



# **Reading Guide**

**4th through 8th Grade**



Safe Haven does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation in its educational programs and activities.

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## **GERI Discussion and Activity Guide**

*Key Topics listed with each book title*

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# Grow Engage Read Imagine (GERI) Program Overview



**CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS**  
GERI uses books to offer alternatives to violence



**PROMOTING YOUTH LEADERSHIP**  
Stories show characters of diverse backgrounds and beliefs



**EMPOWERING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**  
Empowering parents to have ongoing conversations on healthy relationships

Grow Engage Read Imagine (GERI) is an initiative of Safe Haven Ministries, promoting healthy communities through reading.

GERI's goal is to prevent violence, beginning with young children, encouraging and supporting healthy relationships and non-violent conflict resolution.

Find the PreK-3rd grade GERI book collection and resources in the "Book Nook" displays at these GRPL branch locations:  
**Seymour, West Leonard, Yankee Clipper, & Main (Youth Services).**



Scan here,  
or visit [gerigr.org](http://gerigr.org)  
to learn more.



Safe Haven Ministries is a comprehensive domestic violence and human trafficking agency located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The team at Safe Haven believes that violence and human trafficking are completely preventable. We believe that we can inspire our community and others to unite in ending violence.

**Grow Engage Read Imagine (GERI)** is a grant-funded initiative of Safe Haven Ministries. This reading initiative seeks to use books to heal, teach, and empower. We want to give caregivers and parents tools and resources to help them have important conversations with their child(ren).

The selected books are age-appropriate and rooted in child development theory, best reading practices for children, and best practices in violence prevention education. The main topics explored include:

|                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bullying                     | Family & Family Structure |
| Boundaries & Consent         | Feelings & Emotions       |
| Communication                | Friendship                |
| Community                    | Representation            |
| Creativity & Imagination     | Respect                   |
| Diversity, Equity, Inclusion | Self-Esteem               |
| Empowerment / Leadership     |                           |

When we normalize equality, promote healthy relationship skills, build awareness, step in to help others, and connect teens to trusted adults, we are working towards a world free from violence. Parents and Caregivers play an important role in preventing violence.

The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention calls the ideas above “protective factors.” Watch the “[Moving Forward](https://youtu.be/FJDwe2RkOqo)”<sup>1</sup> video on YouTube to learn more about protective factors.



<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/FJDwe2RkOqo>

# Important Note for Caregivers

Violence is a sad reality in our world, and many people in our community experience violence regularly. Some of the books included in the GERI collection contain stories that show different forms of harm. Safe Haven's goal is not to show or promote violence for entertainment or shock value. Our first goal is to support families as they learn and talk about important topics like **Bullying, Boundaries, Consent, Communication, Community, Creativity, Imagination, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Family, Feelings, Emotions, Friendship, Representation, Respect, and Self-Esteem**. We know that these issues deeply impact our community. It is our hope that we can all work together to nurture safe and supportive communities for everyone.

## When Your Child Wants to Share

It is difficult to imagine that anyone would want to harm a child. But the truth is that there are many people who will. Sometimes, talking to children about topics addressed in the GERI books can lead to a child opening up about violence or abuse they have experienced. We call this “**making a disclosure**.”

It's usually difficult to receive this disclosure, but it's important to remember that this is a result of your support. The child felt safe enough to tell you. This is important because, all too often, children and teens don't initially disclose abuse out of fear.

Below are four important steps you can take following a disclosure:

1. Thank them for trusting you and let them know you believe them.
2. Let them know that what was done to them was not their fault and that you're sorry they were harmed.
3. Keep them away from the person who harmed them.
4. Seek professional help to support them.

## Self Care

When reading and discussing GERI books, remember your own self-care. If what you read feels overwhelming, take a break. Reach out to someone you trust to talk about how you are feeling.

Reading about any type of violence can feel heavy. If you have personally experienced violence or abuse, it can be especially difficult to talk to your child(ren) about topics that remind you of your own experience.

