



mock·ing·bird

Mockingbird

by Kathryn Erskine

Adapted by Julie Jensen of the National Book Award winning novel

Directed by Steve Wilson



Dear Families, Students and Educators,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Season! We are pleased to bring you *Mockingbird*, written by Kathryn Erskine and adapted for the stage by Julie Jensen. *Mockingbird* is the first production in our brand new series, Prime Online. For the safety to our patrons, we are presenting Prime Online with plays that you can watch online from your home, your classroom or anywhere!

All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary Reading Lists and themes are in the current Pennsylvania curriculum.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide background and context, classroom or home activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature and the theatre. We encourage you to use the games and creative thinking activities, as to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the story of *Mockingbird*.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in the guide, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you, *and* I welcome your suggestions and comments!

Linda Haston, Education Director & Teaching Artist
Prime Stage Theatre
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The activities in this guide are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as you read, and the experience as you *watch* the literature

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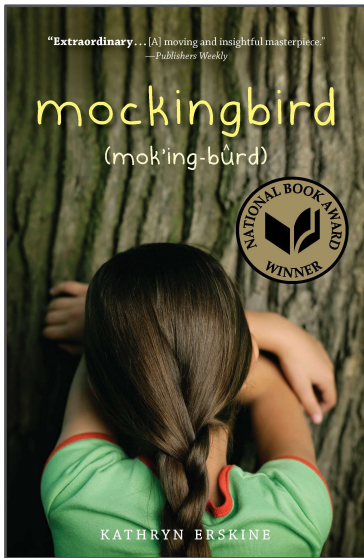
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Mockingbird



In a nutshell: A girl on the autism spectrum reaches out past her own family's tragedy to help others as she helps herself.

Synopsis

The main character is an 11-year-old girl with Asperger's syndrome named Caitlin Smith who is preoccupied with drawing and dictionaries. Her older brother Devon has just been killed, along with a teacher and another student, in a school shooting. Due to Caitlin's condition, she finds it difficult to cope with her feelings about what has happened. She is awkward and pedantic, seeing things in black and white, and referring to her deceased brother as "Devon who is dead" when talking to her father. Caitlin's behaviors are perceived as "weird." She likes to hide under a dresser and bed, and to stuff her head under the couch cushions. Her classmates don't want to be friends with her due to her "weirdness."

Her counselor arranges for her to spend recess with the younger kids. She meets a boy named Michael, who is strangely sad over his mother. When she talks to her counselor about it, she tells Caitlin that he is the son of the teacher who was shot.

Caitlin discovers the words "empathy" and "closure", and determines that this is what she and her distraught father need. She finds it in the form of Devon's Eagle Scout box, which has remained incomplete since his death. Caitlin thinks that if she and her father complete the box, it will bring them closure.

With the help of a school counselor and art teacher, although Caitlin is initially antagonistic, she is able to help her father, as well as Michael and the school bully, Josh, the shooter's cousin, to cope. Eventually, Caitlin, Michael, and Josh become friends, more or less. They go together to the dedication ceremony for the people killed in the shooting) The art teacher there gives Caitlin a box of pastels. After the reception, Josh, Michael, and Michael's dad play football, and the novel concludes with Caitlin creating her first colored picture, having previously only drawn in black and white.

CHARACTERS

CAITLIN: The protagonist; an 11-year-old girl with Asperger's syndrome

DAD: Caitlin's father; struggling with the loss of his son, Devon

MRS. BROOK: Caitlin's school counselor

MRS. JOHNSON: Caitlin's fifth-grade teacher

MICHAEL: Caitlin's friend in first grade

JOSH: School bully; cousin of the boy who killed Caitlin's brother, Devon

EMMA, BRIANNA, SHANE, JOSE: Caitlin's classmates

WILLIAM H: One of the boys Caitlin's age; low end on the autism spectrum

MR. SCHNEIDER: Michael's father

About the Writers

Kathryn Erskine is the author of six novels for young people, including National Book Award-winner *Mockingbird*, Jane Addams Children’s Book Award honor book *Seeing Red*, and *The Incredible Magic of Being*. Her other three novels, *Quaking*, *The Absolute Value of Mike* and *The Badger Knight* have also received recognition. Her award-winning picture book, *Mama Africa! How Miriam Makeba Spread Hope with Her Song*, illustrated by Charly Palmer, is a biography of South African singer and activist Miriam Makeba. Erskine grew up in six countries, attending eight schools and four universities. She has been a State Department employee, an attorney and is currently studying pharmacy. She loves drawing and painting, learning languages and playing the flute, all very poorly, but she still enjoys the effort. Travel comes naturally to Erskine, and she has given workshops around the world, including in Singapore, Panama, Italy, Brazil, Scotland and Guam. She takes trips far and wide for research, as well as for teaching and public speaking. Erskine draws on her life stories—and those of her children—and world events for her writing and is currently working on several picture books and novels for both children and adults. Her characters are often marginalized or underdogs and, while her stories address tough topics, they always culminate in hope, giving children, and all of us, permission to change our world.



Julie Jensen (Playwright) has been writing plays for more than 30 years. More than two dozen of her plays have been professionally produced. Six have been published by Dramatic Publishing: *Two-Headed*, *Last Lists of My Mad Mother*, *Dust Eaters*, *WAIT!*, *The Harvey Girls* and *Mockingbird*. Her work has won a dozen awards, among them the Kennedy Center Award for New American Plays, the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Work, the LA Weekly Award for Best New Play, the Edgerton Foundation’s New American Plays Award and the David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award. Jensen has received numerous grants, among them the McKnight National Playwriting Fellowship, a TCG/NEA Playwriting Residency, a major grant from Pew Charitable Trusts and the National New Play Network’s Rolling World Premiere. She has been commissioned by a dozen theatres including the Kennedy Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville and Salt Lake Acting Company. Her work has been produced in Europe, London, New York and theatres nationwide. She has taught playwriting at five universities, directed a graduate program in playwriting and published a book on the craft titled *Playwriting, Brief & Brilliant*. Currently she is resident playwright at Salt Lake Acting Company, a member of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre and a former regional representative for the Dramatists Guild.

Q & A with Kathryn Erskine

From Publishers Weekly

Kathy Erskine's novel, *Mockingbird*, sprang from the intersection of two life-changing events—a daughter diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, and the April 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech near Erskine's home in Charlottesville, Va.

Your daughter, Fiona, has Asperger's syndrome. When did you decide you wanted to write a novel about a character with that condition?

I had been jotting down notes, mulling over the idea of a main character who had Asperger's almost as an exercise—trying to see the world through her eyes, but I didn't have a compelling plot.

And an idea came to you after the Virginia Tech shootings?

I know it sounds like a weird combination. It was so horrific and so overwhelming and I spent a lot of time trying to process my thoughts on how something like that could happen so close to home. Everybody in Charlottesville knows somebody at Tech. It was everywhere. My thoughts went to what it must be like to be related to one of the victims and to how a kid like mine who sees the world so differently, who doesn't feel heard or understood, how frustrated she gets and how frustrated other people get with her because they don't understand how her mind works. Those two ideas gelled in my mind.

In your story, the brother of the main character, Caitlin, is a victim of a shooting incident at his middle school. Was this almost like Caitlin losing her translator?

Right. He was the person in her life who understood her best, her link to the outside world.

Has your daughter read *Mockingbird*? What was her reaction?

She's read it and she really liked it. She feels it's pretty accurate of the way she sees the world. She's very excited to have a book about someone like her. She's 13 now and suddenly she sort of likes the idea of being different. She's almost proud of her Asperger's. I don't know if that's going to change but at the moment, she's okay with it and she likes that it's out there.

One of the really useful things about a book like *Mockingbird* is that it opens a window for kids on what the "different" kid in their class might be going through.

I hope so. I mean, one time, Fiona's whole school had art assignment to draw a flower. Fiona drew a dog with a Mexican hat and a ukulele. When I asked, 'Where's the flower?' she said, 'The teacher didn't say we *had* to draw a flower, she said she *wanted* us to draw a flower. I wanted to draw a dog.' So one of the things we had to stress with her teachers was not to couch things in polite terms. Be direct.

For all its sadness, *Mockingbird* has many really funny scenes.

Well, it is funny sometimes because the way she sees things can be so skewed. And I had to have some humor because the story is really heavy.

Though Caitlin is 11 in the story, can you see 11-year-olds reading *Mockingbird*? Who do you think the audience is?

