

Noticing

Discussion Guide and Activities for At-Home Learning

Age range: 5–9 Grade level: K–4

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Illustrated by Elise Hurst

OBJECTIVE

Teach students that there are amazing things to notice everywhere, including within themselves.

SUMMARY

Noticing is about the excitement of what happens when we look closely at the world around us.

It's the story of a girl who encounters a wise painter on what seems like an ordinary day. To the girl's surprise, the painter suggests that there is nothing ordinary about it at all—instead, everything is brimming with wonder. The girl visits the painter regularly, eager to learn more about this new way of seeing things. After all their time spent together, the girl realizes that the best thing the painter taught her to see is her own value and potential.

Yamada and Hurst's book explores the power of recognizing everyday miracles and finding the magic that often seems hidden. Readers will learn that there is greatness to discover in many places... and most importantly, in themselves.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sometimes, it can be hard to see the good in things, and sometimes we might even have a hard time seeing the good in ourselves. *Noticing* shows readers that beauty can be found everywhere and teaches that each one of us is uniquely wonderful.

Yamada and Hurst offer the awe-inspiring message that amazement exists in both the grand things and in the small, ordinary things—in places that might seem unlikely. Yamada's narrative features the wise words of a painter, a woman whose art reflects the beauty she sees in the world. As the girl spends time with the painter, she becomes captivated by the woman's perspective and slowly comes to see everything in a new light. The painter helps the girl understand for the first time just how special she is, and the girl learns to more deeply appreciate the people, places, and things in her life. Hurst captures the concept of hidden beauty in her illustrations by weaving objects and creatures within the design of the larger scene. The lessons from the painter come to life as we ourselves look closely at the pages and experience the joy of discovering things anew.



The key takeaway is that, when we really look, we can find astonishing amounts of goodness in people, in ourselves, and in our surroundings.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does the painter call herself “a noticer”? What do you think that means?
- Have you ever seen shapes in the clouds, or noticed something amazing when you went outside? How did that experience make you feel?
- What does it mean to see with our imagination or with our heart?
- What’s a way you can show someone that they’re special and that they matter?
- What are some people, places, or things that mean a lot to you?
- Why do you think the girl says the day is just “ordinary” at the beginning of the book? Do you think she changes her mind?
- What does it mean to be curious about something? Why is it important to be curious?
- What’s something wonderful and special about you?
- Why do you think the girl wants to tell the painter, “thank you for seeing me” at the end of the story? What does it mean to see someone?

ACTIVITIES

Find what’s hidden

Set a timer for 10 minutes, and have students find as many hidden shapes as they can within the illustrations of the book. These could be hidden objects, animals, faces, or anything else they discover.

Once the timer ends, ask students to pair up with you or another student to compare what each person found.

Did either of you notice something that the other didn’t?

This activity is meant to build observational skills and encourage students to welcome different perspectives.



Discover extraordinary things

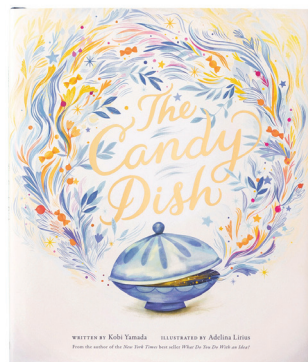
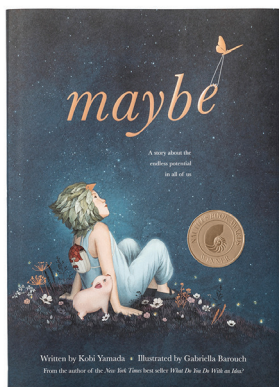
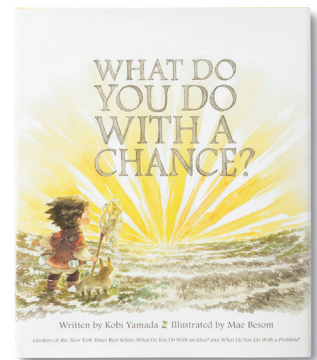
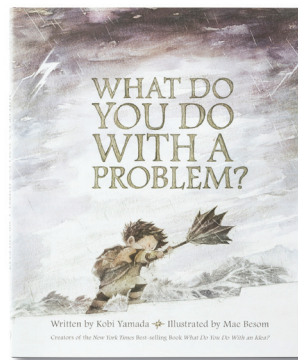
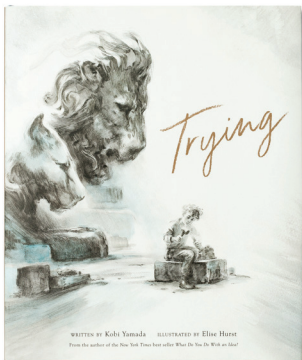
Challenge students to keep track of 3 incredible things they notice about the world around them every day for a week. Ask them to spend time outside looking for things that they find interesting or that make them feel happy and excited. With the help of a parent or caregiver, or by themselves, have students write down everything they notice. Then, instruct them to bring their lists back to you and share their top 3 favorite things they saw. This activity is meant to help kids become more aware of their surroundings and develop an outlook of appreciation and wonder.

See the good

Ask students to think of at least one thing they like about themselves. Then go around the room and ask for volunteers who'd like to share what they thought of. Next, ask students to think of at least one thing they like about someone else. Have them make a plan to tell that person the thing(s) they like about them. This activity is meant to build self-confidence and encourage kindness.

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