I Walk With Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness by Kerascoet is about Vanessa – the new girl in school. Vanessa arrives at her new school, the teacher introduces her and she takes her seat. But Vanessa spends the rest of the day alone. On the way home, another little girl witnesses Vanessa bullied. Upset, Vanessa runs home in tears. It is clear how much this incident troubles both girls. The next morning, the girl invites Vanessa to walk with her to school and soon other children join them, leaving the bully behind.

This wordless book is a powerful story of how a small act of kindness can make a world of difference. It is not just about bullying but also about acceptance, kindness, friendship and making good choices.

You can help children develop essential literacy skills by reading, talking, singing and playing with them everyday. Use the following suggestions as you share I Walk With Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness.

Ask Open-Ended Questions Before and After Story

Before the Story

*Introduce the story:* An elementary school girl witnesses the bullying of another girl, but she is not sure how to help.

- What are the little girls doing on the book cover?
- Were you nervous on your first day of school?
- Did you make new friends?
- What does it mean to be kind?
- Has anyone been kind to you? What did they do?

After the Story

- Was this Vanessa’s first day of school? How did she feel?
- How was someone mean to Vanessa?
- How was someone kind to Vanessa?
- What ideas do you have for showing kindness?
- When you see someone being mean or hurtful to others, what can you do?

Introduce New Vocabulary and Concepts

Explaining unfamiliar words and concepts will help expand children’s vocabulary, develop their background knowledge and enhance future read alouds.

- ally: someone who helps you when you are being hurt
- bully: someone who is hurtful
- community: people in the same place
- kind: nice
- neighbor: a person living near you
- nervous: scared
- school: a place to learn and play
- teasing: laughing at
- upset: sad

This book provides a way to talk to children about friendship, first day at school, bullying, kindness and emotions.
Engage Preschoolers in Early Literacy Book Extension Activities Using I Walk With Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness

- Research how to say “Welcome” and “Hello” in different languages (including sign language). Write them on popsicle sticks and put them in a box. Pick a stick and use that word to start the day with a “Hello” song:
  
  
  "Hello" Friends
  (Tune: “Goodnight, Ladies”)
  (“Hello”) friends (3x)
  It’s time to say (“hello”)

- Give each student a ‘badge’ and ask them to write their names (write it for them if they can’t). Ask them to wear it. Form a circle. Ring a bell, ask them to go inside the circle and introduce themselves to as many as possible. Ring the bell again and ask them to return to the circle. You can do this a few times.
- Talk about different ways of showing kindness. Invite them to illustrate these acts and display them. You can also role-play the different scenarios.
- Write (or illustrate) and decorate kindness postcards and mail or distribute them.
- At the end of the day, share and talk about acts of kindness you witnessed or experienced and encourage the children to share their experiences as well.

Sing Songs and Chant Rhymes About Salutations and Kindness

Where is ______?
(Tune: “Are You Sleeping?”)
Where is (child’s name)? (sing twice)
Here I am. (child sings) (sing twice)
We’re so glad to see you. (sing twice)
Here at school. (sing twice)

Clap a Friend’s Name With Me
(Tune: “London Bridge is Falling Down”)
Clap a friend’s name with me,
Name with me, name with me.
Clap a friend’s name with me,
Let’s clap (name).
Variations: snap, stomp, pat (knees)
bump (hips), flap (elbows)

Hello Neighbor
Hello neighbor. (wave)
What do you say? (shake hands)
It’s going to be a beautiful day! (make a circle with both hands in front of you)
So clap your hands,
And stomp your feet,
Jump up and down,
And have a seat!

Three Kind Friends
(Tune: “Three Blind Mice”)
Three kind friends,
Three kind friends.
Kind as they can be,
Kind as they can be.
They always share their toys with me,
They always say ‘thanks’ and ‘please’.
They remember it’s not nice to tease.
They’re three kind friends.

Good Morning Preschool Friends
(Tune: “If You’re Happy and You know It”)
Good morning preschool friends,
How are you? (arms pumping saying: “good, good!”)
Good morning preschool friends,
How are you? (arms pumping saying: “good, good!”)
It is time to start our day,
We are here to work and play.
Good morning preschool friends,
How are you? (arms pumping saying: “good, good!”)