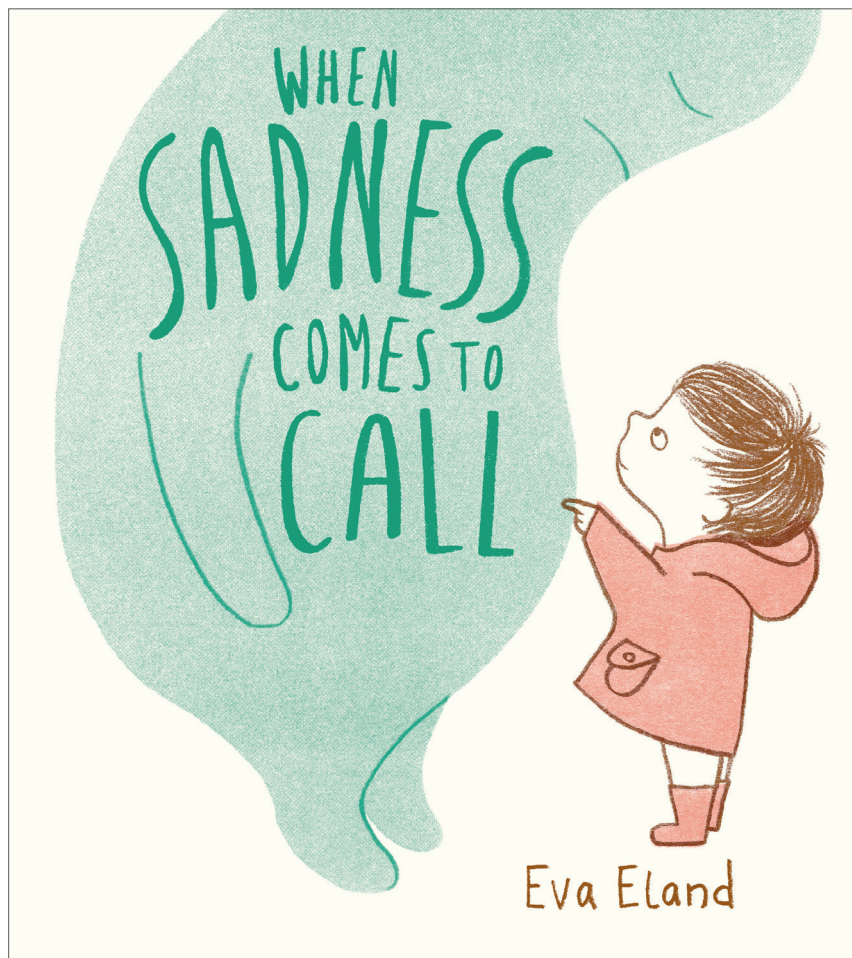


Teaching Notes for WHEN SADNESS COMES TO CALL

By Eva Eland

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These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

The concepts explored in the book and these teaching notes are more suitable for children aged 5+.

Reading aloud and key talking points:

- Look at the front cover of the text and spend time closely looking at the illustration, before exploring the words you can see. *What do you notice about the two characters that you can see? How do you think they are feeling? What makes you think or feel that way?*
- Pass the book round to the children, so that they can feel the debossed expression on the green character's face and literally feel its emotion. *Can they make the same expression with their own faces? Can they think of a time when they have felt this way before?* Invite the children to share their personal experiences if they feel comfortable to talk about these.
- Now look at the second character, in the red coat and boots. *Who do you think this is? What do you think they might be thinking or doing? What ideas do they have about what the story involving these characters might be about?*
- Now read the title of the book 'When Sadness Comes to Call' – *what do you think this means? Does it give you any more ideas about the story to come?*
- Now open the book to reveal the front endpapers. Spend time looking closely at the different images they can see and talking about these together. *What similarities are there in the images? What are the differences?*
- Now look at the inside title page. *Who can you see in the illustration? What is happening? Does this give you any more ideas about the title of the book? Re-read this again, as you see it on the page. What do you think is happening here? Do you think the child with the book will answer the door? What might happen if they do?* Collect examples of the children's responses. You could display these around a copy of this illustration to come back to later.
- Turn the page and read the first spread, looking closely at the illustration alongside. Discuss the text together – *what does 'unexpectedly' mean? What do you think it means for sadness to arrive unexpectedly? Does it really knock on your door like this? Can we see sadness? Can you think of a time you have felt sadness? What do you think could have happened for sadness to come to this child?* Collect examples of the children's thoughts and ideas around a copy of this illustration.
- Read on to 'But sometimes it feels like you've become sadness yourself'. *Is this what they thought would happen?* Compare the events with the children's predictions. Re-read and revisit these pages, looking in close detail at the illustrations and discussing what is happening as the spreads move on. Children might notice small details like the withered plant in the vase, the fact that sadness's presence on the page becomes bigger as the spreads progress and how, eventually, the child is encompassed in sadness. *How do they think the child feels about the sadness? What tells them this? How do the other people in the last spread in this section react to the child's sadness? Why do you think they don't notice? Is there anyone who does?*

