

A Teacher's Guide to the

Jamie Is Jamie Series



by Afsaneh Moradian

Illustrated by Maria Bogade

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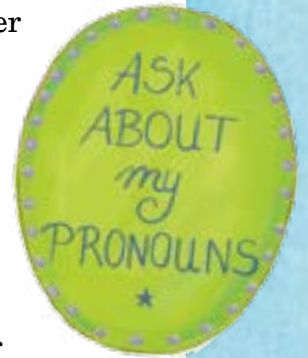
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A Note to Teachers, Parents, and Caregivers

Thank you for sharing Jamie with the children in your life! The character and this series were inspired by my own child, who didn't seem to fit in when she was young—she wasn't interested in “girl” toys and the boys in her class didn't want to play with a girl. I wanted Jamie to give readers a great friend who is free to play and live authentically while being kind to others.



Jamie is a wonderful example of what it means to be true to yourself while being a caring friend. Jamie's fun and playful attitude enables Jamie to teach children and adults how to include and respect other people. In the series, Jamie shows us how to challenge gender stereotypes, how to use correct pronouns and not assume a person's pronouns, and how to really listen to what people think and feel. You can use the books with one child or with a group of children as a way to create supportive, inclusive, loving, and respectful environments.

In this guide, you'll find discussions and activities to extend children's learning that relate to and expand upon the themes in the series. Discussion questions foster empathy and encourage children to examine the ideas in the books, while activities help children relate the stories to their own lives. By using these discussions and activities, you give children space to express themselves and their reactions to the characters and stories.



While the books can certainly be read at any time during the year, reading them at the beginning of the school year can help create a respectful and inclusive classroom culture. In addition, using the books whenever a new group of children begin spending time together enables the group to form a community rooted in acceptance, respect, and consideration of others.

The books can be used to set up icebreaker activities when children are first getting to know one another or throughout the year to foster community, active listening, and sharing. The stories also work well in introducing discussions about play, the people in children’s lives, and children’s needs and preferences. Any classroom or school that is actively supporting transgender, nonbinary, gender fluid, and other gender expansive students and/or adults can certainly use these books as an introduction to talking about gender norms and stereotypes and about how to be respectful of everyone. If you are the parent of a gender-expansive child, sharing the Jamie Is Jamie series with your child’s teacher is a great way to support your child in school and out in the world.



Feeling free to express yourself, play your way, have your pronouns used correctly, and know that your ideas and opinions matter creates a safe atmosphere where social and emotional development can flourish.

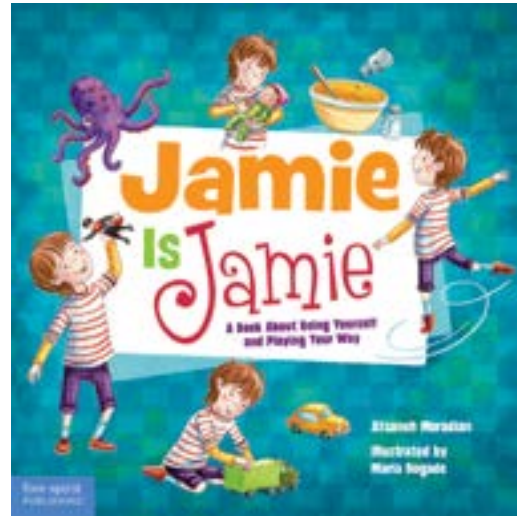
—Afsaneh Moradian



Discussing the Story

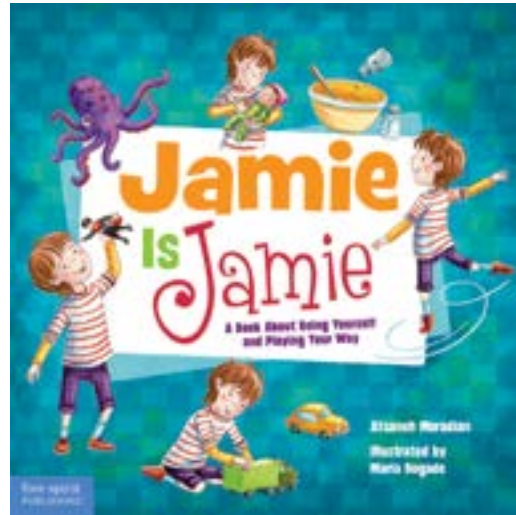
Ask children the following questions after reading the book:

1. Would you like to be friends with Jamie?
Why or why not? *(This question encourages children to think about what happens in the story and their ideas about friendship.)*
2. What would you like to play with Jamie?
(This question helps children connect with the story and provides insight into a child's preferences for play and into how they view Jamie.)
3. What makes Jamie a good friend? *(This question asks children to examine their ideas about friendship. What makes a good friend, and what do they need to do to be a good friend to others? Try writing children's answers in a visible place, and then ask them, with a show of hands, which qualities the other children in the book possess, which qualities they themselves have, and which qualities their friends possess.)*



Activity 1

Challenging Gender Stereotypes



Objective: Children will share and reflect on their ideas about gender and what it means to be a boy or a girl or nonbinary. Children will also practice using details from a text to support their ideas.

Materials: a space to write large and visibly for the group, such as a chalkboard, whiteboard, or chart paper; chalk or markers

Ask: Do you think Jamie is a boy or a girl? Give at least one reason why.

Explain: The book does not clearly state Jamie's gender so let's see if—by carefully examining the story—we can figure it out.

Do:

1. Write *boy* and *girl* on the board and list the reasons children gave for whether Jamie is a boy or a girl underneath the respective label. Once you have the lists completed, go through each reason and ask children if it's only possible for a boy or a girl. (The class should realize at the end of this discussion that there is no way to prove that Jamie is a boy or a girl.)
2. Expand the discussion by asking the group if all children are either boys or girls. This is a great opportunity to introduce nonbinary gender identities to children.
3. Add nonbinary and transgender as two new categories on the board and explain these terms. Ask the group if there is any evidence that Jamie could be one of these.

Take it a step further: For older children, invite them to write persuasive paragraphs or short essays responding to this question: Is it possible to know Jamie's gender from the story?

Activity 2

“All Kids Can” Posters

Objective: Children will demonstrate their understanding that toys, play, and activities do not have gender and that all children are free to play what they like.

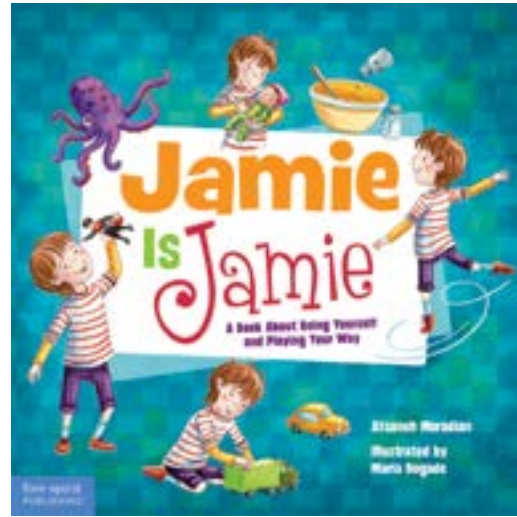
Materials: large pieces of paper; pencils, crayons, and markers; materials for decoration such as stickers, glitter, and stamps

Ask: What is your favorite game to play with a friend? What is your favorite thing to do when it’s raining outside? What are your favorite toys?

Explain: Jamie shows us that it’s okay to have fun playing with the toys and games we like. What you enjoy playing with is a part of who you are, and we want to celebrate that in this room. We are going to make posters that share all your favorite things to play and do.

Do:

1. Have children draw or help them write the many toys, games, and activities they enjoy on their posters. Give children time to decorate their posters, and then have children share their posters with the group.
2. Display children’s posters in your space.



Activity 3

Musical Playtime

Objective: Children will practice having an open mind and trying new things, including interacting with new people.

