

The New Bird in Town

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Book Summary

When Owl moves to a new neighborhood, he can't wait to make friends. But when he invites the other forest animals to his tree-warming party, they misinterpret his intentions. With the help of Skunk, who knows how much first impressions can stink, Owl and his neighbors learn that everyone deserves a chance to be known.

Everyone wants to belong and be known. Giving students regular opportunities to get to know each other leads to the creation of a positive online classroom community. Activities that allow students to share about themselves will foster the practice of essential listening skills and help to build empathy. Here is a structured activity for students to share about themselves with classmates.



Who Remembers?

Consider using this activity after reading the story to reinforce strategies that can be used to learn more about someone else.

Goal: To share about a favorite place and to remember what others shared

SEL Skills Focus: Social awareness (respect for others, empathy)

Opening:

1. Gather students for an online whole-class meeting.
2. Tell students they will go around the virtual circle, each taking a turn to share a favorite place and briefly explain why. (The teacher may need to prompt because the order of the students may differ on various technological devices. Options include: alphabetically by first name, alphabetically by last name, or randomly calling on the next student.)
3. Then they will play a game called “Who Remembers,” so they will need to listen carefully to what their classmates share.
4. Brainstorm examples of favorite places with students.

Body:

1. Be the first sharer in order to model using a complete sentence and keeping the “why” succinct. For example, “My favorite place is my front porch because I like to read there.”
2. Have students take turns (see options above) sharing their favorite place and briefly explaining why.
3. After everyone has shared, challenge the class with four or five “Who remembers . . . ?” questions. For example, “Who remembers whose favorite place is the library?” or “Who remembers what was shared about favorite places at home?”

Closing:

1. Invite students to share their strategies for remembering what classmates said.
2. Revisit pages 16–19 when Owl meets Skunk. Ask students to share ways in which these two characters get to know each other better. (Some ideas: asking questions, listening to each other, apologizing for assumptions/misconceptions, and sharing about themselves.)
3. Ask students to share examples of when they met someone new and how they got to know them better.

Specifications:

32 pages

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This book addresses the following social and emotional learning skills:

- Welcomes or invites others to join in
- Independently recognizes when others need help
- Understands the importance of being polite and kind
- Takes risks to learn new things
- Willing to independently resolve conflicts with peers
- Can recognize the value in being open and honest with others