

The Strongest Thing



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Library Lesson Plan

Pre-Reading Ideas

Big Balloons: Give everyone a balloon to blow up. Have the kids imagine that they are filling their balloons with anger. *Ask:* What would happen if you kept filling your balloon with anger or other hard emotions? (Possible answer: the balloon could pop.)

Discuss: What makes you feel angry? Do you remember the last time you felt angry but held it in? How did you wind up letting it out? (Possible answers: I acted mean to my friend. I screamed. I knocked over a chair. I shared how I was feeling with my mom.)

Connect: Do you ever hold in your emotions and not tell people how you are feeling? If so, why do you think you do this?(Possible Answers: Afraid to share; don't want someone else to feel upset.)

Pre-Reading Questions: In *The Strongest Thing*, the main character, Sera, has a father who can't control his anger. Sera holds in a lot of her emotions. What do you think will happen if Sera holds in her emotions about her Dad's anger?

Action Item: As we read, try to find moments when Sera holds in her emotions. Notice when you think this is good for Sera. Notice when you think this is bad for Sera.

Post-Reading Ideas

Respond: Were there times you thought it was good for Sera to hold in her emotions? Were there times you thought it was bad for Sera to hold in her emotions?

Discuss: What do you think about Sera's Dad's anger? Was it good for him to let it out the way he did? What could he learn about holding in and letting out his feelings? What does it mean to be strong? Is it strong to let out your feelings? Is it strong to know when and how to let them out?

Reflect: Look at the skin of the balloon when it is all blown up. Notice that it is thin and stretched when it is holding so much! Sometimes people need to pay attention to the "when and how" of letting out feelings, so the feelings can be let out in a positive way. Knowing when and how to let out feelings in a good way can take strength. And YOU can be The Strongest Thing!

Wrap Up: Let's blow up our balloons and then let the air out when we decide together that it is a good time. 1....2....3.... GO!! BALLOONS ZIP AROUND THE ROOM!

Extension Activities:

Add some paper mâché: When there are a lot of feelings, it is important to strengthen your balloon and have support around it. The mâché can represent the people in your life who care about you, the things you do to feel better, and the love you give yourself when you're going through something emotional and hard.

Make a Feelings Sandwich NOM NOM NOM!!!: Sera describes her house "like the middle of an old sandwich, squished and dark and icky." Child therapist Vasilia Graboski used this simile to create a wonderful "feelings sandwich" activity! Check it out: VasiliaGraboski.com/blog/my-house-is-like-a-sandwich.