



Extension activity for HOW KATIE GOT A VOICE ...AND A COOL NEW NICKNAME by Patricia I. Mervine

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: For more information about helping children understand disabilities, read the section after THE END in the book.

PRE-READING ALOUD:

Vocabulary: nickname.

Discuss what a nickname is and if anyone has a nickname for someone that they would like to share.

INTRODUCTION:

This book is about students in a classroom, very much like your classroom, except everyone has a nickname.

Remind the class about the staring activity they participated in during the Cromwell Center's visit. Ask them to recall how it felt to be stared at: uncomfortable, awkward, nervous...

Ask students if they have ever been "the new kid" in any setting...school, church, sports, etc. Ask them how that felt. Ask the students to think about those experiences as you read this book about a new girl in a classroom.

DURING READING:

Write a running list of nicknames the characters in the story have and why.

POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you think Katie was stared at when she came to the new school? Why?
- How do you think she felt? How could you tell?
- Are those the same feelings some of you felt being new somewhere?
- What did Katie have difficulty doing?
- Do you think she might get stared at because she has difficulty doing those things and is in a wheelchair?
- Are those the same feelings some of you had during the Cromwell Center staring activity?
- What was Katie's new nickname? (CommuniKate)
- Do you think this was a good nickname for Katie? Why?
- How do you think Katie felt about her nickname? How do you know that?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Nicknames: Review the list of nicknames from the story. Discuss how each one got their nickname. Did everyone like their nickname in the story?

Sometimes nicknames are hurtful. Nobody likes to be called a nickname that is not kind. What can we do if someone is being called an unkind name or nickname?

Remember when we all shared something that we were really good at with the Cromwell Center presenter? Let's think again about what we are really good at. Let's make a class list of those things and then think of a fun nickname for each person based on his or her "talent".

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