Reading these books with a child or discussing the books can bring up difficult feelings. These feelings are normal. To address these challenges, try building a system of support that helps you as you begin to explore more of these topics in depth with the children in your life. These additional supports will aid in processing those hurtful reminders and understanding the responses you may have to them.

### Supports may look like:

- Calling hotlines that specialize in domestic and sexual violence
- Reaching out to advocates at local domestic and sexual violence agencies
- Having a friend, a family member, or a partner that you can speak with
- Putting a pause on the discussion until you're emotionally ready to continue

You aren't alone, and you don't have to go through it alone. On [page 30](#) of this guide, you will find a community resource directory.

**Safe Haven is a place to visit/call/text for help and support.**

**Safe Haven Ministries  
2627 Birchcrest Dr. SE (8a-5p)  
616-452-6664 (24/7)  
Webchat is available at [shmgr.org](http://shmgr.org) (24/7)**



# 4th - 8th Grade



## Discussion & Activity Guide

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The 4th - 8th Grade Discussion and Activity Guide pairs with Grow Engage Read Imagine (GERI) books for children between ages 9 and 14. The guide includes a brief description of each book and its main topics. There are discussion questions to help guide ongoing conversations with your child(ren), and fun activities designed to promote healthy relationships, boundaries, and positive social norms.

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# Consent (for Kids!): Boundaries, Respect, and Being in Charge of You

By Rachel Brian

**Description:** Readers will learn about boundaries and how to set them, ways to respect themselves and others, what to do if someone makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, and much more. Along the way, they'll be encouraged to reflect on (and improve!) their own behavior and to practice consent in their daily lives.

**Topics:** Consent, Boundaries, Communication, Empowerment, Respect

## Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to set a boundary?
2. How do boundaries help in relationships or when interacting with others?
3. Can you share some examples from the book where characters set boundaries and how it affected their relationships?
4. Practicing consent involves more than one part. Can you explain how the different parts of consent contribute to building good relationships?
5. Sometimes people communicate without using words. What are some ways someone can show they don't want to do something or that they feel uncomfortable without speaking? How does paying attention to these signs help us respect others' boundaries?

## Actividades

*Let's Watch Together!*

"Consent is like being the ruler of your own country...population: YOU."

Visit <https://youtu.be/h3nhM9UIJjc> or scan the QR Code to watch the video that inspired the book! From Blue Seat Studios, this video is a "smart, playful guide to consent and bodily autonomy."



*Consent and Aliens*

An alien spaceship just landed on earth! Our new alien friends want to learn how to fit into human society. But first, they have to learn about respecting boundaries. Alone or in a group, find the definitions of *empathy*, *compassion*, *respect*, *consent*, and *bodily autonomy*. After you define these words, how would you explain it to the aliens?

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.  
Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# Amina's Voice

Written by Hena Khan

**Description:** Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except, now that she's in middle school, everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? While Amina struggles with these questions, she also has to deal with the devastation of her local mosque being vandalized.

**Topics:** Empowerment, Leadership, Respect, DEI, Community

## Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Amina feel uneasy when Soojin considers changing her name to something more "American"? What does it signify to have an "American" name, and why does it bother Amina?
2. What could be the reasons behind Baba's insistence on perfection for his children? What might drive his expectation for them to be flawless?
3. If someone who had previously been hurtful suddenly wanted to be your friend, how would you react? How would you approach the situation?
4. Why do you think some people bully others who are different? How would you feel and respond if you were in Amina's and Soojin's position, facing teasing and bullying because of your cultural background?

## **Amina's Voice Activities**

### *Learn a New Word*

Amina's Voice uses vocabulary from Islamic, Pakistani, and Korean culture. Language is a great way to connect and learn about people. Together, let's build a world word wall.

- Search for words from our story that you are unfamiliar with.
- Once you have picked several words, look up their definitions.
- On a poster paper, place the words in categories based on cultural origin with their definitions.
- As you discover new words from other stories you can add to your world word wall!

