

Empathy is Elementary



Stories, Lessons & Activities
To Help Pre-K – 5th Graders
Learn About Empathy

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WRITTEN BY
Rebecca Schmidt, M.Ed., LSW

Illustrated by Jeffrey Zwartjes



Dedication

This book is dedicated to the staff at Mayfield's Lander Elementary School who is always so supportive of my unique ideas and allows me to introduce these ideas to their students during guidance classes. They are always flexible and kind. Everyone at Lander truly makes empathy look elementary!

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Stories, Lessons & Activities to Help Pre-K – 5th Graders Learn About Empathy

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Introduction

As an elementary school counselor for more than 20 years, I am always searching for books to use with my students in individual counseling, small groups and classroom guidance. I may find a great book for young children and another for older elementary-aged students, but rarely find one book I can use for all children. This book meets that need.

Teaching empathy to elementary-aged children is difficult because they are inherently self-centered at this age. It is not easy to get children to look outside of themselves and think of others. Therefore, it is important that we start teaching children at a very young age to look around them and try to *feel* what others are feeling by observing their facial expressions, listening to their words, and watching their body language. It is important to help them learn what they can do to help a friend in need feel better. Older children need to understand the importance of realizing others act certain ways for a reason, and to think of *why* they may be behaving that way instead of just assuming that person is “weird” or different.

The stories in this book teach these concepts.

Miss Heart’s Sunshine Center is most appropriate for 4 and 5 year old children. Pre-K and kindergarten-aged children are very familiar with the concept of learning centers where they move from station to station. In this story, Miss Heart introduces her kindergarten class to the *Sunshine Center* where boys and girls can help others’ sad feelings disappear. When Jackson notices his friend John is sad, he goes to the *Sunshine Center*, carefully chooses John’s favorite things, and makes a *Sunshine Card* for him. Jackson gives the card to John and his sadness fades away.

Gabby Good’s Glasses is most appropriate for 6 and 7 year old children. In this story, Gabby Good receives a package from her Aunt Dana in the mail—a pair of very special goggles. These goggles help her “see” what other people are feeling by looking at their faces and bodies and hearing their words. Gabby uses these goggles to recognize when her friends are feeling angry or sad so she can help them feel better. At the end of the story, Gabby realizes she doesn’t need special goggles, because with an open heart she can see these things with her own eyes.

Tammi & LuLu is most appropriate for 7 and 8 year old children. This clever, rhyming story is about a new girl at school who doesn’t think before she speaks. When Tammi, the smart girl who always knows what to say and do, is home with the flu, LuLu says mean things to the other children. When Tammi returns, she teaches the other children how to outsmart LuLu. Tammi explains if you react to a bully, it is like giving the bully a present. At the end of the story, Tammi teaches LuLu that in order to have friends, she needs to think of others’ feelings before speaking.

Gabby Good's Glasses

(Ages 6-7/Grades 1 & 2)

Purpose:

To help children learn to observe others in order to determine how they feel



Materials Needed:

Lesson:

- Gabby Good's Glasses* story (pages 27-33)

Helping an Upset Friend:

- Swim goggles or big clown glasses

Feeling Cards:

- Feeling Cards* (page 34)
- Swim goggles or big clown glasses



Pre-Lesson Preparation:

Select one or more of the activities to be presented to the class. Gather the necessary materials for presentation.

Lesson:

Tell the children that the lesson for today is about learning to observe others in order to determine how they feel.

Read *Gabby Good's Glasses*.

Then ask the children the following questions:

1. What feelings did Gabby see through her special goggles when she was on the bus with David?
2. What did David's face and body look like?