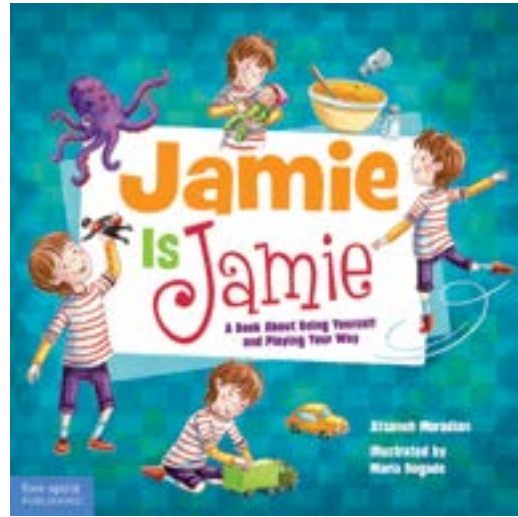
Materials: a variety of toys and materials for play; a device for playing music or a bell

Ask: What do you love to play with in this room? Who do you really like to play with?

Explain: It's important to try new things and meet new people so you don't miss out on having fun and playing with new friends. Everyone is going to have the experience of playing with a variety of toys and having fun with all their classmates.

Do:

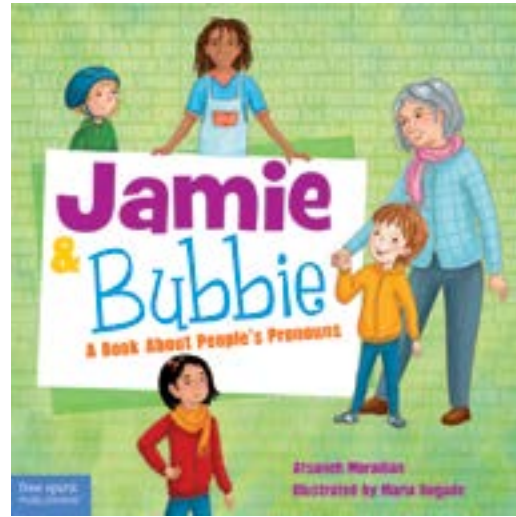
1. Place toys in various locations around the area you use for circle time or morning meetings. Only place enough toys for half of the class to encourage children to play in pairs. Ask everyone to choose a partner and a toy, and give children a few minutes to play together. Tell children that when they hear you ring the bell (or stop the music), they must find a new toy and new partner. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to play with everything.
2. Have the group sit in a circle. Ask questions for feedback and reflection: Did you like that activity? Did you discover something new to play with? Did you have fun playing with someone you've never played with before?



Discussing the Story

Ask children the following questions after reading the book:

1. Do you ever get to spend time with an older family member or family friend? What are your favorite things to do together? *(This question helps children think about, share, and celebrate the time they get to spend with the older people in their lives. You may choose to follow this question with Activity 1.)*
2. In the book, Bubbie makes three mistakes about people's gender. What mistakes does Bubbie make? *(Guide children in remembering that Bubbie makes mistakes around the gender of Ms. Wallace, the employee at the restaurant, and Alexandra.)* Have you ever seen someone have a "Bubbie" moment and mistake someone else's gender? Have you ever had a "Bubbie" moment? Tell us about it. *(This question checks for children's comprehension while focusing children on gender.)*
3. Each time Bubbie uses the wrong pronoun, Jamie explains that Bubbie has made a mistake. How does Bubbie handle being told she is wrong? How do you feel when someone tells you that you are mistaken about something? How do you respond? *(This question encourages children to accept the mistake and to try to make the correction in the future without feeling angry or embarrassed.)*
4. Can we always know what gender someone is? Why or why not? *(This question challenges the assumptions children may have about gender and makes children aware that gender is more complex than someone's appearance.)*
5. Jamie uses *they* when talking about Sam and *their* bike. Do you know anyone who goes by *they*? When should you use *they*? *(These questions connect the book to children's experiences and check for children's understanding of the singular they.)*
6. If you're not sure what pronouns someone goes by, what can you say? *(This question checks for children's understanding of how to use pronouns respectfully.)*



Activity 1

Spend the Day with Bubbie

Objective: Children will explore the relationship they have with an older loved one.

Note: This activity can easily follow discussion question #1.

Materials: activity sheet (page 11, optional) or paper; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; pencils

Ask: Think about an older loved one, such as a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or a neighbor, who you enjoy spending time with. If you had an afternoon together, like Jamie and Bubbie do in the book, what would you want to do?

