

Welcome to Our Classroom!



THE ALL ARE WELCOME SERIES

By Alexandra Penfold; Illustrated by Suzanne Kaufman

Plan your year with the beloved All Are Welcome series, which supports essential SEL skills and builds belonging from the first day of school through year's end. Learn about the series and identify read-aloud moments for each title as well as classroom and community themes for each season of the academic year.

WELCOME TO OUR CLASSROOM!

A teacher welcomes a new group of students as they prepare for an exciting and collaborative year ahead.

August to October

- Start of the Academic Year
- September 6: National Read a Book Day
- October 5: National Do Something Nice Day

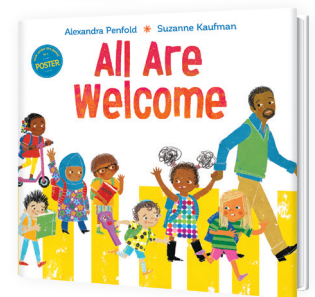


ALL ARE WELCOME

Join the call for a better world with this *New York Times* bestselling picture book about a school where everyone belongs.

November to December

- Mid-November: World Kindness Week
- November 20: National Child's Day
- Thanksgiving



BIG FEELINGS

A picture book that shows young readers, in gently reassuring rhyme, how they can navigate the big feelings that are sure to come up.

January to February

- January 31: Inspire Your Heart with Art Day
- February 11: Make a Friend Day
- February 14: Valentine's Day
- February 17: National Random Acts of Kindness Day

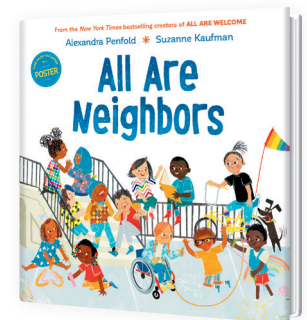


ALL ARE NEIGHBORS

When a new family moves in, the whole neighborhood comes together to celebrate their diverse community.

March to April

- March 13: Good Samaritan Day
- April 4: School Librarian Day
- April 22: Earth Day
- Fourth Tuesday of April: National School Bus Driver Appreciation Day

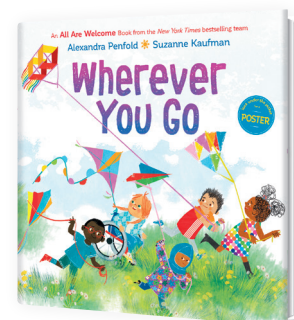


WHEREVER YOU GO

A book that celebrates the many milestones of a child's life, from a school play to graduation, with an emphasis on kindness and community.

May to June

- Moving-Up and Graduation Ceremonies, End-of-the-Year Celebrations
- May 1: School Principal Day
- May 7: Try Something New Day
- June 1: National Pen Pal Day, National Say Something Nice Day



WELCOME TO OUR CLASSROOM!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before reading the book, look at the front and back covers with your class. Ask students what they see. What do they think the book will be about? Consider the title as you discuss and make predictions.
2. Compare and contrast the classroom when only the teacher is present and the classroom when it's full of people. What feelings does each room bring up?
3. What are some things that you would like to learn this year?
4. How does it feel to try new things? How can we support each other in trying new things?
5. Revisit the book's jacket. What do you see? What does the butterfly remind you of? Do students relate to the butterfly or caterpillar?



ACTIVITIES

1. Empower your students to create a collective Classroom Culture Code. How can we create an inclusive classroom full of kindness and friendship? Create a list with students. Start with "In our classroom . . .," and use the list you made to fill in the blank! For example: "In our classroom, no one sits alone." Discuss how students can speak and act kindly toward one another. Have all students and staff sign the charter by writing their name or adding a hand- or fingerprint. Hang the charter for all to see. When students are not following it, remind them to refer back to it.
2. On strips of paper, have students write their name and decorate their strip with things they like. Link the strips together and explain that these links form a community, just like the class. Students may present their links to the class as they connect them. Emphasize that the links must stay connected and work together to remain strong. Count the links as a class and hang them for all to see.
3. Have students use pencils, crayons, and markers to draw a self-portrait. This can be done through free drawing, a worksheet template, or by tracing a photograph of themselves. At the bottom, each student or the teacher can write "is welcome."
4. Consistency and kindness are essential in every classroom. Create a welcome or morning routine for students to follow as they enter. Include a greetings chart where each student shares how they feel and chooses how to greet others—through a handshake, hug, dance move, high-five, wave, or by simply saying "hello." Encourage students to greet at least five peers before beginning the day.
5. Bring the culture of your classroom into the greater school community. Identify different staff members (nurse, physical education teacher, specialists, librarian, cafeteria staff, maintenance, school counselor/psychologist, crossing guard, security guard, principal, assistant principal, etc.) and explain their roles. If possible, show photos. Have students visit these staff members to say "hi" and see where they work.
6. Writing or drawing prompts: What is your favorite subject in school? Why? What is one goal you have for yourself this year? Tell me something you would like me to know about you.