My sister is a fourth-grade teacher and though she loved the book, she said, 'I can't do it for fourth grade,' and I agree. School shootings are really, truly scary. I think it's probably better for kids already in middle school.

To read the whole interview, So this website: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/interviews/article/42755-q-a-with-kathryn-erskine.html>

Q & A with Steven Wilson

Steven Wilson is the director for Prime Stage Theatre's online stage reading of *Mockingbird*.

Could you tell us a little bit *Mockingbird* and what first drew you to this story?

This was a situation where I did not find the story, but the story found me. Wayne had approached me about working on a new play focusing on Autism. The initial project fell through, but Wayne and I were both passionate about bringing Autism awareness to the forefront for Pittsburgh audiences. *Mockingbird* is a young adult novel and there was a play adaptation of it out in the world. Wayne found it and passed it along to me. I enjoyed the play so much; that I went and read the novel as well. Caitlin is such a wonderful main character. The story does a great job of mapping a journey for Caitlin as she navigates Autism and the loss of somebody very close to her. It is a process of learning how to process grief and through it, Caitlin makes many more discoveries.

How you prepared to director this production of *Mockingbird*?

Preparing to direct a play requires collaborative conversations with all of the artists involved. One of the things that became very important was a commitment to casting a performer with Autism for the role of Caitlin. There are many performers out there who are on the Spectrum and rarely have the opportunity to represent themselves on stage. Another commitment was making sure we had a representative from The Autism Society of Pittsburgh join the artistic team to assist us in portraying an accurate picture. Prime Stage is certified by Kulture City (www.kulturecity.org) to present Sensory Inclusive performances. They have very helpful.

***Mockingbird* was originally scheduled to premiere as a fully staged production last spring but was delayed and then had to be performed as an online reading due to the safety guidelines for Covid-19.**

Can you tell us a little bit about that experience?

Like anything in our lives, Covid-19 hit us all in unexpected ways. We are dealing with something that was unknown at the start and as we learn about it, adjustments are made. Similarly, when Covid-19 affected the fully staged production, we took things a day at a time. We cast the play and maintained communication with everyone involved. We hoped to delay the start of rehearsals and looked into moving the date in anticipation of safely returning to the stage. When it became clear that we were not going to be able to do a staged production for (at least) the remainder of 2020, we explored our online options. We did have to recast some of the roles and have many discussions about the best way to deliver this story using an online platform. I was fortunate to have some experience directing plays online and able to apply that knowledge to the planning process.

Original scenic design rendering for Prime Stage Theatre's intended Spring production of *Mockingbird* created by set designer, Johnmichael Bohach.



Q & A with Steven Wilson continued...

How did your vision for the production change?

The story does not change. How the audience receives the story does change. Online storytelling is a new form. I've learned that we cannot approach it by doing what we would normally do in the theatre only now we are online. There are new techniques to this online format. It is not film or theater, but lives somewhere in between the two.

Personally, I have been very excited and energized by exploring this new terrain. More and more theaters are making the shift to online storytelling and as we do, the technology continues to evolve on a daily basis. I feel like a pioneer and it's really exciting. Do I miss the live theatre? Absolutely. But I'd rather spend my time focusing on what we do have rather than what is missing.

What would you like audiences to get out of this reading?

I'm hopeful that audiences will get a clear storytelling experience that keeps them engaged. I'm also hopeful that audiences learn more about Asperger's syndrome and Autism and what it means for people who live with it. I'm also hopeful that we will empower the Autism community by giving them the opportunity to see themselves represented publicly through the eyes of a really great main character in Caitlin along with the talented performer we have playing her.

What is a play reading?

A playing reading is a “standing reading” where actors perform while standing still with the scripts on music stands or in their hands.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, theaters from Broadway to your local community playhouse, have had to close their doors to live, in-person performances. As a result, some theater companies have turned to digital or virtual platforms to continue to engage with audiences. There have been a number of live staged readings of plays and musicals performed through platforms like Zoom and Facebook Live.

You will not find a set design or extravagant costumes in a play reading. Rather, you will see actors playing their roles and reading from their scripts. It is a great opportunity to connect with the story and the text in a more simplified way.

(Photo from SaltLakeActingCo)



Putting it in Context

What is autism?

Like many young people, Caitlin is on the autism spectrum. Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 54 children in the United States today.