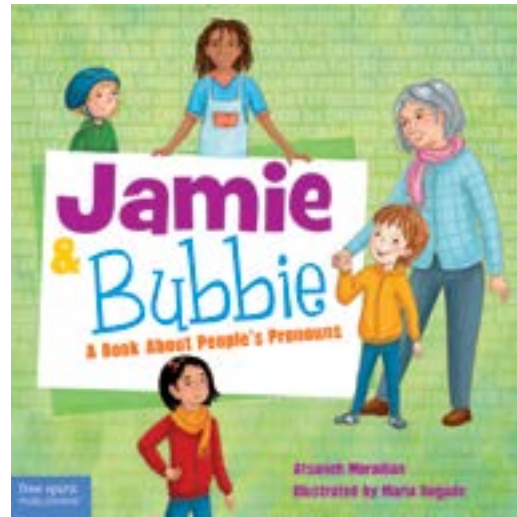
Explain: Tell children that they are going to plan all the activities that they and an older loved one will do together.

Do:

1. For younger children, have children draw the activities they would like to do together with an older loved one.
2. For older children, have children write a plan for what they'd like to do during an afternoon together with an older loved one. They can include times so that it reads like an itinerary. This helps students practice, and demonstrate their understanding of, time and planning.

Take it a step further:

1. For younger children, have children name the activities they have drawn so you can label them.
2. For older children, have children draw or create a collage to accompany their written itinerary.



Spend the Day with Bubbie

If you could spend the day with an older relative or family friend, what would you want to do? Draw or write your plan for the day.

Activity 2

My Family Picture

Objective: Children will demonstrate their ability to use pronouns.

Materials: paper or poster board; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; ruler; pencils

Ask: Who are the people in your family (or in your home)? Can you picture them in your head?

Explain: In *Jamie and Bubbie*, Jamie teaches us how to use pronouns. Share with children that they are going to get a chance to practice using pronouns by thinking about their families.

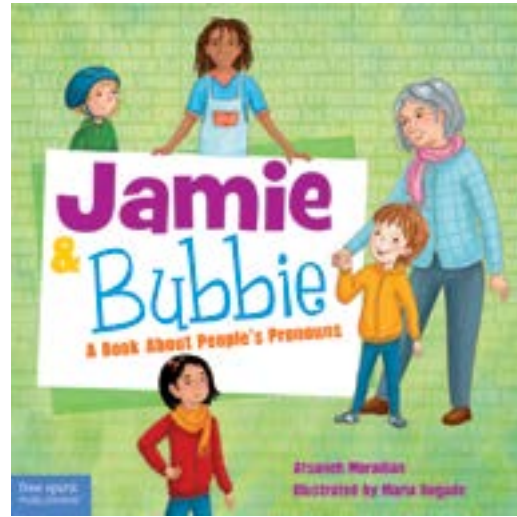
Do:

1. Ask children to draw a picture of the people who live with them.
2. Help children use a ruler to draw a line that corresponds to each person in their drawing.
3. Have or help children write the people's pronouns on the lines. If children choose, they can also write the person's first name or their relationship to the child (mom, dad, sister) on the line or draw a second line to include both names and pronouns.

Share: Ask children to share their drawings with the group.

Celebrate: Display children's drawings to celebrate their families and their artwork.

Take it a step further: Expand the activity by having children create family trees. (*Note: Please do not insist that children use real photographs in their family trees, since these may be irreplaceable, and allow for drawings and magazine cut-outs to substitute for photos.*)

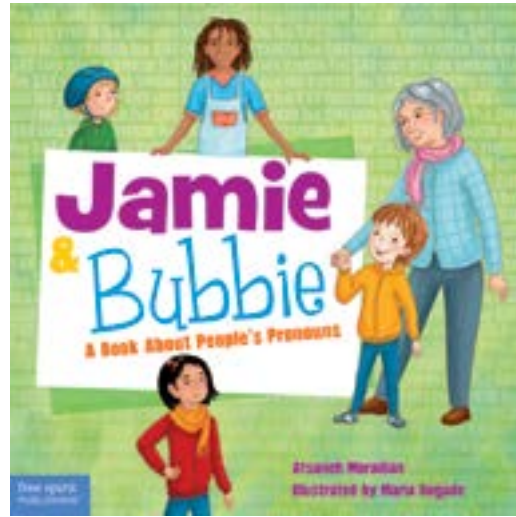


Activity 3

Bubbie Needs Your Help!

