



Classroom Guide for **BEIN' WITH YOU THIS WAY**

by **W. Nikola-Lisa**
illustrated by **Michael Bryant**

Reading Level

Interest Level: Grades Pre-K-3

Reading Level: Grades 2-3

(Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula)

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 3.3/.5

Lexile Measure®: NP

Scholastic Reading Counts!™: 3.9

Themes

Physical Differences and Similarities, Sharing and Cooperation, Making Friends

Synopsis

A playground rap that introduces young readers to how people are different and yet the same.

Background

According to author W. Nikola-Lisa, *Bein' With You This Way* is a "celebration of how all of us, no matter our racial, gender, or cultural background, have the capacity to share in the beauties of life." The genesis of this book came about while he was attending the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) conference in Atlanta. He said, "I started writing the book because I got a certain beat in my head, and then an idea. After drinking three milkshakes at a hotel restaurant, I had the basic draft of the story down."

There were several other points of origin to the book. First, it is a traditional concept book that draws on the nature of opposites. It is also lodged in the folk tradition, especially jump-rope and counting rhymes. Another area of influence is poetry, in the use of compressed lines, stark images, and a heightened sense of language. Finally, the book is influenced by music. In fact, the author originally considered developing a musical score to accompany the text, but ultimately decided against it.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

Before reading the story to the students, you might want to involve the children in activities related to similarities and differences.

Ask two volunteers to stand in front of the class. Ask the class to suggest how these two people look the same (e.g., hair color, clothes) and how they look different.

Ask one volunteer to name some games he or she likes to play. Ask second volunteer if he or she likes the same games, or some different games. Then pair students and have them discuss how they look the same or different. Have students ask each other what they like to eat, favorite subject in school, family members, etc.

Setting a Purpose for Reading/Listening

Show students the cover of the book. Discuss the title and the picture. Show students the first few pages of the book. Ask them what they think the book will be about. Where does the action in the book take place? What do the people in the book look like? Ask students what questions they have about the book.

After the students have had the story read aloud to them, ask them if the story answered their questions.

DURING READING

Reading the Text

Ask students if they have heard of rap. Explain that rap is like a poem and is read with rhythm. (It is suggested that teachers practice reading orally through the book before reading it to the class.) Read with expression and rhythm without interruption. Students may join in at the refrains.

AFTER READING

Responding to the Text

1. Discuss how the characters are similar and different (e.g., everyone has hair, skin, but of different color, length).
2. Discuss what they all like to do (e.g., play, laugh, run; list verbs on chart paper).
3. Students can choose a partner. Ask them to look at each other, and describe how they are the same/different physically; write a story about My Friend & I, telling how they are different yet similar. Finally, ask students to illustrate their stories.

ESL Teaching Strategies

1. Students who speak English as a second language will require preparation for listening to the text. Before you read the story, discuss the pictures with them. Point out the differences between the children in the illustrations. Ask students to find similarities between them.
2. Repetition is important to students learning a second language. You might wish to make a tape recording of your reading so that ESL students may hear the story several times. Remember to read slowly and expressively, and keep the "rap" rhythm. It might be helpful to add a sound signal to tell students when to turn the page. When reading aloud in front of the students, use exaggerated gestures to illustrate meaning.

3. Encourage students to join in making sounds in the story, such as "Uh-huh," "Mm-mmm," "Ah-ha," or phrases that are repetitious.

Cooperative Learning

After students have listened to or read the story, form them into groups of four. Tell students that they are to work together to make a picture of someone they would like as a friend. Use the Roundtable structure, which asks students to take turns contributing details in responding to a prompt.

Give each group one large sheet of paper with the outline of a person's head drawn on it. Provide the group with some crayons. Explain that they are to draw a picture -- only one picture -- of someone they would like as a friend. Each student in the group will have a turn to add a detail to the picture. The first student might draw the eyes, the second student the hair, and so forth.

Tell students that they will have to take a vote among themselves whether the person is a boy or a girl. (You might want to choose one group to model the voting procedure for the class.)