Caitlin has a school counselor named Mrs. Brooks. Mrs. Brooks helps her to understand her symptoms.

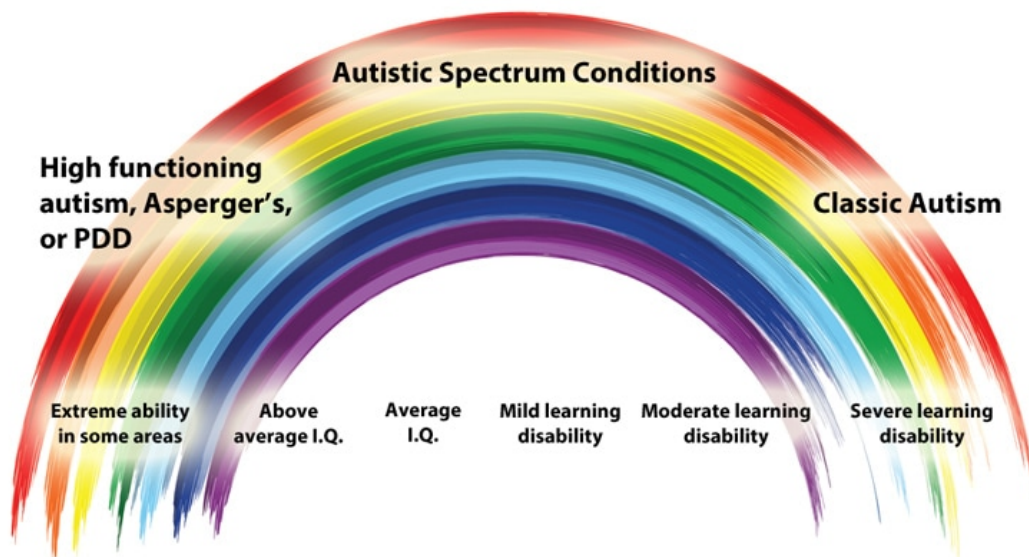
Like many on the spectrum, Caitlin has difficulty with social interactions. It is hard for her to recognize body language and understand other people's emotions and intentions when speaking. She takes things very literally and often does not understand sarcasm. Mrs. Brooks teaches Caitlin to interpret people's feelings by reading facial expressions and looking them in the eye. She also teaches her to use her manners and how deal with her tantrum, rage, meltdowns (TRMs).

Kids with Higher Functioning Autism experiencing stress may react by having a tantrum, rage, or meltdown (TRM).

Autism exists on a spectrum.

That's why it is called autism spectrum disorder or ADS. We know that there is not one type of autism but many types, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Some people with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently.

Diagram from bryson-banks.weebly.com



Putting it in Context

The core symptoms of autism are social communication challenges and restricted, repetitive behaviors. Many people with autism have sensory issues. These typically involve over- or under-sensitivities to sounds, lights, touch, tastes, smells, pain and other stimuli.

Social communication challenges

Children and adults with autism have **difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication**. For example, they may not understand or appropriately use:

- Spoken language (around a third of people with autism are nonverbal)
- Gestures
- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Tone of voice
- Expressions not meant to be taken literally

Additional social challenges can include difficulty with:

- Recognizing emotions and intentions in others
- Recognizing one's own emotions
- Expressing emotions
- Seeking emotional comfort from others
- Feeling overwhelmed in social situations
- Taking turns in conversation
- Gauging personal space (appropriate distance between people)



Restricted and repetitive behaviors

Restricted and repetitive behaviors vary greatly across the autism spectrum. They can include:

- Repetitive body movements (e.g. rocking, flapping, spinning, running back and forth)
- Repetitive motions with objects (e.g. spinning wheels, shaking sticks, flipping levers)
- Staring at lights or spinning objects
- Ritualistic behaviors (e.g. lining up objects, repeatedly touching objects in a set order)
- Narrow or extreme interests in specific topics
- Need for unvarying routine/resistance to change (e.g. same daily schedule, meal menu, clothes, route to school)

Sensory Issues

Sensory issues often accompany autism. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association added sensory sensitivities to the symptoms that help diagnose autism.

Autism's sensory issues can involve both hyper-sensitivities (over-responsiveness) and hypo-sensitivities (under-responsiveness) to a wide range of stimuli.