### *Food & Research*

Time to do some research! Food is a great way to show people you care about them. Throughout Amina's Voice we see how food helps characters relate to one another, like when Soojin shared her bulgogi with Emily at the lunchroom table.

- Research the meals mentioned in the book (kimchee, gulab jamun, bulgogi)
- Find out what these meals look like and how are they shared
- After you finish with meals from our book, search for meals from other countries and cultures.

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.  
Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# Front Desk

By Kelly Yang

**Description:** Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. 1) She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. 2) Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. 3) She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

**Topics:** Immigration, Empowerment, Family, Empathy, Community

## Discussion Questions

1. How does Mia's opinion of America change throughout the story? What events or experiences change her view on the country?
2. Mr. Yao tells Mia to be cautious of "bad guys." How do you think he determines if someone is "bad"? What are your thoughts on using this way of judging people?
3. Mia's mom decided to protect her by telling the principal they had just moved from China. What reasons might she have had for taking that action?
4. Why is Mia hesitant to say that she lives in a motel to the other kids at school? Have you ever created a fictional story about yourself? What made you do so?

## Activities

### *Watch a Video*

Scan the QR code or visit [https://youtu.be/tlxSJW\\_Q2mQ](https://youtu.be/tlxSJW_Q2mQ) to check out this animated short called "It wasn't easy growing up as an Immigrant" from the Youtube channel Storybooth. You'll hear Corrie's story as she talks about her experiences immigrating from the Philippines to America with her parents. Watch the video for similarities and differences to Mia's experiences in our story.



Growing Up As An Immigrant

### *Character Letter*

All the characters from Front Desk had unique perspectives that greatly impacted Mia at one point or another in our story. Have kids write a letter from the perspective of their favorite character in our story. For example, Mia's mom might write a letter to their family back in China, or Mia might write to Lupe.

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.**

**Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# The Jumbies

by Tracey Baptiste

**Description:** Corinne La Mer claims she isn't afraid of anything. Not scorpions, not the boys who tease her, and certainly not jumbies. They're just tricksters made up by parents to frighten their children. Then one night, Corinne chases an agouti all the way into the forbidden forest, and shining yellow eyes follow her to the edge of the trees. They couldn't belong to a jumbie. Or could they? When Corinne spots a beautiful stranger at the market the very next day, she knows something extraordinary is about to happen. When this same beauty, called Severine, turns up at Corinne's house, danger is in the air. Severine plans to claim the entire island for the jumbies. Corinne must call on her courage and her friends and learn to use ancient magic she didn't know she possessed to stop Severine and to save her island home.

**Topics:** Empowerment, Friendship, Community

## "The Jumbies" Discussion Questions

1. The jumbies are based on Caribbean folktales. Can you think of any other stories, tales, or superstitions that share similarities with the jumbies?
2. Why do you think stories about the jumbies exist? What do you believe these stories are attempting to teach or demonstrate to people?
3. When the White Witch said, "I can't help one side at the expense of the other," what do you think she meant by that? What message do you think she was trying to convey?
4. Severine offers to cook dinner for Corinne and her father, but Corinne senses that something isn't right about the meal. Have you ever had a similar experience where you felt something was wrong despite others telling you differently? How did you handle that situation?
5. Corrine learns something new about her heritage. How does this discovery affect how she feels about herself and fitting in? How does her journey of self-discovery relate to the themes of culture and accepting who you are in the story?

## "The Jumbies" Activities

### *Find a Jumbie*

The author of our tale, Tracey Baptiste, based this book on the stories she heard while growing up in Trinidad. Throughout the book she names several jumbies (Douens, La Diabless, Soucouyant) but these are not all the jumbies. Do some research and see what other jumbie-like creatures you can find based on Caribbean folklore.

## *Design Your Own Jumbie Creature*

In "The Jumbies," the story revolves around magical creatures called jumbies. These creatures are inspired by Caribbean folklore and have unique characteristics. In this activity, you'll get to use your imagination and creativity to design your own jumbie creature.

### Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- Pencil
- Imagination!

### Instructions:

1. **Imagine:** Think about what your jumbie looks like. Is it friendly, mischievous, or mysterious? Consider its shape, features, and size.
2. **Sketch:** Use pencil and paper to sketch your jumbie. Outline its form, facial features, and any unique traits.
3. **Features:** Add details like fur, feathers, scales, or clothing. Be creative with colors and patterns.
4. **Magic:** Decide on a special power or ability for your jumbie. Can it control the weather or talk to animals?
5. **Name:** Give your jumbie a name that represents its nature or powers.
6. **Describe:** Write a short paragraph describing your jumbie's appearance, personality, and magic.
7. **Share:** Display your jumbie creation in your room or share it with friends and family.

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.  
Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# Harbor Me

by Jacqueline Woodson

**Description:** It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat—by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them—everything from deportation and incarceration to fears of racial profiling and adjustment to changing family dynamics. When the six are together, they can express feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. Together, they can grow braver and more prepared for the rest of their lives.

**Topics:** DEI, Immigration, Friendship, Emotions, Empathy, Family, Representation

## "Harbor Me" Discussion Questions

1. Consider this quote: "We circled around each other and listened. Maybe what matters most is that we were heard." What do you think was meant by this?
2. Do you believe listening and being heard are important in personal and community relationships? Explain.
3. Freedom is explored by the kids in the story. What are your thoughts? How do you see freedom in your own life and what are your attitudes toward change?
4. What did you think this book would be about before you started reading it?
5. One of the group members mentions that 'none of the kids have freedom.' What are they trying to say? How do they describe freedom? How do *you* define freedom in your own life?
6. While the kids are sitting together, they talk about how things can change easily. How do you feel about change? Do you think it happens too quickly or too slowly? Why?
7. One group member tells the others that they never had to think about color before joining them at school. How do the other kids react to this? What do they think about this statement?
8. If you could ask each of the main characters a question, what would it be? What are some things you would like to know about them?
9. How do you feel about the way this book ends? What are your overall thoughts and emotions about the ending?



## **"Harbor Me" Activities**

### *Create a Poem*

Esteban's Papi wrote poems as a way to express his love to his family. Write a poem from the point of view of each of the "ARTT" room students (Haley, Holly, Esteban, Amari, Tiago, and Ashton). Think about what their interests are, the stories they shared in the "ARTT" room, and their dreams.

### *Time Capsule*

Haley brings her recorder to the "ARTT" room and lets the other kids record their stories and experiences. She does this so that one day when they all come back together they can remember the memories they share.

#### Materials needed

- Pencil
- Paper
- Shoebox
- Items you'd like to include in your time capsule

#### Instructions

1. Write and date a letter to yourself with questions for future you to answer
2. Put a few things in your box that represent who you are now
3. Include some photos of family and friends
4. Put all of these into an old shoe box
5. Open the shoe box a year from when you closed it

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.  
Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# The House on Mango Street

by Sandra Cisneros

**Description:** Told in a series of vignettes, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous. The House on Mango Street is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become.

**Topics:** Empowerment, Social Norms, Abuse/Violence, Immigration, Respect, Family, Community

## Discussion Questions:

1. How does Esperanza's community shape her thoughts, feelings, and actions? How does your own community influence you in similar ways?
2. In what ways does language both bring people together and create divisions within communities (in the book and in your own experiences)?
3. Which family portrayed in The House on Mango Street reminds you of your own family and why?
4. Throughout this book, violence affects many characters, yet no one steps in or offers help. Why do you think this is the case, and how do you think these experiences shape Esperanza's worldview?
5. In the final words of the book, Esperanza talks about leaving and coming back for "the ones she left behind" and "the ones who cannot get out." Who do you think she is talking about and what does it mean?

## Activities

### *Role Models*

Esperanza meets many women and girls that inspire her as she grows into herself. Find the three women named below in our story. Then explain what they did and how they are a role model for Esperanza.

