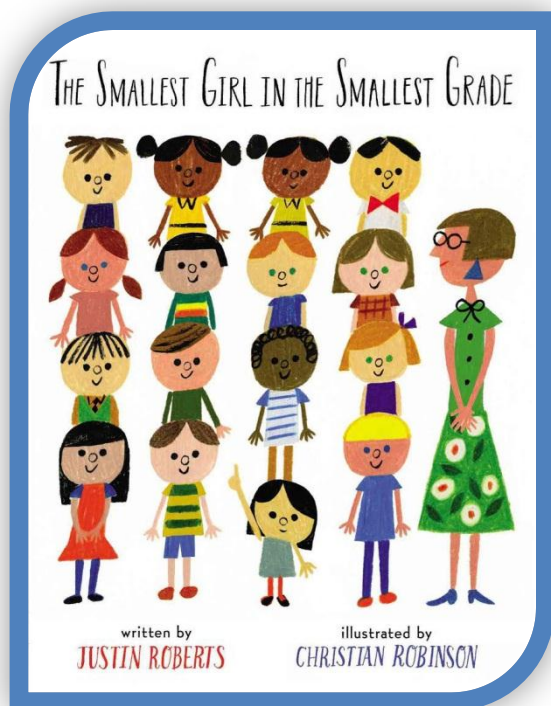




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade

Justin Roberts (Author), Christian Robinson (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0399257438

Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons

Year Published: 2014

Age Range: 3–6

Book Themes

Bullying, Mean behavior, Standing up, Being an ally

About the Book

Hardly anyone noticed young Sally McCabe. She was the smallest girl in the smallest grade. But Sally notices everything—from the twenty-seven keys on the janitor's ring to the bullying happening on the playground. One day, Sally has had enough and decides to make herself heard. And when she takes a chance and stands up to the kids who are bullying others, she finds that one small girl can make a difference.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen

thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What is the story about?
- What was your favorite scene and why?
- What kind of stuff did Sally notice in school?
- Have you ever seen things like that at your school?
- How would you describe Sally's personality?
- Have you ever known anyone like Sally?
- Why do you think Sally stood up and said something at lunch that day?
- What happened when everyone put their fingers in the air?
- Do you think one person can make a difference?
- Is there something you care about so much that you might stand up the way Sally did?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Observing and "Noticing"

The main character in the book, Sally McCabe, is a very observant girl. She notices small and large things every day—from the twenty-seven keys on the janitor's ring to the time that Tommy Torino was tripped in the hallway. It is precisely because Sally pays such close attention to detail that she observes all the mean and bullying behavior that takes place at her school. Being a keen observer is a skill that comes naturally to some children and for others, it needs to be taught, reinforced and nurtured. As you read the book, point out and ask questions about what Sally notices and how she makes those observations. As you go about your day with your child, point out things they may not notice, including the words, facial expressions and body language of people you see, which promotes empathy. Walk around your block or neighborhood in silence and look around; when you come back home share notes on what you each observed. When your child comes home from school, ask thought-provoking questions that get them to think about what they observed and encourage them to observe things that others may not see. In this way, you convey the message that noticing is important and you give them practice in doing so.

2. Mean Behavior

As you read the book together, talk about the mean behavior that unfolds throughout the book. Ask your child what Sally notices about how kids are being pushed, tripped, called names, excluded, etc. For each of these incidents, ask what is going on and how the person feels, which encourages empathy. Point out the difference between name-calling (using words to hurt or be mean to someone or a group), teasing (laughing at and putting someone down in a way that is either friendly and playful or mean and unkind) and bullying (when one person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.) Young children are more likely to see mean behavior, name-calling and teasing rather than bullying but it is important to define the terms accurately. Talk to your child about the extent to which they see this

kind of behavior in their school and how it is addressed, either by other children, the teacher or other adults in the school. Affirm that there are many ways to address the mean behavior we see and they all make a difference.

3. Be An Ally

It is important to convey to your child that when mean, bullying or biased behavior occurs, there are many ways you can choose to be an ally. As you are reading the book together, ask what Sally McCabe did about the mean behavior taking place in her school. Elicit/explain that in the first place, Sally took notice of the behavior. Then, she stood up and said something about it in a very public way. Ask your child if there are other things Sally or anyone else could have done and brainstorm some ideas. Discuss the myriad of ways someone can **be an ally** and ask your child to identify ways they have been an ally or observed other people being allies. You can also talk about situations they have experienced or witnessed involving bullying or mean behavior and role play with them how they might be an ally in that situation. Be sure to emphasize the need for safety and support when choosing an ally strategy. In addition, be a role model for your child by standing up for what's right in small and large ways and talk with them about what you did and why.

Other Books You May Like

The following are curriculum and resources on bullying and social justice.

Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/each-kindness.html

One by Kathryn Otoshi, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/one.html

The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/the-invisible-boy.html

ADL Additional Resources

The following are resources on bullying and social justice.

Print Material

Be An Ally: Six Simple Ways

www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Be-an-Ally-Six-Ways-online-version.pdf

This resource provides simple things youth can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying.

Are You Ready to Be an Ally?

www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Are-You-Ready-to-Be-an-Ally.pdf

This resource provides some thoughts to guide youth in determining if their read to be an ally as well as ways they can become an ally.

Websites

Anti-Bias Education

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators,

administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

Bullying/Cyberbullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/bullying-cyberbullying

Anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying training program offerings, curriculum and resources for youth, educators, youth providers and adult family members.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/parent-family-and-caregivers.html

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-bullying.html

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

The Question Corner

www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Child and Youth Activism, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice-books.html?subsocial=child-and-youth-activism