ALL ARE WELCOME

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can we keep our classroom "safe and sound"? Encourage students to review classroom rules.
2. What makes a good friend? How can you be a good friend during recess? Throughout the day?
3. We each have special talents. What talents do you have? Tell me something you would like me to know about you.



ACTIVITIES

1. Each time the story says "all are welcome" or "all are welcome here," pause and have students read the line along with you. They can shout, clap, stomp, pat, or perform a class movement—as long as they participate together. You can create a rhythm or chant. Have students repeat: "You have a place." "You have a space." "All are welcome here."
2. Ask students to switch their lunch seat for a day or a week, encouraging them to sit next to someone new.
3. Celebrate each student! Dedicate one week to each "Student Star of the Week." Have the student create a poster with pictures, interests, heritage, memories, or anything they'd like to share. Provide time for presentations and recognize them with a certificate, medal, or T-shirt.
4. Build a community of gratitude. Encourage students to write a thank-you note to a friend or staff member who makes them feel valued, and deliver it.
5. Writing or drawing prompts: What happens when you include someone? What makes you unique? Have you ever not felt welcome? What can you do to change that feeling or take initiative to feel included?

BIG FEELINGS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the children in the story feel mad?
2. Why are the children sad? What makes you think this?
3. Have you ever had to say sorry to someone? How do you think it made them feel? How did it make you feel?



ACTIVITIES

1. Have students complete the sentence: “In this classroom, we want to feel . . .” (e.g., welcomed, safe, respected, inspired). Discuss how to support those feelings. Write all of the class’s statements on a poster and hang it for all to see.
2. Writing or drawing prompts:
 - I feel ____ when . . .
 - What does “see another point of view” mean? Describe a time you did this.
 - What big feelings have you experienced?
 - Create artwork or writing inspired by a heart shape for “Inspire Your Heart With Art” Day. Display it for the school community.

ALL ARE NEIGHBORS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a community?
2. Pause on pages 5 and 6. Does this look like your community? What is the same? What is different?
3. How are the characters treating each other? How are they treating their neighborhood?
4. What does “shared space” mean? How can we take care of shared spaces?

ACTIVITIES

1. Invite community members to share about their careers. Have students prepare interview questions and discuss what they learned.
2. Take a neighborhood tour. Observe sights, sounds, shapes, and smells. Create maps afterward and compare perspectives.
3. Arrange a field trip to visit community helpers (police, fire, EMS). Have students ask questions and write thank-you cards.
4. Create a community paper quilt using decorated squares from each student. Display it in the school.
5. Writing or drawing prompts:
 - Who are five people in your neighborhood, and why are they important?
 - What do you want to be when you grow up? Why?
 - What are five important jobs in your community? Why?
 - Draw or describe a place in your neighborhood that makes you happy.



WHEREVER YOU GO

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. "Where will you go? Who will you be?" How would you answer these questions about yourself?
2. What does it mean to be proud of yourself? When have you felt proud?
3. What does it mean when the author says, "You are the words to my favorite song"?
4. How can you be a good teammate? What makes a team work well?
5. Should people only feel proud of you when you graduate? When else can someone feel proud of you?
6. What does it mean to love someone? Who do you love? Who loves you?

ACTIVITIES

1. Art walk/gallery: Display student work from the year, especially All Are Welcome creations.
2. Interview a graduate! Pair students with graduating students to discuss goals, achievements, and future plans.
3. Write letters to next year's teacher. Students write or draw introductions, including interests, goals, and learning preferences. Deliver the letters to the next teacher.
4. Memory kites: Students create decorated paper kites representing goals or memories. Display them.
5. Graduation or moving-up ceremonies: Celebrate achievements with performances, speeches, awards, and keepsakes.
6. Writing or drawing prompts:
 - Who makes you feel loved or valued?
 - How do you like to be celebrated?
 - Where will you go? Who will you be?
 - What happens when it's hard to achieve a goal? How can you keep going?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - What milestones outside of school are you proud of?
 - What is your dream job and why?



Lauren Alinkofsky is a Special Educator in New York City. She has been in the education field for over fifteen years. Lauren serves as a member of the National Art Education Association, New York State Art Teachers Association, Story Pirates Academic Advisory, as well as the founding chapter sponsor for her school's National Elementary Art Honors Society. Lauren is an avid collaborator with museums, theatre groups, and cultural institutions focusing on education and inclusive arts programs.



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