



Small Things

Activity 1: All-Around Communication

Format:

- Small Groups

Materials:

- Letter size paper
- Pencils

Timing:

- Following the pre-reading discussion

Instructions:

1. Guide students to consider some different aspects of communication – Written, Spoken, Body language, Tone of voice, Register.
2. In small groups, instruct students to compare and contrast the aspects of communication and record their ideas.
3. Lead a discussion for students to share their findings with the class.

Activity 2: A Different World

Format:

- Individual

Materials:

- Letter size paper
- Colouring pencils, markers, crayons

Timing:

- Following the pre-reading discussion

Instructions:

1. Guide students to imagine a world without relationships.
 - Ask them: What would this look like to you?
2. Instruct students to draw a picture depicting their ideas of what this would look and feel like.
3. Ask if any students feel comfortable sharing their drawings or thoughts with the class.

Activity 3: Decision Map

Format:

- Small Groups

Materials:

- Legal or chart (large) size paper
- Colouring pencils, markers, crayons

Timing:

- While Reading

Instructions:

1. Divide students into small groups
2. Instruct students to select a situation from the book they can relate to, and discuss what they would do if faced with that situation. For example:
 - What would you do if someone you weren't friends with tried to join in an activity you were doing with your friends?
 - What would you do if you were worried about a friend or someone in your class?

3. Ask each group to create a mind map representing their decision-making processes through that situation (i.e., decisions you made, factors that contributed to your final decision).
 - Note: Students can be creative but you may need to show some examples of mind maps like this one to get them started - <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/decision-making-mind-map--530650768579250036/>.
4. Ask each group to share their chosen situation and decision process.
5. As a class, discuss any apparent themes in the decision-making processes across groups.

Activity 4: Put Words to It

Format:

- Individual

Materials:

- Letter size paper or journal
- Pencils

Timing:

- While Reading

Instructions:

1. Remind students that while Small Things is a picture book with no words, it is able to communicate powerful messages to readers.
2. Instruct students to select their favourite scene from the story and create a dialogue for the characters in that scene.
3. Offer students the opportunity to read their scene to the class.

Activity 5: Who Can Help?

Format:

- Individual

Materials:

- Printouts of the Who Can Help? handout

- Pencils

Timing:

- Following the post-reading discussion

Instructions:

Note to teachers: Review/adjust the handout as required for your class.

1. Explain to students that the handout being distributed is an opportunity to reflect on how they can support themselves and ask for support from others when navigating a difficult time. There are no right answers. It is a personal resource to turn to whenever you need it.
2. Students complete the Who Can Help? Handout

Activity 6: Communication Charades

Format:

- Small Groups

Materials:

- Computers (optional)

Timing:

- Following the post-reading discussion

Instructions:

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Assign each group one of the following categories:
 - Confident using body language
 - Confident using spoken words
 - Unconfident using body language
 - Unconfident using spoken words
- Instruct each group to create a role play to acting out their category.
 - If necessary, allow each group to research the meaning of their category or discuss what each category might look like.
- After each group performs their skit, ask the rest of the class if they can guess which category they were role playing.

Activity 7: Inside Out and Small Things: A Comparison

Format:

- Individual
- Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion

Materials:

- Letter size paper or journal
- Pencils
- Computer

- Projector

Timing:

- Following the post-reading discussion

Instructions:

1. Watch the following excerpts from Pete Docter and Ronnie Del Carmen's 2015 film *Inside Out* (or watch the whole film).

☐ You may need to offer a bit of a synopsis of *Inside Out* for the following excerpts to make sense to students:

<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/movie/inside-out/summary>

- Meet Riley's emotions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1S0RKRRyqhQ>

- Joy realizes the importance of Sadness for Riley's mental health:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcfmHoUiNnw>

2. Ask students to identify and write about the similarities between how the young girl in *Inside Out* and the young boy in *Small Things* express their feelings.
3. Guide a class discussion about the students' reflections.