- Talk with the children about how we recognise and respond to our own emotions and those of friends and family. *Can they think of a time when they have seen someone who has felt sad? How did they know this? What did they do? Or, have they ever felt sad and no-one has noticed, like this child? What did they do, or, what would they have liked other people to do?* Now, ask them: *what do they think the child should do next?* Collect examples of predictions made by the children and make a note of these around a copy of the illustration to come back to.
- Read on to ‘You can listen to their sounds together.’ *Were they surprised by what happened next? How did it compare to their predictions? How did the child learn to cope with sadness by itself? Did doing these things take the sadness away? Why do you think these things might have helped? What do you do when you feel sadness that helps you to cope with or begin to overcome this feeling?* Talk about the different things they mention, comparing these with what the child does in the book. It would also be a good idea to keep a note of the children’s responses so that teachers, adults and classmates know what might help different children cope with or overcome any sadness they might feel.



- Turn the page and read aloud the next spread; ‘Maybe all it wants to know is that it is welcome.’ Look at this image carefully where the child is literally embracing sadness. Talk with the children about this image. *What does it mean to them? What do they think it is saying about sadness?* Now turn the page again and look at how sadness is represented here. *How do you think the child is feeling now? What makes you think this? How do you think they feel about sadness now?*
- Now read to the end of the book. *What changes can you see from the start of the story to this final spread?* Look at how the plants in the vase are now colourful, alive and upright, the colour brought into the, walls, the vase and the plants outside the door and how this compares with the emptiness on the facing spread and the previous spreads. Look again at the child. *How do you think they are feeling now? How can you tell?* Come back together to talk about the range of emotions we all experience. Encourage the children to name and recognise these emotions through sharing images and other texts. You may find the following examples useful:

A Book of Feelings by Amanda McCardie and Salvatore Rubbino (Walker)

The Great Big Book of Feelings by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith (Frances Lincoln)

Everybody Feels... (series) by Moira Butterfield and Holly Sterling (Quarto)

- Now look at the back endpapers. *What do you notice about the way the people and the character of sadness are represented in these illustrations?* Compare these with the front endpapers and explore the differences. *What do you think the illustrator is showing us in these two different spreads?*



- Read the entire book from the beginning and continue to read aloud until the end. Allow the group to begin to explore their responses to it through booktalk with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls ‘the four basic questions’. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:

Tell me...was there anything you liked about this story?

Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?

Was there anything that puzzled you?

Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...? Did it remind you of anything else you’ve read or seen?

- The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative ‘Why?’ question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the ‘wrong’ answer.
- As children reply it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘puzzles’, ‘patterns’. This written record helps to map out the group’s view of the text and the important themes and ideas around the story from the children’s perspective and is a way of holding on to ideas for later. Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions. You may, for example, ask the children if they had favourite parts of the story, and why this was.
- Extend the children’s thinking through a more evaluative question, such as *Why do you think Eva Eland chose to write this book? Who do you think would like this book? Why?*
- Leave multiple copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.

To continue work around the book:

- Use watercolour paints to make shapes of your own to express what sadness looks like. *How do you make a shape that looks sad?* Encourage the children to explore and experiment with their own bodies to investigate what posture, facial expressions and body positions might best represent sadness. *What colours would you choose to represent sadness? Why? Extend this work by getting the children to think more widely about different emotions. What other emotions could you represent with the paints? What colours would they be? What would the shapes look like that represent surprise, happiness, fear etc.?*
- Write and draw about your own experiences of feeling sadness or other emotions. Display these in the class so that children can see and reflect on their individual and shared experiences.
- Create a space in the classroom where children can display their work around feelings and use this as a focal talking point for children to share and discuss their feelings more widely. You could make a display of other texts that focus on feelings to support the children in sharing and discussing experiences, related to different characters and story events. These could include:

Where Happiness Begins by Eva Eland

Fergal is Fuming by Robert Starling

Luna Loves Library Day by Joseph Coelho and Fiona Lumbers

The Bad Mood and the Stick by Lemony Snicket and Matthew Forsythe

Swarm of Bees by Lemony Snicket and Rilla Alexander

The Problem with Problems by Rachel Rooney and Zehra Hicks

The Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammand, S. K. Ali and Hatem Aly

Wolfie the Bunny by Ame Dyckman and Zachariah OHora

Angry Arthur by Hiawyn Orama and Satoshi Kitamura

Not Now, Bernard by David McKee

Elmer by David McKee

Frog and the Stranger by Max Velthuijs

Badger's Parting Gifts by Susan Varley



This sequence of activities was created in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a charity working to improve literacy in primary schools. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: www.clpe.org.uk