



Chapter 7 Saying you'll do something means you have to do it unless you have a very good excuse

Setting; The clinic

Catherine has brought her CD player so Jason can listen to some guitar music. She has made a number of new cards for him which are not “boring.” Jason smiles at these cards, "CATHERINE. FRIEND". Catherine tells Jason about her friends, Melissa and Kristi. (Ryan Too, who STINKS A Big ONE.) Using cards Jason learns more about her guinea pigs. Catherine whispers an apology to him for the earlier time she drew a picture of him. Catherine draws herself waving on the friend card. The speech woman appears with a cheesy grin, talking loudly. Catherine writes a new rule: **Some people think they know who you are, when really they don't**

Think about/ Talk about/ Write about

In this chapter Jason and Catherine are becoming friends. After this chapter would be a good time to do A **Communication Card Activity**. Students can make cards as “friendship cards” for each person in his or her small group with colored pencils. This might be a whole classroom activity...or cards could be large enough for a bulletin board.

The idea of communication cards is used in several activities.

Chapter 8 If you can only pick one, choose carefully.

Setting: Catherine and David's house

Catherine enjoys thinking of new words which will help Jason express himself like others his age. YEAH, RIGHT. SURE. YOU BET. PERFECT. FRUSTRATING. Her mom has left her in charge of David who is playing with the TV remote in his usual way...waving it around, rewinding. Mom shows up just about the same time Kristi comes over. The girls have a friendly conversation; meanwhile David is still playing as Catherine keeps an eye on him in a mirror. Kristi mentions that she thinks Ryan is nice. “Nice as a cockroach,” thinks Catherine and she

changes the subject, “Want some sherbet?” The girls are interrupted by David shrieking because his tape of Frog and Toad is unwound. Catherine knows that it’s best just to stop and fix it. She does, and when Label’s voice begins to tell the story “David’s face lights up like a Christmas tree.” Kristi meets Cinnamon and Nutmeg. Things are calm until David bursts in announcing loudly, “No toys in the fish tank.” This time it is a small cowboy. Catherine takes David back to her mom, so she can enjoy Kristi’s company. Kristi invites Catherine over to watch TV at her house. Mom and David go to the clinic; Catherine thinks about Jason, but wants very much to go to Kristi’s instead of the clinic. So she gives up seeing Jason today. Catherine finds it feels “deliciously easy” to go to a friend’s house without having to tell David he can’t come.

Think about/ Talk about/ Write about

- Check Science folder for fish tank lesson plans.

9. At someone else’s house, you have to follow their rules.

Setting: Kristi’s house

Catherine loves being at Kristi’s house because, “I can just be me.” Kristi’s room is beautiful with neat rows of make-up and jewelry, things that Catherine always has to keep away from David. No locks on doors, no safety plugs, no kid’s videos at Kristi’s. No one throws toys in the fish tank. During their visit the conversation moves to boys. Kristi is interested in Ryan. She asks about the boy in Catherine’s sketchbook. Catherine is embarrassed to tell Kristi that Jason is in a wheelchair. (“He’s just a boy I know.”) She learns that Kristi’s parents are separated, not divorced, and that this is hard for Kristi to understand. (Melissa’s are divorced, so her friends have that in common.) When Mom and Dad come home, Catherine learns that Jason missed her at the clinic. He sent carrots to Cinnamon. Catherine feels bad. “I can make it up to Jason on Tuesday. I know what I’ll do.”

Think about/ Talk about/ Write about

- **Descriptive Writing:** Write a paragraph describing a room in someone else’s home. Choose a room you like: It might be a friend’s room, your cousin’s bedroom, your grandmother’s kitchen, your uncle’s garage, your neighbor’s back porch, or even the gym or the art room at our school. Use sensory details to help your reader “see” the room.
- Draw a map of the room you described.

Chapter 10 if it fits in your mouth, it’s food.

Setting: The clinic

Catherine brings Cinnamon and Nutmeg to the clinic. Jason is delighted: **AWESOME**. However **GROSS** is the word when Nutmeg poops on a communication card. Among the new words for the day are **WHATEVER** (said with a roll of the eyes) and **SECRET**. Catherine and Jason talk about music; they make up a story about people they see outside; they make jokes. Jason expresses himself about the **SPEECH WOMAN. I CAN’T TALK. BUT. I HEAR. FINE**. Catherine wants to buy more card stock. “She thinks Jason needs many words.

Think about/ Talk about/ Write about

- This seems the perfect chapter to ask the Guidance Counselor to lead her own activity or adapt one of Little Read's activities around **empathy** for people with disabilities.
- See Activity in Language Arts folder. A Day in Someone else.'s Shoes.
- See Picture Book Activity Be Good to Eddie Lee under Language Arts. This can introduce the students to a fictional character with Downs Syndrome,

Chapter 11 Sometimes people laugh when they like you. But sometimes they laugh to hurt you.

There's a nice description on p 105 of the clam flats. We are reminded of Cynthia Lord's craft of developing the setting through Catherine's eyes often as she looks out of the car window. Catherine looks forward to getting new colored pencils which her mom promised. On the way home they see Ryan and Kristi playing basketball. Catherine has a knot in her stomach because David runs to see Ryan. David has no conception that he is bullied. Ryan plays a mean trick on David, giving him an empty gum wrapper. Catherine screams, "You Jerk!" David goes ballistic. Ryan and Kristi leave. Catherine sees Kristi nod as Ryan is talking. "This small gesture "bleeds the fight out of me." Catherine ponders, "How can David's outside look so normal and his inside be so broken? Like an apple, red, perfect on the outside, but mushy brown at the first bite?" "I'm sorry, Frog." says David. Catherine feels the "full guilt avalanche."

Her mom doesn't understand the calming effect of the Frog and Toad dialogues and corrects Catherine. Page 112 is very poignant, a good read aloud page for the class. David's "fingers flicker like blades of grass shivered by the wind."

Think about/ Talk about/ Write about

- This is an opportunity for the teacher or guidance counselor to address the all-important topic of **bullying**. An idea: Ask students to imitate the style of the graphic novel and consider "What if David were in our school." Or "What if Jason were in our school? ' They can make their own little graphic stories on one page, or they can do a little book about what happens when children like David encounter bullies. You might introduce the activity by calling attention to graphic novels which are familiar to the children. This might be a good culminating activity at the end of the book study. See lesson plan under social studies: Every Child Has a Right to an Education
- Activity: This is a good chapter for finding similes and metaphors.

Chapter 12 Open closet doors carefully. Sometimes things fall out.

Setting: The clinic

The incident with Ryan has inspired Catherine to write a number of feeling words like MURKY.

As she describes the pond where she swims in to Jason, she sees that Jason longs for

the thrill of swimming. “How can someone live a whole life and never feel that?” Catherine tells Jason how David thinks Ryan is his friend, expressing her feeling of MURKY. Jason replies, SOMETIMES. WISH. DIE. He chose the word INCOMPLETE to express that feeling. Catherine shares that she feels incomplete as well. Jason reveals his dream of running. Catherine suggests that she can take him for a run in the parking lot. Pages 121 to 123 are the “heart” of the book for many of us. These are important pages to read aloud. As seagulls billow in the air, “Strong, flying fast and free, we run.”

Think about/ Talk about/ Write about

- Charades: Another use for communication cards. Make feeling cards. Child takes a card and acts out a feeling. Another version is paper charades where the child with the card draws the feeling and his partner guesses the feeling word.
- "Mapping the Parking Lot" Math Activity is a good choice after this chapter.