These can involve:

- Sights
- Sounds
- Smells
- Tastes
- Touch
- Balance
- Body awareness (proprioception)

For example, many people on the spectrum are hyper-sensitive to bright lights or certain light wavelengths (e.g. from fluorescent lights). Many find certain sounds, smells and tastes overwhelming. Certain types of touch (light or deep) can feel extremely uncomfortable.

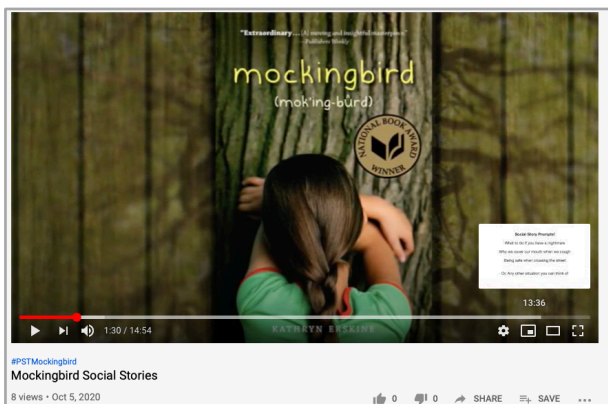
Information from <https://www.autismspeaks.org>

Before Pre-Show Activities

Try these activities to spark curiosity before reading the book or watching the PST Online Performance.

Online Video!

Watch PST’s Education Lesson on “How to Make a Social Story.”



To watch the video, click on the following link:

https://youtu.be/zn3UZeiX_4w

Social Stories were created to help teach social skills to people with autism and similar exceptionalities. They are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why. Social Stories present information in a way that is easier to comprehend and understand.

In this video lesson, students and families will watch a scene from Prime Stage Theatre’s online reading of *Mockingbird* and will make their own Social Story!

For more information and examples of a social story go to page 16 of this guide.

Watch “To Kill A Mockingbird”

To Kill a Mockingbird is Caitlin’s favorite movie. If possible, watch the movie (or read the book).

Consider how *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a clue about the title of this story.

Answer the following questions.

*Why do think the author chose *Mockingbird* as the title for this book.

*How do the characters of Jem and Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* relate to Devon and Caitlin in *Mockingbird*? What is similar about the two relationships? What is different?

*The film is shot in black and white. How might Caitlin appreciate that?



PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS *(These questions can be used in journal entries or group discussions)*

1. Titles of books and plays often contain important ideas or symbols. Thinking about the meaning behind words in the title and the artwork on the book cover can give clues about the overall themes and message of a work of literature. What clues can you find about the story you are about to read?

2 . In this show, *Mockingbird*, Caitlin experiences a lot of bullying. What are some reasons people might get bullied? Have you ever known of any situations at school where someone is a target for bullying?

3 . After struggling to make friends, Caitlin has a special friendship with Michael. Have you ever struggled to make friends? What made it so hard? Do you have a special friendship with someone now? What makes this person or friendship so special?

4 . One of the themes in the show is understanding self and others. Mrs . Brook, the school counselor, tells Caitlin that she has to put herself in someone else’s shoes. What do you think the phrase to “walk in someone else’s shoes” mean?

During Reading Activities

Try the following activities to enrich the experience and enliven the text while reading the novel or play.

Lighted Lantern

Adapted from: Christy Crawford Teacher Blog - https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/blogs/christy-crawford/migrated-files/Student_Worksheet.pdf

It was very important for Caitlin to finish the chest her brother was working on for his Eagle Scout award. The chest helped make Caitlin feel close to her brother, and helped her remember him.

MATERIALS

Clear empty jars, one per student

Strips of yellow or orange paper cut the same height as the jars Glue or tape

Red or orange tissue paper



- 1 . Each student should be given a jar and enough strips of paper to cover their jar with – they do not need to use every strip, but it should be given as an option. Ask students to think about a loss they have experienced – perhaps the loss of a family member or pet, or even a loss of a special friend who moved away or a house they have moved from.
- 2 . On each strip of paper, instruct students to write something special about that person, animal or place they have lost – things they did together, special moments they shared with each other, something they would like them to know, etc. Students can use as many or as few strips as they'd like.
- 3 . Next, have students glue or tape the strips vertically around the jar. Then, provide students with a few squares of red and orange tissue paper. Have them twist the tissue paper into the shape of a flame and secure it to the inside bottom of the jar. Or, provide a battery operated candle to light up the jar!
- 4 . This lantern can serve as a glowing reminder of the loss the student may have experienced, that our fond memories will live forever and they will continue to be a shining light in our lives.

