

EDUCATOR GUIDE

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“Adults may learn a trick or two from Granddad’s model of patience, acceptance, communication, and support, while sensitive children will see they are not alone and that it’s OK to feel upset. . . . A sweet, specific, and straightforward tale of dealing with good and bad in the world.”
—Kirkus Reviews

WHEN GRANDDAD picks Ava up from school one Thursday afternoon, she’s quiet. She doesn’t want to talk about the lockdown drill that has stirred up her worries. How can she be so afraid in a place that has always felt so safe?

Granddad doesn’t talk much either; he just offers creativity and companionship. And with his gentle encouragement, Ava begins to sense that although the world can be scary, it is still a beautiful place.

With tender insight, *One Thursday Afternoon* sheds light on how an unpredictable world can make a child feel, reminding us that big fears can become smaller when we take time together to look, listen, and create. The book includes an author’s note about the story’s real-life inspiration and recommendations for how adults can help children overcome fear.

barbaradilorenzo.com

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The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and CASEL 5 social and emotional learning competencies addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit corestandards.org; for more about CASEL 5, visit casel.org.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Look carefully at the endpapers in *One Thursday Afternoon*. What clues do you see in the illustrations that let the reader know about the setting and the problem in the story?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7



Describe the difference between Ava and Granddad's expressions when Granddad is in his car picking up Ava from school. How does Ava's expression hint at the problem in the story?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7



Even though Ava just wants to go home straight from school, her grandfather has other plans. What is the surprise that Granddad has for Ava?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1



What do you think Granddad means when he tells Ava that the two of them can be "alone together?"

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3



Why do you think that Ava starts to cry after she sits quietly using her senses to take in nature?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3;

CASEL 5 Social Awareness



What does Ava finally share with Granddad about her day at school as they paint in the park?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3



What connection does Granddad make between Ava's upsetting day and events that happened to him when he was little?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1



Which words would you choose to describe the feelings you get from the illustration of Ava and her granddad painting by the water with two ducks looking at them? What about this illustration gives you this feeling?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7; CASEL 5 Self-Awareness



Fear creeps back into Ava's mind when she thinks about news reports of schools in danger. What things help Ava feel calmer and less scared?

CASEL 5 Social Awareness



What lessons do you think Ava learns through her experiences with a lockdown drill at school and time spent with her grandfather?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2



How do lockdown drills at school make you feel? What do you do when you feel anxious or scared? What makes you feel better in those situations? How can you help others who are feeling anxious or scared?

CASEL 5 Self-Awareness; CASEL 5 Self-Management; CASEL 5 Social Awareness

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Art with Feeling

Time spent outside painting with her granddad helps Ava to free up her emotions so that she can talk about her feelings. Invite students to head outdoors with art supplies. Have them close their eyes to really use their senses to help get in touch with nature and their emotions before they create their artwork. Ask them to zero in on their feelings and create an art piece that reflects their emotions. Create a class display of this “feelings art.” Have students identify the emotions that each artist conveyed in their pieces.

CASEL 5 Self-Awareness; CASEL 5 Social Awareness

Help Is at Hand

Mister Rogers famously said that when there are emergencies and disasters we should “look for the helpers.” There are always people who are committed to helping others. Work with students to create a T-chart to list helpers that are available at school, and others who may come to school to help if needed. On the other side of the chart, list ways that students make sure that they are safe every day, such as by wearing a bike helmet, holding an adult’s hand when crossing a street, etc.

Handling Stress

Create stress balls for students to use in situations when they are feeling overwhelmed and need to calm down. Supplies needed for each student: a balloon, a funnel, some cornmeal, and permanent markers. Blow up the balloon until it is about 4 to 5 inches in diameter and pinch it closed. Next, insert the funnel and fill each balloon with cornmeal. Slowly release your pinched fingers and squeeze out the excess air. Tie the balloon closed, then decorate the stress ball with permanent markers. **CASEL 5 Self-Management**

My Beautiful Place

When Ava’s granddad shares with her about his own scary experience with safety drills at school, he reminds her, “Even though the world is scary, it’s also a beautiful place.” Invite students to think of a place that brings them peace and happiness—their very own “beautiful place.” Have each student write a personal narrative about this special place. Encourage them to include sensory details so that the reader can picture the place in the same way that the writer does.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3



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Name: _____

ZOOMING IN ON THE CENTRAL MESSAGE



Think carefully about the events in *One Thursday Afternoon*. What message do you think the author is trying to share with readers? Complete the sentence below and draw an illustration to go with the book's message. Then think about how you could apply this message from the book to your own life. Write about this connection and draw a picture.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2; CASEL 5 Self-Awareness

The central message of this book is

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for drawing an illustration related to the central message of the book.

Connecting the message to my own life

Name: _____

CHARACTER STUDY

Characters in stories often change over the course of the story. Think about Ava. What is she like at the beginning of *One Thursday Afternoon*? How does she feel and behave? Spending time with her granddad changes Ava. What is she like at the end of the story?



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3;

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3; CASEL 5 Social Awareness

Draw a picture of Ava at the beginning of the story. Write a description of her feelings and behavior.

Draw a picture of Ava at the end of the story. Write a description of her feelings and behavior.

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for drawing and writing a description of Ava at the beginning of the story.A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for drawing and writing a description of Ava at the end of the story.

Name: _____

INQUIRING MINDS

Strong readers ask questions about the stories that they read. Think of questions you would like to ask about the following parts of the story. After you've written your questions, find a partner and take turns asking and answering your questions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

Here is a question I have about the **TITLE** of the story:

Here is a question I have about the **CHARACTERS** in the story:

Here is a question I have about the **SETTING** of the story:

