

TEACHER SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF *ADALYN'S CLARE*

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Note to Teacher:

Explosive behavior is scary for everyone, but particularly for an elementary aged student who might observe another student losing control but not understand why anyone would act in such a way. I am hopeful that this story can, in a playful way, help to explain social anxiety as well as explosive or difficult behavior. Adalyn's problems are not just "bad behavior", and I hope the story illustrates that in a way that children can appreciate. Adalyn also has a program that might not be obvious to everyone else in the school. Mrs. Kelly is working as hard on teaching her relaxation as Mrs. Thomas is to teach her reading or math. Relaxation is a very important part of Adalyn's school plan.

I also hope that children can appreciate and respect Adalyn's difference. I hope this story can be used as a part of an anti-bullying campaign to jump-start a discussion about the painful side effects of bullying. The story could also prompt discussion about Adalyn's unique nature, and how fun it would be to have someone like her as a friend.

The science club topics are fun ones to talk about. Your class might want to research local endangered animals. The class could sponsor a fund raiser to "adopt" an endangered animal. The class could also double check the geographic anomalies mentioned in the book and find some of their own!

Suggested Book Discussion Questions for Children

1. Adalyn has a lot of worries and anxiety. Have you ever felt worried or anxious? What kinds of things make you feel worried? What helps you feel better when you get worried?

2. What things helped Adalyn to relax? How did Clare help her to relax?
3. Do you think the science room animals help the reader by telling their stories?
4. Why do you think the science club is a good place for Adalyn to find friends?
5. How was Richard Riker being a bully to Adalyn? Have you ever been bullied? Have you ever been a “hero” by standing up for someone else who was being bullied?
6. Who was your favorite character in the story?
7. Do you know a teacher like Mr. Spencer? What made Mr. Spencer so special?
8. Was it helpful for you to know Clare’s thoughts?
9. Do you think Adalyn will have a better year in 5th grade? Why or why not?
10. Does your school have a science club? Would it be something you would be interested in starting or joining?

Relating Adalyn’s Clare to Common Core Standards

The Common Core Standards or your state’s literacy standards can be related to the use of this book in the following ways:

1. Discuss the varying character perspectives and character thoughts regarding Adalyn’s behavior and responses to every day problems at school.
2. Discuss the theme of the story as it relates to anxiety, emotions and friendships.
3. Describe Adalyn’s character in depth.
4. Describe Clare’s character in depth

5. How does Adalyn differ from Henry and how are they the same?
6. How does Mr. Hirtle's character compare to Adalyn's character?
7. How does the animal's perception of Adalyn compare to the human perception of her?

Supportive Information Regarding Adalyn's Clare and Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy is the use of fiction to teach social and emotional information. Raymond Mar, a Psychologist at York University in Canada, performed an analysis of 86 fMRI studies, published in 2012 in the Annual Review of Psychology, and concluded that there was substantial overlap in the brain networks used to understand stories and the networks used to navigate interaction with other individuals. Mar found that this was true, in particular, for interactions in which we are trying to figure out the thoughts and feelings of other people, referred to as Theory of Mind.

In a 2010 study, Dr. Mar found that the more stories children had read to them, the keener their theory of mind. Fiction, is particularly useful because negotiating the social world is very tricky and requires a child to weigh all the issues of cause and effect. Stories and dramas can help children understand these complex social issues.

Dr. Kimberly Maich, co-author of *Read Two Books and Write Me in the Morning: Bibliotherapy for Social Emotional Intervention in the Inclusive Classroom* (Teaching Exceptional Children Plus. 2004) made the following comments regarding the use of Adalyn's Clare in Bibliotherapy:

-I love how the story starts RIGHT with that tent, pointing out not only issues of self-regulation and a strategy for success, but also sensory issues. It doesn't have to be about a "diagnosis." Many students would identify with this straight away.

-The 'internal dialogue' is just right. I can imagine students nodding away with this one, as well. Many of our students would be upset about an unexpected adult in the classroom for the day, but this could be devastating for some.

-I like that there is more than one effective 'escape' strategy in the first few pages.

-I also appreciate the reaction of the substitute teacher to effective strategy use. This certainly reflects what I am sure are the experiences of many students, not only in school, but in the community, and perhaps the home environment, as well. This is a great jumping-off point for a discussion.

-GREAT that the 'special teacher' doesn't have a specific role name--I think this helps with the bibliotherapeutic approach and allows more students to reflect on similar experiences. This would be excellent for an activity on 'best practice' in the school environment.

-On page five, I like how the often 'factual' soothing nature of many of our students with ASD is gently mentioned, and mentioned as a POSITIVE.

-On page seven, again, I appreciate all the positives, wonderful goals for future relationship development. Again, students could set their OWN such goals!

-On the same page, I love the specific list for supporting the puppy's needs. This is just right, and again could lead to many reflective activities.

-On page 10, I really like that sad conversation about being friendless. This will be also familiar to many of our students, and certainly has potentially for identification and catharsis upon reading this. The conversation about waiting in line is perfect, as well. It's like you are right inside the head of one of our students!

-On page 14, all those visible/invisible 'signs' of anxiety are right on target!

-On page 16, you can see the value in positive modeling of strategies that really work--like visuals. I enjoy how the main character has then chosen to imitate their use.

-On page 19, again we can see those adult perceptions which we THINK are hidden ... but maybe not! How great that on page 23, we see this again but from the perspective of 'getting inside the head' of an animal! Very nice!

-Chapter 6 (and p. 63) totally surprised me and my first reaction is WONDERFUL! We are getting an in-depth look at yet another perspective. Perhaps this could even help develop theory-of-mind skills!

-On page 31, I love how the vocabulary that the main character is using is developing! Again, it is great to read these often-discussed characteristics in action!

-Chapter 8 is amazing, approaching this often-discussed, but not often read about, topic in literature intended for our students. Wonderful!

-What an excellent lesson on p. 43! I am sure that it is hoped that perhaps the ADULTS in a situation like this would learn this particular lesson, as well.

-At the start of p. 44, I enjoyed more ABA standards popping up here! Plus, I love that research is mentioned

-On p. 47, this metaphorical look at friendship may draw some students out to discuss a topic that might be too difficult to address directly.

-On p. 51, what a great way to express that 'helper' mode of building social opportunities! Way to go, therapy dog!

-Up to p. 55 (and before and beyond) is so interesting to me. I don't think I have ready many--if any--novels that actually pull apart the emotions around a suspension. Fantastic!

-on p. 58-59, the use and explanation/translation of more clinical/education terms is great! What a perfect teaching moment.

This is why books work so well to not only teach about content, but also social/emotional issues!

-On p. 71, we see a very nicely written example of how to be kind and empathic to others--even if you may not understand what they are feeling!

-On p. 74, this would fit in well with the five-point scale!

-I like this theme of inclusivity/forgiveness/second changes throughout!

-I love how it combines strong interest, an enjoyable story, as well as social/emotional problem-solving, AND it's also full of instructions for best practices!

Good luck and don't hesitate to e-mail me with any questions:
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