s Ok!! Everybody’s Different grew up in Washington, DC. She attended four years of study at Wells College, Aurora, New York. After receiving her BA at Wells, Paula went to teach in an elementary school in Maryland and Connecticut. She received her Master’s Degree in Elementary School Education at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven.

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Kathleen K. Potts was born and raised in Pittsburgh. She attended Wilson College and graduated with an art history major in 1962. Upon graduation she began to teach at the grade school level. Continuing her education she received her Masters of Education in 1967. Pausing to have four children, she returned to teaching and retired in 2001. Kathy continues her love of children by volunteering at a small store-front school for minority children as well as continuing to paint, knit and enjoy her 10 grandchildren. The Study Guide uses illustrations she created for the book, "It's OK!! Everybody's Different". Kathy has illustrated a second book, "Stories Along the Way".