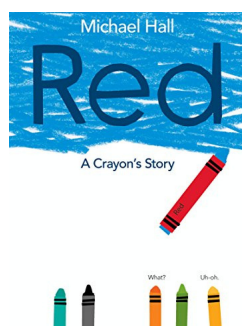
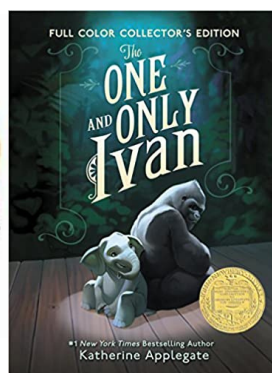




# Family Guide



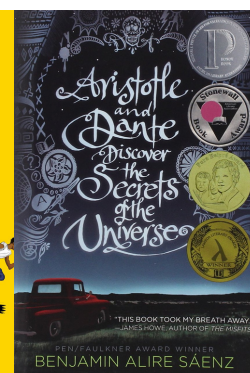
(Kindergarten-3rd)



(4-5th)



(6-8th)



(9-12th)

## Connect

Connecting through stories is unique to humans and our communities! It's also how we grow to better understand ourselves and our place in the world. Here are some ideas of how you can connect with your family around the story and its themes of mental health, belonging and identity.

## Read

Read aloud as a family! Read the whole book together, take turns, or share just your favorite part. Check out the books at your local library, or purchase a copy from [bookshop.org/lists/art-lit-2021](https://bookshop.org/lists/art-lit-2021) and 10% of the proceeds will benefit Words Alive.

## Write

Studies show that journaling can benefit your mental health. Journaling can reduce stress and boost your mood. For 5-10 minutes each day, take quiet time as a family for each member to write in their own journal.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Write about your day: What was the worst thing that happened? What was the best?
- Write down at least 3 things you're grateful for each day.
- Write down a goal and how you want to achieve it.
- Write 3 things you love about yourself.
- Write a poem about how you feel. Here's a template. (Fill in your own words for everything in parenthesis!)

(Emotion)

If (emotion) were a color,  
it would be (color), as (color) as (...).

If (emotion) were a taste,  
it would be just like (...)

If (emotion) were a smell,  
it would be as (...) as (...).

If (emotion) were tangible,  
it would feel like (...).

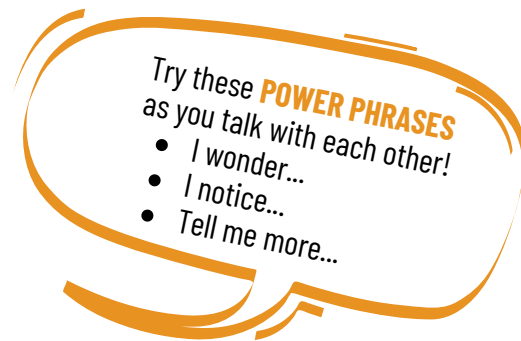
If (emotion) were a sound,  
it would be as (...) as (...). as (...) as (...).



## Talk

**Tips** to get conversation started:

- Talk during dinner, on a car ride, or on a walk. Difficult conversations right before bedtime could make it hard to sleep.
- Be curious. Ask open-ended questions, like "What makes you think that?"
- Validate how each person feels. Maybe share a story when you felt the same way.
- Listen and repeat back what each person says to show you heard and understand.



You don't have to finish the book to talk about the **characters and themes!**

- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What's their message?
- Who is your favorite character and why?
- How is the character similar to you? How are they different?
- What conflict or problem does the character experience? Have you experienced something similar? If yes, what happened?

Characters in these books sometimes feel lonely or sad. However, they find comfort from friends and family, and show courage to overcome challenges. It's healthy to **talk about your feelings, and to ask for support when you need it.**

Use these questions to start a discussion with your family:

- Tell me about your day. What was the best part about your day? What was the worst?
- What was difficult for you today? How can I help?
- What made you feel happy/sad/angry today/recently?
- What makes you feel proud?
- Thinking about current events: What worries do you have? What questions do you have?
- What are you most looking forward to tomorrow?

## Do

**Mindfulness** means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down to really notice what you're doing. Being mindful is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. When you're mindful, you're taking your time. You're focusing in a relaxed, easy way.

Try this mindfulness practice from Mindfully Empowered. This activity helps ground us in the present moment and is especially useful during times when we're feeling anxious, overwhelmed, stressed or worried.

Try this 5 senses practice anywhere: your bedroom, backyard, looking out the window or a walk around the block.

Start by taking a deep breath and then notice:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you hear
- 3 things you feel
- 2 things you smell
- 1 emotion or feeling you have



Find more mindfulness activities to practice here: [www.wordsalive.org/mindfulness](http://www.wordsalive.org/mindfulness)

**On the following page check out the Art & Lit Project: Identity Circles brought to you by ArtReach!**