Perusing the dic·tion·ar·y [dik-shuh-ner-ee] n.

Caitlin has a passion for words and a love for the dictionary. She often looks up words that she hears and reads.

1. Have your students finish the following sentence with three to five words: “I think that Mockingbird is about...” (For example: Mockingbird is about Family, Grief, Friendship)
2. Have them look up the meaning of each word in the dictionary and write out the meaning. (For example: grief [grief] n. 1. keen mental suffering or distress over affliction or loss; sharp sorrow; painful regret. 2. a cause or occasion of keen distress or sorrow.)
3. Encourage the students to use a thesaurus to find different words from what they originally thought. (For example: “grief” could be replaced with “bereavement”)
4. Have students present or write an explanation for each word they chose.

After Post Reading Activities

Try these activities to provide reflection after reading to attending the performance.

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is a concept where neurological differences are to be recognized and respected as any other normal human difference. The term neurodiversity is usually used as a statement against prejudice and bigotry towards autism.

1. With your group, discuss the meaning of this term, share reactions, and connect the concept with Caitlin in the play.
2. Describe Caitlin's relationships with the different characters. How does each character view and interact with Caitlin?

Character List

DAD: Caitlin's father

MRS. BROOK: Caitlin's school counselor

MRS. JOHNSON: Caitlin's fifth-grade teacher

MICHAEL: Caitlin's friend in first grade

JOSH: School bully; cousin of the boy who killed Caitlin's brother, Devon

EMMA, BRIANNA, SHANE, JOSE: Caitlin's classmates

3. Have your students create a list of Caitlin's strengths and challenges like the list above.

Caitlin's Strengths

Caitlin's Challenges

4. Next, have students create a list of their own strengths and challenges. Hold a conversation with your class reflecting on this exercise.

My Strengths

My Challenges

Design your own book cover for *Mockingbird*!

Ask students to redesign the cover of the book. What colors and images can they include to help give the reader clues about what to expect from the story? What feels most important to represent visually?

POST-SHOW QUESTIONS *(These questions can be used in journal entries or group discussions)*

1. Prior to the start of the show a fatal shooting had taken place at the school. Loved ones of some of the students lost their life. How do you think being back at the school environment effected students? Think specifically for Caitlin, Michael, and Josh.
2. How does Caitlin's autism affect the way she grieves after Devon's death? What are some things Caitlin does to manage her emotions?
3. Though she is a gifted artist, Caitlin is fearful of using color in her work. Why do you think this makes her uncomfortable?
4. After the death of a loved one, people often tend to cling on to something that physically represents the person lost. Why do you think completing Devon's Eagle chest project was so important to Caitlin? How do you think it made her feel when she would sit inside the chest?

Resources and Ideas for talking about School Violence

In *Mockingbird*, Caitlin's brother, Devon, dies in a school shooting. The shooting has a profound impact on the entire community. Acts of school violence happen and our children are affected by these events. When school shootings occur, no matter where they happen, our students may be struggling with lots of emotions, including fear, anger, sadness, and anxiety.

There are a number of resources available to help talk with students about school violence and help them cope with grief and loss.

Check Out These Websites

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network <https://www.nctsn.org>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/tools.html>

Read these articles

Parents: This article provides a step by step way to have conversation with you child about school violence. <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/explaining-school-shootings-to-kids/>

Common Sense Media: This article provides an age based approach to discussing the news of school shootings with kids. <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-school-shootings>

Start the conversation. If a child is old enough to comprehend and understand what has happened, experts recommend starting a conversation about it. Talk about the shooting with your child. Silence suggests that what has occurred is too horrible even to speak about or that you do not know what has happened. With the use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, text messages) the news on the radio and TV stations, it is highly unlikely that children and teenagers have not heard about this. Chances are your child has heard about it, too. Here's an idea to get started.

Circle Talk

When upsetting events happen, a circle talk can be helpful for young people of all ages, as well as for adults. Listening circles give people a chance to say what they are thinking and feeling, and can help engender mutual understanding and support.

The format is simple: Arrange chairs in a circle. Provide an introduction to the issue at hand, and to the format of the circle. Then invite each person in turn to share what they are thinking and feeling.

