

Howard B. Wigglebottom Blends in Like Chameleons

Suggestions for Lessons and Reflections

★ THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME

Joey felt there was something wrong with him. He couldn't sit still or pay attention. He couldn't follow or remember rules or instructions. He couldn't finish tasks.

Do you know anyone like Joey? Are you like Joey sometimes? There are many ways to learn new things: Some children learn by looking at pictures, others by listening to stories and songs, others by touching and building things. Some need to sit still, but kids like Joey like to be moving all the time—that is how they learn the best.

There is nothing wrong with Joey. If he can stand up and move while the other kids sit still, he will also be able to pay attention, remember the rules and finish his tasks.

Joey also felt nobody liked him. He wondered if getting angry and doing silly things had something to do with it. Did you like Joey? Why do you think nobody liked him? Why do you think he was angry? He was often angry because he couldn't learn like everyone else. Most of us do silly things when we are angry. What do you do when you are angry?

★ SYMPATHY AND EMPATHY

The children didn't understand or like Joey, except for Howard. Howard felt sorry for him. He could tell Joey was having a hard time. Making friends with Joey was a very nice thing to do. When Howard got to know Joey better he started to like him a lot: He was fun, nice and very smart.

Adults have a saying: "Don't judge the book by its cover." Can you tell if a book is good or bad just by the cover? When you first meet a new kid and you don't like what you see, give it a chance. Most of us don't like things that we're not used to, or people who look and behave very differently from us. After some time, we get used to the differences and start to like them.

How come Howard brought a chameleon to class at the end of the story? Was it wrong? Yes, it was against the rules, but Howard brought a chameleon to class to help Joey feel good and to show Joey he was on the same team, that he understood and shared the same things.

★ WHEN WE LONG TO BELONG

Joey wanted to fit in, to be part of the team, to be liked. What does it mean to be part of a team? A team is a group of kids who want the same things. They protect and respect and are nice to each other because they are on the same team.

Joey wasn't nice when he was angry. He didn't respect the social rules. Here are few social rules:

- Only take people's things with their permission.
- Stop when people ask you to.
- Say "thank you" and "please."
- Wash hands before eating and after going to the bathroom.
- Look people in the eyes.
- Be quiet when other people ask you to.
- Cover your mouth when you cough.
- Don't interrupt people when they are speaking.

Joey learned that if he wanted to be liked he needed to follow the social rules. Can you think of more social rules? Do you always follow the social rules?

★ **BLENDING IN**

Chameleons change colors: They match whatever color they land on. It is hard to tell where they are because they blend in.

What does it mean to blend in? It means when things mix well and we can't tell them apart anymore. Is there a blender where you live? If we place fruits and water in a blender and turn it on, what happens?

Why do chameleons blend in? It is for protection—they are hard to see. What other things besides chameleons and fruit can blend in? How about people? People say they want to "blend in" when they want to be part of the team, feel good and be liked. But people are different from chameleons, fruit or paint: You can always tell people apart. We all have different wishes, thoughts, feelings and desires (read the lesson in *Howard B. Wigglebottom Listens to His Heart*).

Being part of a team or blending in doesn't mean doing or saying things we don't want to. It means we are nice to everyone and we follow the social rules. Are the social rules the same everywhere? Most of them are the same, but depending on the country, there can be extra rules that we need to know about.

★ **PEACE AND CALM**

The classroom was quiet before Joey arrived. Howard liked it when things were calm—no fights and no yelling. That's why he wanted things to go back to the way they were. He knew that a calm, clean and peaceful room was the healthiest place to be and learn new things.

When Joey got help and his needs were taken care of, he was able to follow the rules and everyone was happy and peaceful again. So if there is one kid in school who breaks the peace and calm, we all have to understand and help, so things can be nice as soon as possible.