

Most People

Michael Leannah

Pictures by Jennifer E. Morris

Hardcover, \$16.95

978-0-88448-554-4

9 x 10, 32, color throughout

Ages 4-7 (grades PK-2)

Fountas&Pinnell Level M

Summary

The world can be a scary place. Anxious adults want children to be aware of dangers, but shouldn't kids be aware of kindness too?

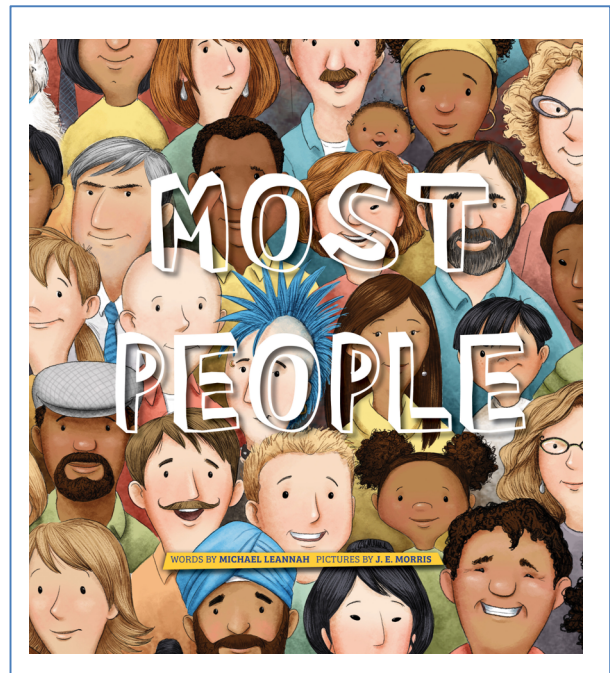
Michael Leannah wrote *Most People* as an antidote to the scary words and images kids hear and see every day.

Jennifer Morris's emotive, diverting characters provide the perfect complement to Leannah's words, leading us through the crowded streets of an urban day in the company of two pairs of siblings (one of color). We see what they see: the hulking dude with tattoos and chains assisting an elderly lady onto the bus; the goth teenager with piercings and purple Mohawk returning a lost wallet to its owner; and the myriad interactions of daily existence, most of them well intended.

Most People is a courageous, constructive response to the dystopian world of the news media.

This book will lead to discussions about:

- People in the neighborhood
- First impressions
- Kindness
- Random Acts of Kindness
- What makes us happy
- What makes others happy



Before You Read

Background

Empathy is our ability to recognize and respond to the needs and suffering of others. We can see empathy-in-action all around us. Young people can understand power of empathy and making a difference for others. An important part of our internal compass, empathy includes the ways we show caring and compassion to people in our lives.

We don't make children happy when we simply enable them to be *receivers* of kindness. We escalate their feelings of happiness, improve their well-being, reduce bullying, enrich their friendships, and build peace by teaching them to be *givers* of kindness.

Access Prior Knowledge

- Have you ever felt shy around people you didn't know?
- Have you ever done something nice for someone?
- Have you ever seen someone else doing something nice for a stranger?
- What is a compass? What is an internal compass?

After You Read

Discussion Questions:

- How do people usually react to people they don't know? How do they react in this story?
- Where might you see people you don't know? The supermarket? A restaurant?
- What do you think people are thinking when they see you for the first time?
- How many times do you see the little white dog in the book?
- How many times do you see the blind lady in the story? How do you know she is blind?
- Are there helpers on each page? Can you point them out?
- What would you do if you found money on the sidewalk?
- Why does the man in blue sweater buy 2 of Molly's Pies at the farmer's market?
- Name 5 kind people that you know.

Activities

- Try smiling at people when you see them. See if they smile back.
- Watch for an opportunity to be kind to someone you know.
- Take time to share with a friend.
- Look for times to say please and thank you.

- Whether it's planting a peace garden, making a get-well card for a sick friend, or simply inviting someone new to sit at your school lunch table, there are many free and easy ways you can help create a more peaceful world.
<http://www.rootsofaction.com/art-kindness-teaching-children-care/>

Further Reading

Say Something by Peggy Moss
Give a Goat by Jan West Schrock
The Goat Lady by Jane Bregoli
Melena's Jubilee by Zetta Elliott
Our Friendship Rules by Peggy Moss and DeeDee Tardif
Thanks to the Animals by Allen Sockabasin
Sylvia Rose and the Cherry Tree by Sandy Shapiro Hurt
Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson
The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig
The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney
Because Amelia Smiled by David Ezra Stein
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

Internet Resources

You may find the following Internet resources helpful as your students continue to explore the topic of the book.

<http://www.yourmodernfamily.com/teach-kids-about-kindness/>

<http://www.rootsofaction.com/art-kindness-teaching-children-care/>

<https://www.verywell.com/teaching-kids-kindness-620723>

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation www.actsofkindness.org

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to encouraging kindness in homes, classrooms, and communities. Their website is overflowing with free resources as well as ideas for how to spread kindness like volunteering at a community garden, donating old books, writing a poem for someone you love, or simply saying good morning to a stranger. In addition, you can read about and share your own stories of kindness. This site is truly an invaluable resource.

Teaching Tolerance www.tolerance.org

Founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance helps teachers and schools fight prejudice, promote equality and celebrate diversity. I have used many of these lessons year after year in my elementary classroom. Be sure to read about the national campaign, Mix It Up,

a Teaching Tolerance initiative that encourages students to step outside of their comfort zone and get to know someone new at lunch. Mix It Up inspires students to make connections and develop relationships with classmates across social boundaries. This can be easily adapted in the classroom as well.

The Kindness Journey <http://thekindnessjourney.com/resources/>

This website follows twelve-year-old Jaden Winn and his mother Amanda as they embark on a yearlong journey across the United States. Their main goal is to educate and inspire people along the way to join in the #kindnessmovement while raising funds for Life Vest Inside, an organization dedicated to uniting the world with kindness (<http://www.lifestinside.com>). If these two don't move you to spread the love, I'm not sure what will!