Empathy Elementary

(Ages 9-11/Grades 4 & 5)

Purpose:

To show children how to put themselves *in someone else's shoes*



Materials Needed:

Lesson:

- Empathy Elementary* story (pages 55-66)
- Paper and pencils
- Empathy Elementary Question Cards* (pages 67-71)

Lesson:

Tell the children:

Today's lesson is about having empathy and standing up to a bully. We are going to read a really great story about a new girl in the 4th grade at Empathy Elementary. There are lots of characters in this story. I want each of you to be responsible for listening for certain things about each character. Everyone is going to choose an Empathy Elementary Question Card. When you take reading comprehension tests, you are always supposed to read the questions before you read the story. So everyone will read their card silently before we begin so you will know what to listen for in the story. After we have finished reading the story, you will each write down your question and the answer to your question. Then we will discuss the story using all of your answers.

Distribute an *Empathy Elementary Question Card*, paper, and a pencil to each child.

Why did Fionna go back and forth between groups of friends?

Empathy Elementary Card
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Why did Bethany not play at recess?

Empathy Elementary Card
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**Fionna was a “bad news reporter.”
What is a “bad news reporter”?**

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Why did Bethany seem weird to Becky?

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Why did Fionna seem weird to Becky?

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Was Bethany weird?

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Was Fionna weird?

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Why do you think Darla’s last name is Dressy?

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Why do you think Bethany’s last name is Boots?

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Why did Darla always feel she had to be perfect?

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June – All Grades



June Morning Announcement:

Good morning, boys and girls! Wow! You all have done such an amazing job of showing people in our school and our community how much you appreciate and care about them!

The kindergartners showed the bus drivers and the school crossing guards how much they care about them.

The 1st graders thanked our cafeteria workers for their hard work.

The 2nd graders made placemats to give to people who have meals delivered to their homes.

The whole school collected mittens, scarves, and hats (new pencils and boxes of crayons) for boys and girls who couldn't afford to buy them.

The 3rd graders wrote letters to elderly people in nursing homes to help brighten their day.

The whole school made hearts for doctors, nurses, and other hospital workers. The hearts were displayed in the waiting rooms to let the workers know how much we appreciate them keeping us healthy.

The 4th graders let our community police officers and firefighters know how lucky we are to have them working so hard to protect us day and night.

The whole school did their part making the school grounds look nice by picking up trash outside. This helped our custodian know how much we appreciate him/her and all of the hard work he/she does everyday.

And, our 5th graders made safety posters to show all of you how much they care about your safety this summer.

Every one of you should be so proud of how much empathy you have shown to others this school year. You have shown you appreciate and care about the people in our school and in our community. You should feel so very proud! Have a wonderful, happy, and safe summer!!

THE FOLLOWING SAMPLES
ARE REPRODUCIBLE/PRINTABLE PAGES
INCLUDED ON THE CD-ROM

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Gabby Good's Glasses



Gabby Good couldn't wait for the mail to come. She had been waiting for days for a package to arrive from her Aunt Dana. Her Aunt Dana told her she was going to send her a special surprise. Finally, the mail came and there was a package addressed to Miss Gabby Good.

Gabby carefully opened the box. In the box, was a sparkly pair of goggles with a note attached.

Gabby carefully read the note:

Dear Gabby,

These goggles will help you see feelings and more.
They'll help you see others like never before.

When someone is feeling mad or quite blue,
with these goggles you'll see why and know just what to do!