Give each person a few minutes to say whatever they want to say – or to pass. When one person is speaking, the others in the group should pay close attention but not comment. The circle is over after every person has had a chance to speak. Often going around the circle more than once allows those who pass on the first go-round to collect their thoughts and feelings so that they can share in the next round.

Possible Discussion Questions:

1. What thoughts and feelings do you have?
2. What thoughts might you want to share with victims of school shootings, their friends and families, and with others who feel vulnerable afterwards?
3. What do you want to say about shootings? What's on your mind?
4. What would you like to do for our community or the world to address [the issue or problem]?

If you liked *Mockingbird*, check out these awesome books!

Rules by Cynthia Lord

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules—from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"—in order to stop his embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a paraplegic boy, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper

Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom - the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it - somehow.

In this breakthrough story, reminiscent of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, from multiple Coretta Scott King Award-winner Sharon Draper, readers will come to know a brilliant mind and a brave spirit who will change forever how they look at anyone with a disability.

Mama Africa! by Kathryn Erskine & Charly Palmer (Illustrator)

Miriam Makeba, a Grammy Award-winning South African singer, rose to fame in the hearts of her people at the pinnacle of apartheid—a brutal system of segregation similar to American Jim Crow laws. Mama Africa, as they called her, raised her voice to help combat these injustices at jazz clubs in Johannesburg; in exile, at a rally beside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and before the United Nations.

The Incredible Magic of Being by Kathryn Erskine

Some might say Julian is sheltered. But he lives large, and his eternal optimism allows him to see infinite possibilities wherever he looks.

Mockingbird Playlist!

Author Kathryn Erskine often creates musical playlists to inspire her as she writes. These are the songs on her *Mockingbird* playlist. Enjoy these tunes while you are reading the book or play!

- “To Kill A Mockingbird” – Elmer Bernstein (Main Title from movie)
- “Footsteps in the Dark” – Elmer Bernstein
- “Everyone Has Strengths to be Proud of” – Cathy Bollinger
- “You Ride Your Way and I’ll Ride Mine” – Rolf Harris
- “Colors of the Wind” – Judy Kuhn
- “Through Your Eyes” – Martina McBride
- “Kindergarten Wall” – John McCutcheon
- “Empathy Song” – The Mosaic Project
- “You’ve Got a Friend in Me” – Randy Newman
- “Sharing Song” – Raffi
- “Mockingbird” – Carly Simon & James Taylor
- “Fly Like an Eagle” – Steve Miller Band

How to Make a Social Story - Video Lesson Information and Examples

(Cont. from pg.11)

Parts of a Social Story

Descriptive Sentences

Answers the 'wh' questions *where* does the situation occur, *who* is it with, *what* happens and *why*?
Descriptive sentences need to present information from an accurate and objective perspective.

Perspective Sentences

Refers to the opinions, feelings, ideas, beliefs or physical/mental well-being of others.

Directive Sentences

Gently offer a response or range of responses for behavior in a particular situation. It is important that these sentences have a positive focus and are constructed in ways which allow flexibility (i.e., avoid statements like I must or I have to).

Control Sentence

Statements that enhance the meaning of the previous sentence (which may be a descriptive, perspective or directive sentence) and can be used to emphasize the importance of the message or to provide reassurance to the person.


Examples of a Social Story

Caitlin Meets Michael



Mrs. Brooks suggests Caitlin makes friends.

At recess, Caitlin observes Michael's body language.

- He is sitting hunched over alone
- He is rubbing his eyes



Caitlin thinks is he either sleepy or sad.
Caitlin decides to ask if he is sad.








Caitlin tries to find out why he is sad.
Caitlin offers him a gummy worm (maybe to make him feel better).




When meeting new people watching their body language can help start a conversation.
This will help me to know if we could be friends.

Unexpected Noises

There are many noises.
Sometimes noises surprise me. They are unexpected












Some unexpected noises are; telephones, doorbells, barking dogs, breaking glass, vacuum cleaners, slamming doors, honking horns, and thunder.

These sounds are okay.
I will try to stay calm when I hear unexpected noises.

I can pick one of my calming tools to help me.

Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online!

Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

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Was the guide useful to you?

Which part(s) did you find most helpful?

How can we improve the theatrical for the future?