When the groups have finished their pictures, display them in the classroom. You might use the pictures as the basis for a social studies lesson on people in a community.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

In order to integrate students' reading experiences with other subject areas, you might want to have students complete one or more of these activities.

Social Studies

1. Ask students to think of some people who live in their community, such as police officers, fire fighters, grocery store owners, and so forth. Ask students what these people look like. Discuss the fact that people not only look different but might also dress differently than others because of their occupation. Have students draw a picture of someone whose clothes tell his or her occupation.
2. Explain to students that one reason Americans look different from each other is because most Americans have ancestors who came from other countries. Suggest that students ask their parents where their families came from. Help students find the countries on the classroom globe or map of the world.
3. *Bein' With You This Way* is set in a park. Ask students if they know the rules for behavior in a park. On the chalkboard, make two columns. Over the first column, print DO; over the second column, print DON'T. Have students suggest rules for park behavior, and write the rules under the appropriate heading. (Example: DO - - share playground equipment, obey park rules, respect other people's rights; DON'T -- monopolize the swing or the slide, litter, disturb other people.)

Art

1. Have students draw a picture of a park, playground, or school yard where they play. Suggest that students draw themselves playing in this place.
2. Suggest that students cut pictures of people, trees, flowers, and animals from newspapers and magazines to make a collage about a park.

Music

Ask for student volunteers to "sing" portions of the book in "rap" style. You might wish to set up a group to perform the book. Some students might perform the solo sections. Others might work as a chorus to perform the repeated words, such as "How perfectly/ remarkably/ strange."

About the Author and Illustrator

W. Nikola-Lisa Other titles by the author include *America: My Land, Your Land Our Land*, *The Holes In The Road*, *No Babies Sleep*, *Storm*, *Night Is Coming*, and *1,2,3 Thanksgiving*. He was awarded the Ezra Jack Keats Fellowship in 1990 and is an associate professor of education at National-Louis University in Evanston, IL. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Florida and his doctorate in education from Montana State University. He lives in Chicago with his wife and their two daughters.

Michael Bryant Other picture books by the illustrator include *Our People*, *Goodbye Hello*, and *The Story Of Nat Love*. He received his bachelor's degree in fine arts from Kean College and was the winner of the University of Wisconsin Multicultural Mirror Fellowship in 1991. One of his favorite paintings in the book, done in watercolor and color pencil, shows children playing on a swing set. "When I first saw the kids swinging up and down, their faces full of joy and innocence, I thought it would make a perfect image for a picture book. I'm so glad that *Bein' With You This Way* gave me a chance to share that moment with readers." He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and their two daughters.

Awards & Reviews

Winner, *Parenting* magazine Reading Magic Award

Winner, *Child* magazine's "Best Books"

"Pick of the Lists," *American Bookseller*

"This fast-paced, cheerful, rap story is multicultural literature at its best." –*Child Magazine*

"[An] ode to the beauty of diversity." –*School Library Journal*

"An exuberant story. The cheerful faces and colorful outdoor scenes in Bryant's vibrant paintings harmonize so well with the bouncy rapping that children will clamor for an immediate reread." –*Kirkus Reviews*

"A delightful book in every way!" –*Carol Avery, The Council Chronicle, National Council of Teachers of English*

Please see our Web site, for an update-to-date, complete listing of awards and reviews at: http://www.leeandlow.com/p/awards_and_honors_1.mhtml

Resources on the Web

Learn more about ***Bein' With You This Way***

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/19/hc/bein_with_you_this_way

Bein' With You This Way in Spanish:

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/139/hc/la_alegria_de_ser_tu_y_yo

Other books by W. Nikola-Lisa

America: My Land, Your Land, Our Land at:

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/11/hc/america_my_land_your_land_our_land

America: A Book of Opposites (board book edition) at:

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/174/bb/america_a_book_of_opposites_un_libro_de_contrarios

Summer Sun Risin' at: http://www.leeandlow.com/books/114/hc/summer_sun_risin

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