

Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes

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This is based on an actual event (true story). The children learned empathy (the ability to put themselves in another's place) and the importance of not judging others based on a physical attribute.

Please discuss this as you read:

The book starts off with Bobby and Marie meeting and becoming friends. Share how you met your best friend(s).

- What makes them your best friend?
- What do Bobby and Marie do that are the same and what do they both like?
- When Mrs. Bowers separates the children in her class and tells them a group of students is better than the others based on a physical trait, how did it make you feel?
- How do you think the children felt when Mrs. Bowers said to divide?
- When Marie suddenly thought Bobby was bad, why do you think she made this judgement? (Why did she believe that?)
- How do you think Bobby felt?
- How was it to be judged for something about your physical appearance and not for who you are inside and what you do?
- In the lunchroom, why do you think the blue-eyed children felt ugly? Were they correct in feeling ugly?
- When Mrs. Bowers changed the "rules" and announced children with blue eyes are better than children with brown eyes, how do you think each group of children felt?
- Why would Bobby say mean things to Marie? Was he justified to say the mean things because Marie was once not nice to him? Is it right to hurt someone who hurt us? Do friends hurt each other to get even?
- Notice that each group of children, when told they are dumb and ugly, stop taking care of themselves and change their beliefs about themselves. Why do they think that is?
- What was it like for Marie to walk alone? Why do you think she drew the mean picture of the teacher? Why was she angry?
- Mrs. Bowers told the class the lesson was about no one being better and they should have stuck with their friends. Why do you think that was true? Why is it hard to stay true to ourselves when others tell us who we are and how to be?



Why is it hard to stay true to our friends when others may not like us if we do?
Share times it was hard to stay true to yourself and your beliefs.

- Mrs. Bowers told the class who was better and smarter by their outward appearance. Who in our community and in our world decides who is better or smarter than others?

Parents:

Talk about the difficulties others face because history or others have decided who is pretty or smart or trustworthy or gets to choose where to go or where to live.

Empathy is an important skill, but it needs to be learned and practiced. Find ways to practice feeling empathy for others. Talk about how judging others on outward appearance or physical traits is hurtful to that person. It is, also, hurtful to the person doing the judging. Pretending others all have the same “color of eyes” is ignoring reality, but seeing the colors and knowing they are all beautiful and looking to meet the person knowing they are a child of God (without judging who or what is better) is the way we acknowledge the belovedness of each person.

For older children, share some events like what happened in Mrs. Bowers class happens in our world without correction. What can you do when this happens? Talk about how just because we may not see it happening or wish it was not happening, it still does.