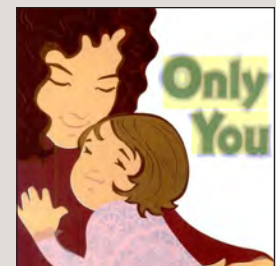
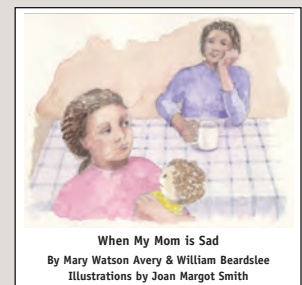
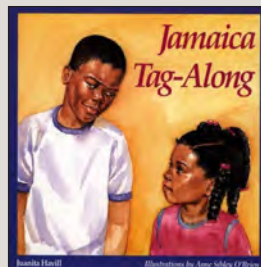


Introduction to the Book Guides



Preparing to Read a Book in Circle Time:

1) Familiarize yourself with the storybook and curriculum materials: Before sharing a book with the children, read the story and review the Tell Me a Story Curriculum for that story, selecting the key points you want to focus on while actually reading the story. Each book will have a social-emotional theme to be discussed at the conclusion of the story, so be sure to select the story's highlight events that could illustrate these themes.

Reflection

Take some time to think about your group of children and try to anticipate what the story might make them think about.

Do you know of a child who might be especially sensitive or eager to talk about the subject?

Imagining the children's potential responses can help you feel more prepared to encourage a positive conversation.

Pay attention to your feelings about the themes in the story. Are you looking forward to reading this book and having this discussion?

Or does this story make you apprehensive?

Why?

Imagining the children's potential responses can help you feel more prepared to encourage a positive conversation.

2) Think about your objectives in sharing the book you have selected: When selecting books with social and emotional themes it is important to consider your objectives in sharing it and encouraging conversation. Your first priority in encouraging an expressive environment is to maintain an emotionally safe atmosphere for everyone. While it is crucial to remain open to children who feel the need to share a spontaneous memory or question – this curriculum does not advocate insisting children recall emotional experiences. For example, in reading *When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry...*, teachers may be tempted to ask the children to simply remember a time when they got mad. We suggest asking the children, "What does angry feel like?" This allows the children to consider the emotion without being asked to personalize it.

3) Decide on size of the group: Is this a book, discussion, and activity you want to bring to Circle Time? Or would it be better to present it to a small group or one-on-one with a child? Here are some things to consider while planning the presentation of the book and activity:

- ▶ **Whole Class (10-20 children):** If you are reading to a large group, consider breaking out of the circle formation, so that children can move closer to you and all face the book. This may help each child to see the illustrations and print more clearly, and in turn, cut down on the number of children frustrated or made fidgety. If you like, you can reform the circle after the story is finished. The large group should be broken up into smaller groups for the activity, depending on the number of students and supporting staff. Teachers can decide if these smaller groups will engage in the same activity within each group, or if different groups engage in different activities. The distinction depends largely on the makeup of the class and the classroom management skills of the teacher(s).
- ▶ **Small Group (3-6 children):** When reading and processing the story with a small group of children, the storyteller will be able to oversee one central activity.
- ▶ **Individual Child:** When an adult is reading a story with only one child, these two individuals can participate in the activity together.

4) Plan for three readings of each book: Please plan to read each book three times, approximately once per week for three weeks. Preschool age children gain mastery through repetition and revisiting the book can help them to form a deeper understanding. With this in mind, each set of questions is designed to build on the child's understanding of the book, its social-emotional themes, and the relevance of those themes to the child.

- ▶ The first reading provides a set of questions focused on helping the child to learn about the plot and characters in the story.
- ▶ The second reading provides a stronger focus on the social-emotional themes of the story.
- ▶ The third reading fosters a connection between the social-emotional themes and the children. This includes encouraging conversation about strategies for negotiating different emotions and social situations. You will find an activity at the end of the third reading as well.

5) Using the suggested questions: The curriculum suggests questions that you can pose to the children. These questions were generated as a result of using the books with teachers and children in preschool classrooms. You do not have to ask all of the questions and the questions you choose to ask should depend on your style and the group of children. Feel free to ask additional questions, respond to the children's spontaneous questions, or make your own comments about the story while reading.

6) After reading the story: There are suggested activities or discussions designed to help children realize the connection between the story and their own lives. You can plan to use these activities immediately following Circle Time, but you may also choose to schedule them for another time in the day. Please remember that the children will benefit from a reminder of the book if the activity does not follow Circle Time. Simply showing the children the book cover again and remembering with them what the book was about can be enough to keep the connection between story and activity clear.