Objective: Children will demonstrate their understanding of pronoun usage.

Materials: *Jamie and Bubbie: A Book About People's Pronouns*; paper; pencil



Ask: What do you think Bubbie means by “putting her foot in her mouth”? What does Jamie think she means? Why does Bubbie say she keeps putting her foot in her mouth?

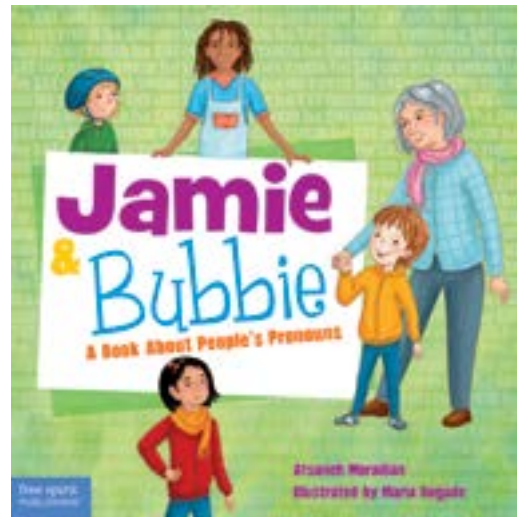
Explain: Tell children they are going to help Bubbie by changing what Bubbie says in each of the situations where she makes a mistake.

Do:

1. Talk about the times in the book when Bubbie makes a mistake. For example, at the beginning of their walk, Bubbie says to Ms. Wallace, “Sir, you dropped your wallet! Jamie, be a dear and give that man his wallet.”
2. As a group, discuss Bubbie’s mistakes, and ask children to share ideas for what Bubbie could have said instead in each situation. For example, in the scenario with Ms. Wallace, children may suggest: “You dropped your wallet! Jamie, be a dear and give that person their wallet.”
3. With younger children, write their ideas on the board or a large sheet of paper. Older children can write their ideas in a notebook or on a sheet of paper.

Take it a step further:

1. For younger children, extend the activity with role play. Small groups of children can role-play each situation, correcting what Bubbie says. For example, one child can be Ms. Wallace, one child can be Jamie, and one child can be Bubbie. Do this for each of the three mistakes. You can also role-play the moment with the mail carrier at the end of the story (one person can be Jamie's mom describing what the mail carrier is doing, another the mail carrier, a third Jamie, and a fourth Bubbie). Children can rotate roles so they get a chance to play each character and help Bubbie.
2. For older children, have them rewrite parts of the book as a play and work together to take turns acting out their short plays in front of the group. They can also make videos instead of performing live.



Activity 4

Let's Take a Neighborhood Stroll

Objective: Children will build confidence in making introductions and using pronouns.

Materials: a device to play music

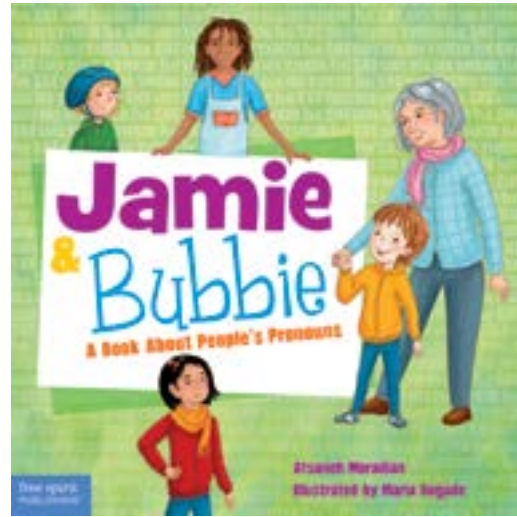
Ask: What is your favorite place to visit in your neighborhood? (Provide an example by telling children one of your favorite places to visit near your home.)

Explain: Share that just like Jamie and Bubbie, children are going to take a walk around your classroom “neighborhood.”

