



Jeffrey Loves Blue

**Discussion Guide by Special Education and
Inclusion Teacher Consultant Jessica Lenarcic**

About this Guide

This discussion guide is created for children aged 4-7 and based around the two main themes in the book. Each theme has a description that connects to the text. The description can be read aloud to the children to introduce the theme. Following the description are discussion questions and example student answers. Finally, there is an activity to go along with each theme. Educators and parents using this guide should use their discretion about which themes, discussion questions and activities are most appropriate for their children or students. To fully explore this guide, educators may need to read the text multiple times and complete the tasks over 1-2 weeks.



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Written by Loretta Garbutt, illustrated
by Lily Snowden-Fine

Note: This book or guide does not explicitly state that Jeffrey has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to explain his insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, and highly restricted and fixated interests. Instead, this book focuses on how people are the same and different, and how we can support each other as friends.

If you wish to use this book as a jumping-off point for teaching about ASD, please consider the following:

- Supplementing the story with more information about ASD, including aspects of the diagnosis and how it appears on a spectrum.
- Being sensitive to the students in your class, school, and/or community who have ASD. Some children or their families may not be willing to share their diagnosis, and/or some students may not have a similar profile to Jeffrey and their ASD may display differently.

READING LEVELS

Grade: 1

Fountas & Pinnell: G

Lexile® Measure: AD 520L

Reading Recovery: 12

Common Core: RL.1, W.1, SL.1, L.1

CURRICULUM LINKS

Language Arts: Reading

Character Education: Empathy

Social-Emotional Learning: Self-Awareness;

Social Awareness; Self-Regulation;

Relationship Skills



Theme 1: Understanding and Supporting All of Our Friends

Description:

We're going to think about the main character in this book, Jeffrey, and how his family, friends, and teachers helped him make a hard decision. We know that lots of people like to have a daily routine. For example, most students on most days wake up in their house, eat breakfast, and go to school. But some people, like Jeffrey, like it when everything is exactly the same all of the time. Jeffrey likes his blue socks, his blue hat, and eating blueberries. When things are exactly the same, Jeffrey feels safe and comfortable. But when an adult encourages Jeffrey to do things in a different way and paint with a color other than blue, he has a lot of big feelings. For some people like Jeffrey, doing things differently from what they planned might feel unpredictable and scary. In the book, Jeffrey puts his head down on the table and appears sad, but other kids may also cry or yell when their plan doesn't go the way they want it to.



Discussion question:

In the book, Jeffrey was asked to paint with a different color other than his favorite color, blue. What do you think are some things that helped Jeffrey feel better about trying a new paint color?

Example student answers

- Allowing Jeffrey time to think about it
- Asking Jeffrey to think about his friend's feelings
- Giving Jeffrey some other choices based on some of his other interests

Activity

Part 1: Using the attached worksheet, ask students to draw a picture of their favorite thing and something new they may want to try. If appropriate, have students write a sentence below each picture.

Part 2: This can be done orally as students share their picture or can be written in sentence form on the back of their pictures. Ask students to think about what may make them feel better about trying the new activity.

Some examples might be:

- Giving them time to think about it
- If their friends do it with them
- Buying some new equipment or materials for the activity

My favorite thing

Something I'd like to try



Theme 2: Bravery

Description:

We're going to think about how Jeffrey was brave in the story. During painting class, Jeffrey only paints with blue paint because it's his favorite color. When a friend, Keiko, asks for a turn with the blue paint and the teacher asks him to pick a new color, Jeffrey doesn't want to. Keiko is sad that she doesn't get a turn, and when she is sad it makes Jeffrey's tummy hurt. After painting class, Jeffrey starts to think about how he could share the blue paint with Keiko and how happy that would make her. He thinks about all the different colors he could choose and which one would be best. At the next art class, Jeffrey chooses to paint in red, and his caregiver tells him that is very brave.

Discussion questions:

- What do you think it means to be brave?
- What are some things we might consider when we are making brave decisions?
- How can we listen to our bodies when making brave decisions?
- How do we know if we are making the right choice?

Example student answers:

- Strong, courageous, trying new things
- If it's scary, if it's fun, if our friends are doing it, if our parents are encouraging us to do it, how our bodies are feeling
- Our bodies might feel nervous, our tummies might hurt, we might know in our hearts that it's the right decision
- If it makes our bodies feel good, if it makes other people feel good



Activity:

Part 1: Encourage students to think of a time when they were brave. Ask them to draw a picture of that moment.

Part 2: If appropriate, students can complete the sentence starters below at the bottom of the drawing or it can be done orally while sharing their picture.

I was brave when I _____. I know I was being brave because _____.

About Jessica Lenarcic

Jessica works as a Teacher Consultant for the Special Education and Inclusion Department for a large school board within the Toronto region. She has worked with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in educational, therapeutic, and recreational settings for more than 20 years. She believes in reading stories like this one in classrooms and homes to support the inclusion and acceptance of all children.