Sally  
Aunt Lupe  
Minerva  
Esperanza's Mother

### *Write a Poem*

Esperanza discovers she has a talent for writing poetry. This is a talent that multiple people throughout the story comment on. Choose one of the topics mentioned below, and create your own poem inspired by *The House on Mango Street*.

Language  
Family  
Beauty  
Growing up  
Falling in love

After Reading a **geri** Book  
Please Scan This Code.

Thank You!



SCAN ME

# Afar

Written by by Leila del Duca, and Illustrated by Kit Seaton

**Description:** Boetema discovers she can astrally project into new worlds and possess the bodies of people on other planets. At the same time, her troublemaker brother finds himself in a scary situation after eavesdropping on an illegal deal between business tycoons and their cyborg bodyguard. Boetema accidentally hurts someone while in another girl's body, and the siblings must work together to solve the problems they've created.

**Topics:** Empowerment, Consent/Boundaries, Social Norms, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

## Discussion Questions

1. Botema tells Inotu a story from her culture about Agama Wanwitu and its meaning. What are some stories from your own culture? How do these stories show the values, traditions, or beliefs of your community?
2. Botema discovers that her dreams allow her to go into different worlds and take on other people's bodies. Does she show respect for others' boundaries when doing this? (Explain how she does or does not)
3. What does it mean to respect personal boundaries?
4. What can you do to help someone who is being picked on or bullied?
5. Throughout their journey, both Botema and Inotu go through big changes. How are Botema and Inotu different from who they were at the beginning of their journey? What experiences or things do you think made them grow and change?



Afrofuturism mixes sci-fi  
and social justice.

## Activities

### *Watch a Video*

Afar is a comic that would be classified as Afro-Futurism. To learn more about what Afrofuturism is, check out the Youtube channel Vox for their video called *Afrofuturism mixes sci-fi and social justice. Here's how it works*. The video covers the origins of Afrofuturism and what it means to have more inclusive stories.

Scan the QR, or visit <https://youtu.be/jlPwTMMhGGI>

### *Dream Journal*

Inotu begins to journal as a way to practice his writing skills and cope with losing his friend. Begin your own journal by writing your day to day within it. Write in it as if you were addressing it to a friend who you haven't seen in a long time.

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.  
Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# Maybe He Just Likes You

by Barbara Dee

**Description:** For seventh-grader Mila, it starts with some boys giving her an unwanted hug on the school blacktop. A few days later, at recess, one of the boys (and fellow trumpet player) Callum tells Mila it's his birthday, and asks her for a "birthday hug." He's just being friendly, isn't he? And how can she say no? But Callum's hug lasts a few seconds too long, and feels...weird. According to her friend, Zara, Mila is being immature and overreacting. Doesn't she know what flirting looks like? But the boys don't leave Mila alone. On the bus. In the halls. During band practice, the one place Mila could always escape. It doesn't feel like flirting—so what is it? Thanks to a chance meeting, Mila begins to find solace in a new place: karate class. Slowly, with the help of a fellow classmate, Mila learns how to stand her ground and how to respect others and herself.

**Topics:** Empowerment, Abuse/Violence, Consent, Bullying, Friendship, Respect, Self Esteem

## "Maybe He Just Likes You" Discussion Questions

1. How can you tell when someone has crossed a boundary? What are some signs that show someone has gone too far?
2. During Omi's birthday hug, the boys from the basketball team also join. How do you think everyone feels afterward? How does it make them feel?
3. Why does Mila feel better when she wears her green sweater? Who else likes Mila's sweater?
4. After the bus incident, Samira tells Mila that she shouldn't let the boys treat her that way. Was it Mila's fault for not saying anything? How would you have reacted if you were Mila?
5. Max tries to convince Mila to talk to the school counselor about being bullied. Is Mila dealing with bullying or something else?
6. What happens when Mila tries to tell others about what's happening? How do they react to her?
7. How does Mila change because of her karate practice? What differences do you notice in her?
8. How does Ms. Fender, the school counselor, respond to Mila when she tells her about the bullying? What does Ms. Fender share with Mila?
9. How does Liana's talk influence Mila's decisions? What effect does it have on Mila?

