



The Bad Seed

Jory John

A sunflower seed is called “bad” by his classmates because he is always late, lies, cuts in line and does other things that annoy. The seed believes what other people say and he begins to believe that he is bad. Circumstances cause him to have a change of heart and he begins to see himself differently.

Themes

- Growth and change
- Empathy
- Self-awareness
- Seeing the good in others
- Perspective taking

Key Vocabulary

- Mumble—to speak softly and unclearly
- Drifted—to wander without any purpose
- Pointless—without any meaning or usefulness
- Humble—doesn’t think too highly of himself; doesn’t brag
- Drooped—bend over downward

Menu of Questions

1. Do you think kids are born bad?
2. Why did the others called him the “bad seed?” (*he never put things away; never washed hands or feet; tells jokes with no punch line; he lies; he is always late; cuts in line; stares at everybody; glares at everybody; talk about pointless stuff*). Do you think he is bad?
3. Why do you think the bad seed did the “bad” things?
4. How do you think it made him feel to hear others call him “bad?” Did he believe them? How do you know?

5. What made the bad seed decide to change?
6. Seeds need water and sunshine to grow. What do people need to grow in a healthy manner? Make a list and post it in your classroom.
7. When you hear someone put themselves down with unkind words, what can you say?
8. What are some of the emotions that the seed felt during the story?

Activities

1. Give the children a list of words that at first glance may have a negative connotation. Ask them to think about why they might actually be grateful for those things by finding the good.
 - Storm
 - Spiders
 - Vegetables
 - Tests
 - Homework
 - School
 - Broken television or screen
 - Sharing a bedroom with your sibling
 - Doing chores around the house
 - Staying in for recess because of weather
2. Discuss the “Reframing” sheet and think of things that they can say to their peers when they hear them say unkind things about themselves.

Reframing

"I'm so stupid"	
"I can't do this."	
"Nobody likes me."	
"Nobody wants to play with me at recess."	
"I'm the ugliest one in the class."	
"I can't do anything right."	
"No one wants to sit with me at lunch."	
"Everybody else is smarter than me."	
"I don't have the right kind of clothes."	
"Probably everyone is making fun of me."	