Do:

1. Play music while children walk around the room.
2. When the music stops (stop music randomly), children stop walking and get into groups of three with whoever is closest to them as quickly as possible.
3. One child in each group introduces the other two children. They can use the child's real name for the introduction, or they can use the name of someone in their real neighborhood. The child introduces each person by saying their name and something about them. For example: “This is Oliver. He has a yellow backpack.” Alternatively, the child can say, “This is Mr. Banks. He/She/They lives/live in a yellow house.”

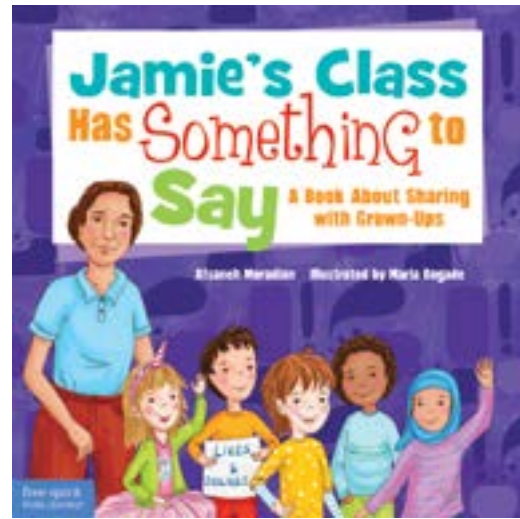
Change directions: Instead of a movement activity, ask children to draw one or two neighbors and write a description of each. The goal is for students to think about who is in their neighborhood and practice using pronouns.



Discussing the Story

Ask children the following questions after reading the book:

1. Have you ever been given a present that someone thought you would like because it's supposed to be fun for boys or girls your age, but you really didn't like it? What was it? What did you do? *(This question asks children to think about why they have disliked an item, whether it was related to gender or some other expectation, and how they might respond in that situation.)*
2. Has an adult ever told you to stop doing something fun and it seemed like they stopped you for no good reason? What happened? *(This question is a good way to open a discussion about authority and when adults and children have different ideas regarding what is in the child's best interest.)*
3. Have adults ever decided what activities you should do or classes you should take without asking you what you'd like to do? How did you feel when this happened? What might you say the next time someone assumes what you do or don't like? *(Similar to the question above, this question gives children the opportunity to reflect on situations when they may feel they were treated unfairly. Discussing this question can lead to asking children for their ideas regarding how to encourage adults to collaborate with children, instead of making unilateral decisions.)*



Activity 1

What We Like and Don't Like

Objective: Children will have the opportunity to share their likes and dislikes and see how information can be displayed using tally marks and bar graphs.

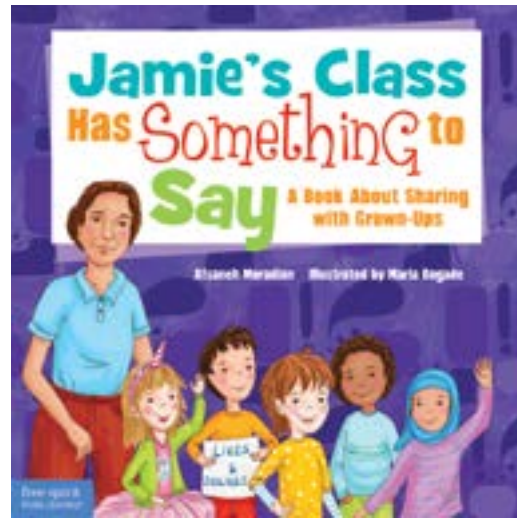
Materials: chart paper for the bar graph; sticky notes; markers; stamps

Ask: What is something you really like? What is something you really don't like?

Explain: Not everyone likes the same things, so it's important to share what we like and don't like. I will ask you questions about things you like, and we will make graphs to show what people in our group like.

Do:

1. Ask the class their preferences for a favorite fruit, favorite book, or favorite learning activity, for example. Use tally marks to record the answers on the board.
2. For younger learners, create a class bar graph to display the answers. Have children take turns putting the appropriate number of stamps or sticky notes on the graph.
3. Have older learners work in small groups. After assigning one of the categories to each group, have students work together to make bar graphs with the data collected by the class. Each group can then present their graph.



Activity 2

Sharing Circle

Objective: Children will get to know each other better and build community in the group. You can also use this activity to set up Activity 3: “All About Me” Posters.

Materials: personal dry erase boards and markers (optional); talking piece (optional)

Ask: Think about what makes you different from everyone else in the class. What makes you, you?

Explain: An important part of being in a community and having friends is knowing what people like and don't like and knowing what is important to each person. This sharing circle is a way for you to get to know one another better.

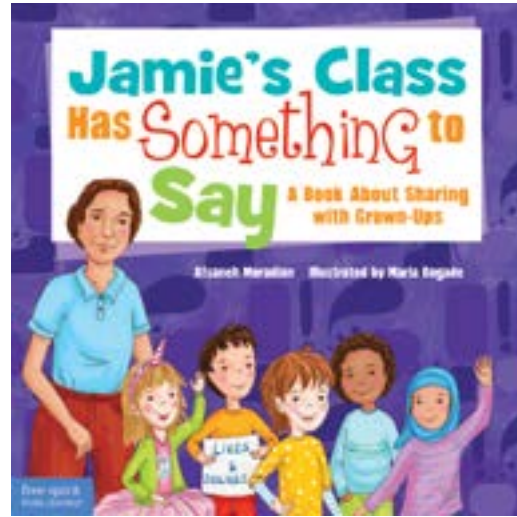
Do:

1. Have students sit in a circle. Ask children to go around the circle, sharing their answers to the following questions:

- What is something you want us to know about you?
- Are you afraid of anything?
- Is there anything you really like?
- Is there anything you really don't like?
- What makes you laugh?



Note: You may want to use a talking piece to help younger children wait their turn to speak. For older children, you can ask them to write their answers on their dry erase boards and then hold up the boards. Once students have shared all their answers, give the class a chance to share their reactions by asking if there were any responses that were surprising and what similarities / differences they noticed.



Activity 3

“All About Me” Poster

Objective: Children will share personal information about themselves with the class and the adults in their lives.

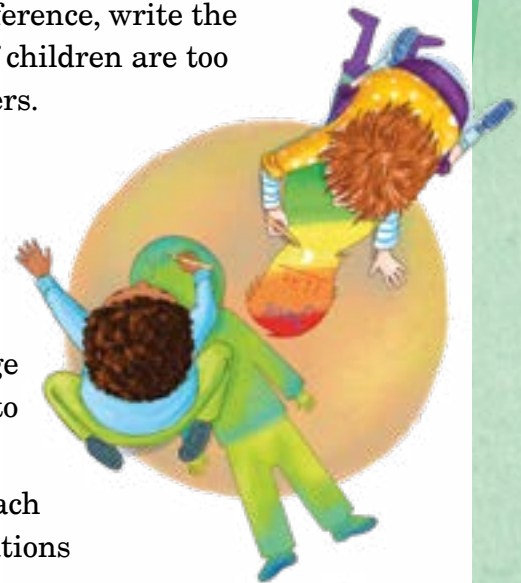
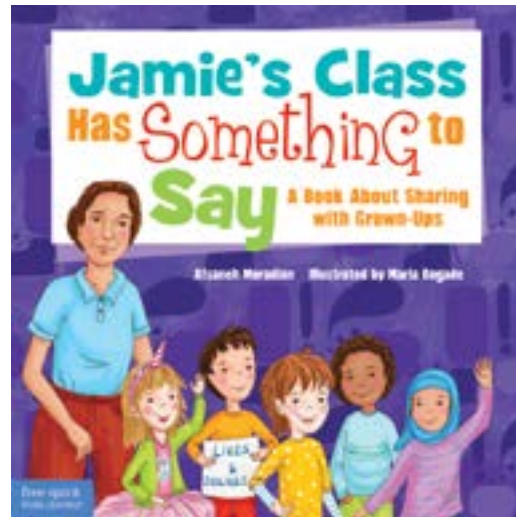
Materials: activity sheet (page 20) or large pieces of paper; markers, crayons, and other materials for decoration

Ask: What do you like? What do you not like? What are you scared of? Is there anything else you'd like the class to know about you?