## **“Maybe He Just Likes You” Activities**

### *Video Time!*

Check out Amaze.org’s video called Communication and Consent on YouTube. This two minute video will discuss what healthy boundaries are, definitions of consent, and how to obtain consent from someone else. As you watch this video, think about the following

1. Do I respect people's boundaries?
2. How do I communicate when someone has crossed the line?
3. What does practicing consent every day look like?

### *Finding Boundaries*

For this activity, caregivers and their child will be working together. Search through our story for all the times someone respected and disrespected boundaries.

#### Respecting Boundaries

1. Name the characters that respected the boundary.
2. How did they respect the boundary?
3. What about what they did tells you the boundary was respected?

#### Disrespecting Boundaries

1. Name the character that broke the boundary.
2. How did they disrespect the boundary set?
3. What tells you that it was disrespectful or harmful?

**After Reading a *geri* Book  
Please Scan This Code.  
Thank You!**



**SCAN ME**

# Tight

by Torrey Maldonado

**Description:** Lately Bryan's been feeling it in all kinds of ways. He knows what's *tight* for him in a good way—reading comics, drawing superheroes, and hanging out with no drama. But drama's hard to escape where he's from, and that gets him wound up tight. And now Bryan's new friend Mike is challenging him to have fun in ways that are crazy risky. At first, it's a rush following Mike, hopping turnstiles, subway surfing, and getting into all kinds of trouble. But Bryan never feels right acting wrong. So which way will he go when he understands that drama is so not his style? Fortunately, his favorite comic heroes shed light on his dilemma, reminding him that he has power—the power to choose his friends and to stand up for what he believes is right.

**Themes:** Boundaries/Consent, Social norms, Bullying, Empowerment / Leadership, Friendship

## "Tight" Discussion Questions

1. What was Bryan's first impression of Mike when they first met? How did Bryan feel about him?
2. How is Mike's home life different from Bryan's? How do their families and living situations contrast?
3. In the story, different characters use the word "soft." What do you think they mean when they say it? What are they referring to?
4. How does Bryan change after his dad, Pa, gets arrested? What differences do you notice in how he acts or feels?
5. Why is Bryan scared to tell Mike what he really thinks about Little Kevin joining them for "train surfing"? What might he be afraid of?
6. What does Bryan's dad, Pa, say about jail? How does this affect Bryan's understanding of his dad's situation?
7. How does Bryan feel and act when he is away from Mike for a while? What changes do you see in him during that time?
8. Why do you think Bryan's mom, Ma, wanted him to be friends with Mike? What reasons might she have had for encouraging their friendship?
9. If Bryan could have handled the fight with Mike in a different way, what do you think he could have done? How might things have turned out differently?
10. Bryan often feels pressured by his friends to do things. Can you relate to that? Have you ever felt pressured by your friends? How did you handle it?

## Activities for "Tight"

### *Finish the Story*

Our story ends with Bryan promising himself that he will think before he acts. Write your own version of how you think Bryan and Mike's conversation will go. Consider the following questions as you write your story:

1. Where will the conversation take place?
2. How will Mike react to seeing Bryan again?
3. Do Bryan and Mike remain friends?

### *The Box*

In our story we see Bryan struggle with peer pressure from other boys his age. He has a fear of being labeled soft. Together with your youth, this activity is going to investigate Bryan's fears of being called soft.

