

Supplemental Material S4. Narrative text lesson plan.

The Very Best of Friends (Wild, 1989)

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Lesson Plan: Key Ideas, Suggested Open Questions, and Feeling Words

Idea #1: Jessie, James and William have a complicated relationship.

1. What do you think about William, the cat?
2. What is the difference between Jessie's and James's relationships with William?
3. Why does Jessie try to be nice to William?
4. Why did William want to please Jessie?

Feelings: loved, left out, craving, misunderstood, appreciated, unappreciated, tolerant

Stop/Talk: End of third paragraph: "Stop that dreadful caterwauling!"

Idea #2: William and James have a close relationship.

1. What else have we learned about William?
2. How do we know that William and James are the very best of friends?
3. How did James show his appreciation for William?

Feelings: content, useful, appreciated, loved, accepted, grateful, welcomed

Stop/Talk: End of sixth paragraph: "James said he was better than a hot water bottle any day."

Idea #3: James dies suddenly and Jessie and William are alone.

1. How did the death of James affect Jessie?
2. Why does William wait for James?
3. Why do you think Jessie stopped caring for William and put him outside?
4. What did William think and feel about the changes in his life?
5. Why does William try to get Jessie's attention?
6. What doesn't Jessie seem to hear or see William?

Feelings: depressed, lonely, abandoned, desperate, grieving, sorrowful, numb, angry

Stop/Talk: End of ninth paragraph: "But Jessie didn't seem to see him or hear him."

Idea #4: Jessie realizes that William has changed.

1. Why did William become mean and lean?
2. How did Jessie's reaction affect William?
3. What happened inside of William to make him change so dramatically?

Feelings: wild, unloved, transformed, hurt, abandoned, angry

Stop/Talk: End of eleven the paragraph: "He didn't look a bit like James's cat anymore."

Idea #5: Jessie and William become friends.

1. Why did Jessie suddenly realize how William had changed?
2. How did Jessie react when she realized what has happened to William?
3. Why was William slow to accept Jessie's friendly invitation?
4. How has Jessie changed her mind about William?
5. What caused her to change her mind?
6. How did Jessie and William build a new relationship?
7. What role do you think that love had in bringing them together?
8. How do you view their relationship at the end of the story?

Feelings: awakened, apologetic, compassionate, angry, suspicious, surprised, trusting, affectionate, loved

Stop/Talk: End of the story: "Jessie says he is better than bed socks any day."

Big Ideas

1. Close, loving relationships bring joy and healing.
2. Grief can close our eyes and hearts to what is good in life.
3. Rejection and abandonment can cause hurt and negative actions.
4. People need each other's love and attention to survive.