Explain: Just like Jamie's class, we are going to make “All About Me” posters.

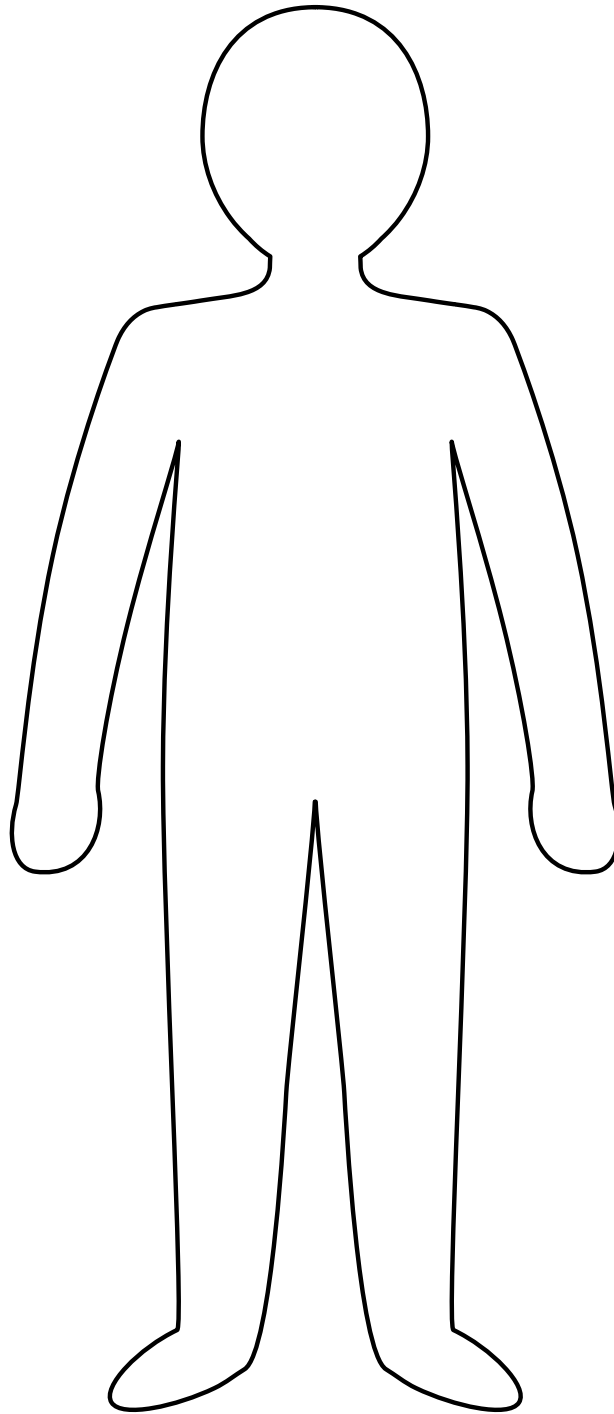
Do:

1. Using *Jamie's Class Has Something to Say* for reference, write the different categories for the poster on the board. If children are too young to write, write the categories on their posters.
 - I Like
 - I Don't Like
 - I'm Scared of
2. Give each child a copy of the activity sheet on page 20. If you have large paper, you can ask children to lie down on the paper and trace their silhouette.
3. Ask children to write or draw their answers for each category on their posters. Let children add decorations to the posters.
4. Display the posters once complete. Invite children to share their posters with the class. If possible, invite families to visit and see the posters, or display during a family night or conferences.



All About Me

Name: _____



About the Author and Illustrator



Afsaneh Moradian (she/her) has loved writing stories, poetry, and plays since childhood. After receiving her master's in education, she took her love of writing into the classroom where she began teaching children how to channel their creativity. Her passion for teaching has lasted for over fifteen years. Afsaneh now guides students and teachers (and her young daughter) in the art of writing. She lives in New York City and Oaxaca, Mexico.



Maria Bogade (she/her) is an illustrator and author with an animation background. She loves creating illustrations with a strong narrative, colorful and beautifully composed to entertain children and adults alike. Her work is internationally published and is also found on greeting cards and products such as chocolate. With her three children and spouse, she lives in a tiny village in southern Germany where fox and hare bid each other good night.