1. In the box labeled soft, place examples from our story of characters being called that.
2. In the box labeled cool, place all the things that received praise from characters.
3. Look through both boxes, but especially the soft box, and talk about
  - a. Why was it called soft?
  - b. Is it a bad thing?
  - c. Does it really belong in this box?

| COOL | SOFT |
|------|------|
|      |      |

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# The Prince and The Dressmaker

by Jen Wang

**Description:** Paris, at the dawn of the modern age:

Prince Sebastian is looking for a bride—or rather, his parents are looking for one for him. Sebastian is too busy hiding his secret life from everyone. At night he puts on daring dresses and takes Paris by storm as the fabulous Lady Crystallia—the hottest fashion icon in the world capital of fashion! Sebastian’s secret weapon (and best friend) is the brilliant dressmaker Frances—one of only two people who knows the truth: sometimes this boy wears dresses. But Frances dreams of greatness, and being someone’s secret weapon means being a secret. Forever. How long can Frances defer her dreams to protect a friend?

**Topics:** DEI, Social Norms, Bullying

## Questions for Prince and The Dressmaker

1. Why do you think Prince Sebastian wanted to keep everything about their new client a secret? What reasons might they have had for wanting to keep things mysterious?
2. What does Frances do to make Sebastian feel safe and secure?
3. How does art and fashion allow Sebastian to express themselves? How are Sebastian and Lady Crystallia different in how they behave?
4. When can it be a problem for someone to reveal someone else’s secret?
5. How can acceptance help others in the real world, outside of fairy tales?

## Activities

### *Learning about Gender*

Sebastian sometimes goes by Lady Crystallia and also asks that others use pronouns other than “he” or “him”. Learn more about gender and using pronouns respectfully with Amaze.org’s video called *Range of Gender Identities*.

### *What are Pronouns?*

Check out this other video from Amaze.org called *What are Pronouns?* In this video, you will learn how to use pronouns, what to do if you use the wrong pronouns for someone, and how you can be a supportive friend.

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# Glossary of Terms

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boundaries                              | Limits and rules we set in our relationships to make sure they stay healthy and safe                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Consent                                 | Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Disclosure                              | Something (such as information) that is made known or revealed                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) | Promotes the fair treatment and full participation of all people, especially in the workplace, including populations who have historically been under-represented or subject to discrimination because of their background, identity, disability, etc.  |
| Domestic Violence                       | A pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.                                                                                                      |
| Gender Equity                           | Respecting all people without discrimination, regardless of their gender, and addressing gender inequalities that limit a person's ability to access opportunities to achieve better health, education, and economic opportunity based on their gender. |
| Inclusive                               | Including all people or groups involved in something                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Marginalization                         | Discrimination and exclusion because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.                                                                                                                        |
| Sexual Violence                         | Any sexual act committed or attempted by another person against an individual who has not freely given consent or is unable to consent or refuse. This includes both unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment.                                     |
| Social Norms                            | The unwritten or unspoken rules that influence how people in a society behave.                                                                                                                                                                          |

# GERI Website and Online Tools (GeriGR.org)

The Grow Engage Read Imagine (GERI) Website provides additional information about the GERI program, and includes additional discussion questions for each book in the collection. There are also a variety of resources for parents and caregivers, in the form of an online Parent Toolkit.

The online parent toolkit features information and resources centered around the following topics and more:

- Tips on age appropriate conversations with your child(ren)
- Safe, unsafe, and unwanted touches (Boundaries/Consent)
- Handling disclosures (When your child wants to share)
- Community resources for victims and survivors

Find the toolkit and other helpful resources online at **GeriGR.org**



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## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We're glad you had an opportunity to read and discuss a book from the GERI collection today!

We'd like to learn more about your experience with GERI, so that we can measure effectiveness, answer any questions, and continue to make improvements. Completing this brief survey is completely voluntary and anonymous.

After you finish reading and discussing each book, please scan the QR Code or visit **<https://gerigr.org/survey/>** to provide feedback.

Thanks for helping us grow GERI.