Love,
Aunt Dana



Tammi & LuLu



**In a school in the heart of Mayfield Heights,
lived Tammi who had a smile as bright as 10 lights!**

**She was kind to others and stood up for them, too.
She was known as the girl who knew what to do.**

**Now at Tammi's school, no bullies were allowed,
but one day something happened that drew a big crowd.**

**It happened when a new girl came to Tammi's school.
It happened on a Monday and broke the bully rule!**



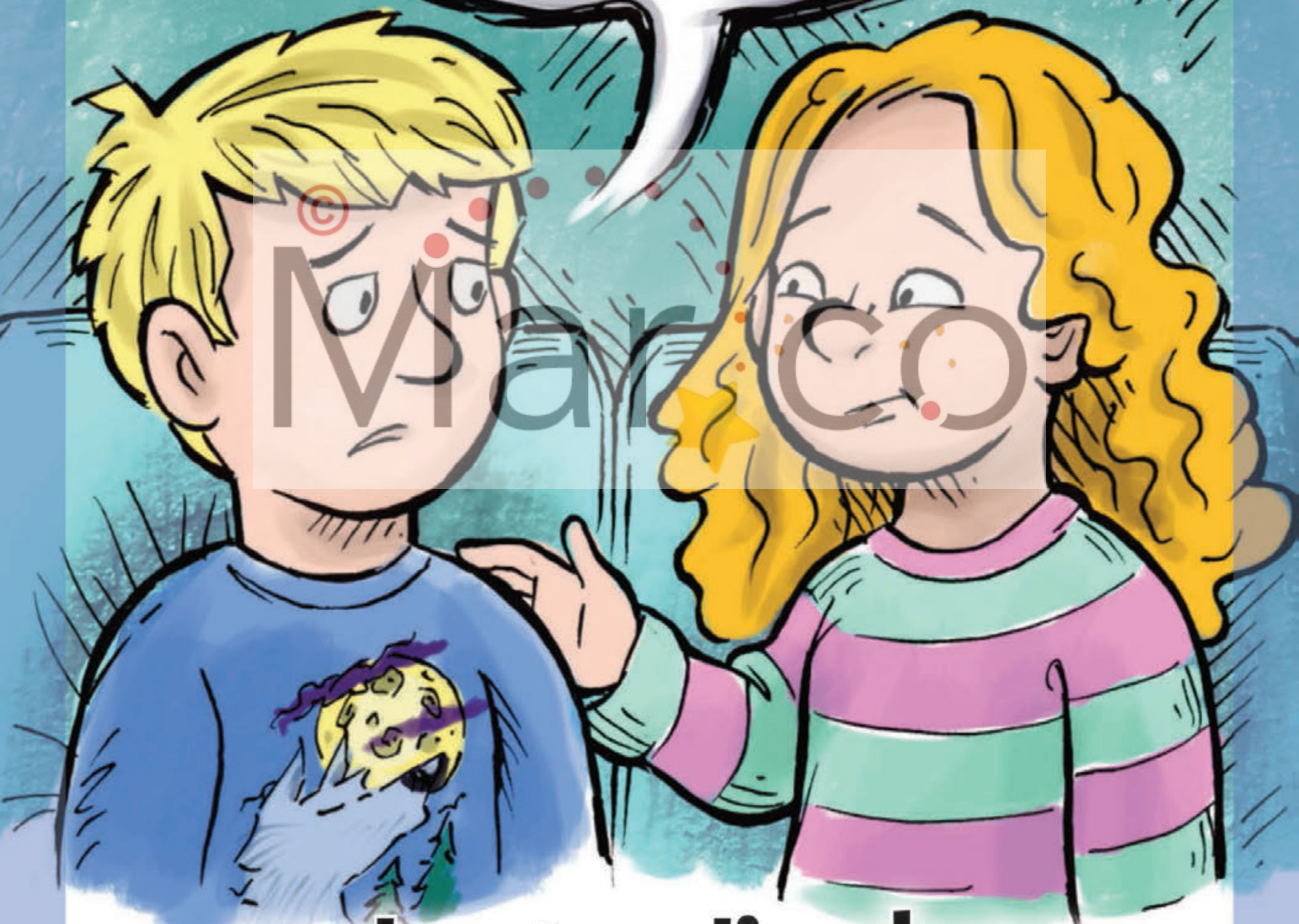
**That week, Tammi didn't meet the girl who was new.
She happened to be home with a wild case of flu!**

**The girl had a frown and mean look in her eye.
The other kids noticed, but walked right on by.**

**The girl's name was LuLu, she came from far away.
You heard mean words from her mouth each day.**

**She didn't think of others' feelings or consider how they felt.
She didn't care that her words would make a heart melt.**

Empathy is...



**understanding how
other people feel.**