

# KNUFFLE BUNNY FREE: AN UNEXPECTED DIVERSION

## KNUFFLE BUNNY FREE: AN UNEXPECTED DIVERSION

by Mo Willems

Themes: Growth and Change, Families, Feelings, Problem Solving

Ages: 3-7; Grades: PreK - 2

Running Time: 13 minutes

### SUMMARY

Trixie and her parents are heading to Holland to visit Trixie's grandparents, Oma and Opa. All goes well throughout the long flight to Holland and Trixie's arrival at Oma and Opa's house, until, at dinner, Trixie realizes that Knuffle Bunny isn't with them! Daddy calls the airline, but the plane is already on its way to China. Trixie's family tries different methods to coach her through letting go of Knuffle Bunny, and Trixie tries to be brave. But she is still sad. As the vacation winds down, Trixie has basically come to terms with the loss of Knuffle Bunny. The movie ends with a surprising twist that no one, including the characters, see coming. Students will love to connect with Trixie's plight, and parents will connect to Trixie's parents' pride as their little girl grows up.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect, draw, and write about how things change as they grow up.
- Students will make text-to-self and text-to-text connections.
- Students will perform community service to symbolize growing responsibility and maturity.

### BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Invite students to bring in an important personal item for show-and-tell. Tell them that this could be something that they have had since they were a baby or something that they care about very much. For some students this may be a blanket or a book, for others, a toy. During the show-and-tell, allow each student to speak about why the object is so important to him/her and then permit three students to ask questions. Encourage students to speak in complete sentences. One of the objectives of this activity is to give students practice at oral language development.

Follow up on the previous sharing activity with reviewing text-to-self connections. Tell students that they are about to see a movie about a girl who discovers that it is time to let go of her much-loved bunny. Ask students to think about their special item and reflect on the following questions:

- How would you feel if you lost your item?
- Would you be willing to give your item to someone else if they seemed like they needed it?
- Do you think you will ever be old enough to let go of your special item?
- How does your special item help you feel good? Do you think it could help others?

Encourage students to make connections with Trixie's changing feelings throughout the movie.

### AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Read or watch the other Knuffle Bunny stories (Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale and Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity). Use a table to compare and contrast the different stories. Ideas to focus on:

- How was Trixie different in each story? How was she the same?
- What was the problem in each story? What was the solution?
- Who solved the problem in each story?
- As Trixie gets older, how does she change?

Emphasize to students that they are making text-to-text connections as they make these comparisons. Culminate the discussion with a shared writing activity where you elicit ideas from students to model writing a synthesizing statement that compares and contrasts the two texts.

Discuss growing up with students. Guiding questions:

- What can you do now that you couldn't do when you were younger?
- What kinds of things get more challenging as you grow up?
- What are the good parts about being younger? What are the good parts about being older?
- What do you earn as you grow up? What kinds of things do you have to give up?

Give students options for brainstorming and discussing these questions. These could include: reflecting silently and listing ideas, reflecting and sharing with a partner, or a whole group discussion. After reflection and discussion, provide students with a graphic organizer in which they can draw and write about growing up. This could be in the form of a timeline, a comic strip, or a booklet with spaces for pictures and lines on each page. Give students the opportunity to share their drawing and writing when they are finished.

Connect Trixie's giving of Knuffle Bunny to community service. Ask students to brainstorm ideas about how they could help younger students at school or others in their communities. Some ideas include: reading partnerships with Pre-K or Kindergarten classes, recess or lunch buddies with younger grades, reading to elderly members of the community, or organizing a food or clothing drive. After the class has chosen an idea, make a plan together to organize it, and give students as much responsibility as possible in its execution.

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