# Find GERI Books In Your Local Library!

Most books are also available as audio books and E-books using your library's App.  
(with a library card)

**No Library Card? Get one at your local library!**

Accepted forms of ID include: Driver's license, State ID, Military ID, International Drivers license, State ID, Passport, Non-US Consular ID, Residential alien card, State issued tribal ID, Job corps ID, Prison issued ID  
If no form of ID is available please **contact your library's Patron Experience Manager.**

GERIGR.ORG



# Complete GERI Collection Book List

(several titles also available in Spanish)

## **Pre-K Books**

**Counting On Community** by Innosanto Nagra

**Daniel the Tiger Won't You Be My Neighbor** by Rachel Kalban

**Giraffes Can't Dance** (*las Jirafas No Pueden Bailar*) by Giles Andreae

**Guess What I Can Be** by Marcel C. Gamble

**Hug Me** (*Abrázame*) by Simona Ciruolo

**I Like It When/Me Gusta Cuando** by Mary Murphy

**La Catrina: Emotions** by Patty Rodriguez

**Miles is the Boss of His Body** by Abbie Schiller

**Missing Daddy** by Mariame Kaba

**Start With Sorry** (*Empieza Por Pedir Perdón*) by P.T. Finch

**The Color Monster** (*El Monstruo de Colores*) by Anna Llenas

## **K-3rd Grade Books**

**The Name Jar** by Yangsook Choi

**My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay** by Cari Best

**All Are Welcome** (*Todo El Mundo Cabe Aquí*) by Alexandra Penfold

**Pink Is For Boys** by Robb Pearlman

**Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept** by Jayneen Sanders  
(*Algunos Secretos Nunca Deben Guardarse*)

**Mango Moon** (*La Luna Mango*) by Diane de Anda

**Don't Touch My Hair!** by Sharee Miller

**Mango, Abuela and Me** (*Mango, Abuela y yo*) by Meg Medina

**Julian is a Mermaid** (*Sirenas*) by Jessica Love

**The Day You Begin** (*El Día en Que Descubres Quien Eres*) by Jacqueline Woodson

**My Papi Has A Motorcycle** (*Mi Papi Tiene Una Moto*) by Isabel Quintero

## **4th - 8th Grade Books**

**Amina's Voice** by Hena Khan

**Front Desk** by Kelly Yang

**The Jumbies** by Tracey Baptiste

**Harbor Me** by Jacqueline Woodson

**Consent (For Kids!) (*El Consentimiento (¡Para Niños!)*)** by Rachel Brian

**House On Mango Street (*La Casa en Mango Street*)** by Sandra Cisneros

**Afar** by Leila del Duca

**Maybe He Just Likes You** by Barbara Dee

**Tight** by Torrey Maldonado

**The Prince and the Dressmaker (*El Príncipe y la Modista*)** by Jen Wang

## **High School Books**

**Saints and Misfits** by S.K. Ali

**The Hate U Give (*El Odio Que Das*)** by Angie Thomas

**Hearts Unbroken** by Cynthia Leitich Smith

**Speak: The Graphic Novel (*Habla*)** by Laurie Halse Anderson

**The Poet X (*Poet X*)** by Elizabeth Acevedo

**The Perks of Being a Wallflower (*Las ventajas de ser invisible*)** by Stephen Chbosky

**The Outsiders** by S.E. Hinton

**A Time to Dance** by Padma Venkatraman

# Additional Resources

This guide was created with the intent to give people who care for children and youth the tools to talk about subjects that often are avoided. Having these kinds of conversations can seem challenging at times. Do your best to speak to kids from a place of concern and care.

If you or someone that you know has experienced or is experiencing violence or abuse, the following local resources can provide free and confidential support:

## Local

Safe Haven Ministries

Website: [www.shmgr.org](http://www.shmgr.org)

24/7 Hotline: 616- 452- 6664

YWCA West Central Michigan

Website: [www.ywcawcmi.org](http://www.ywcawcmi.org)

24/7 Hotline: 616-454 -9922

Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County

Website: [www.cac-kent.org](http://www.cac-kent.org)

Telephone Number: 616-336-5160

Hispanic Center of Western Michigan

Website: [www.hispanic-center.org](http://www.hispanic-center.org)

Telephone Number: 616-742-0200

## National

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)

Website: <https://www.rainn.org/>

24/7 Hotline: 800-656-4673