

Kids Need Connections Campaign Resources: Young Adult Stories that Build Resiliency

When young adults have strong, healthy relationships with nurturing adults, they become safer, stronger & happier.

Positive adult-teen connections are critical to keep young adults safe and nurture their growth and development. Kids with meaningful connections are more resilient in the face of daily life challenges and even more severe trauma. At SCAN, we have created a unique way to create positive connections with a child or young adult while also developing their resiliency skills. Our series – *Young Adult Stories that Build Resiliency* – is a collection of six popular young adult stories and corresponding questions that are engaging, provide a chance for you to have an open discussion with a young adult about their emotions, and also allow you to model what they can say or do when confronted with situations that can test their resiliency.



Each book listed below has a coordinating worksheet that provides an overview as well as suggested questions to discuss with young adults:

The Fault in Our Stars

John Green

Matilda

Ronald Dahl

Stargirl

Jerry Spinelli

The Giver

Lois Lowry

Okay for Now

Gary D. Schmidt

Wonder

R. J. Palacio

To access the worksheets online, please visit our website and search “Young Adult Stories”:

www.scanva.org

To access our Parent Resource Center, please visit:

www.scanva.org/prc

For additional campaign resources—including bookmarks and fact sheets—please visit:

www.scanva.org/kidsneedconnections

If the young adult identifies with a particular story in the list, then consider visiting our Pinterest page (pinterest.com/scanofnova) to find additional activities that complement and extend the story. **These stories, questions and activities can be used in a variety of settings: at home, in the classroom, Sunday school classrooms, or with after school programs.** The possibilities are endless as are the connections that young adults will make now – connections that can last a lifetime with people, emotions and the stories themselves.



BOOK: The Fault in Our Stars

AUTHOR: John Green

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

Insightful, bold, irreverent, and raw, The Fault in Our Stars is award-winning-author John Green's most ambitious and heartbreaking work yet, brilliantly exploring the funny, thrilling, and tragic business of being alive and in love.

EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUNG ADULTS:

1. What is something you are afraid of?
What do you do to face the fear and take power away from it?
2. How important are family and friends to you?
How do you use their support when you are faced with challenges?
3. What do you want to be remembered for?
4. What is the role of the support group for Hazel?
Does it change from the beginning of the book to the end? If so, how?

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BOOK: The Giver

AUTHOR: Lois Lowry

The Giver, the 1994 Newbery Medal winner, has become one of the most influential novels of our time. The haunting story centers on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his fragile community.

EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUNG ADULTS:

1. Is there a certain age when childhood ends and adulthood begins?
What do you think it is and why?
2. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of such an ordered society?
Would you struggle or thrive?
3. What does pain feel like to you? If you never had to feel pain again, would you be okay with that?
Why or why not?
4. What memories are your favorite? How do you share them and with whom?

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BOOK: Matilda

AUTHOR: Rohald Dahl

Matilda is a sweet, exceptional young girl, but her parents think she's just a nuisance. She expects school to be different but there she has to face Miss Trunchbull, a kid-hating terror of a headmistress. When Matilda is attacked by the Trunchbull she suddenly discovers she has a remarkable power with which to fight back. It'll take a superhuman genius to give Miss Trunchbull what she deserves and Matilda may be just the one to do it!

EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUNG ADULTS:

1. What is one of your favorite books? Why?
2. How does it make you feel when people say mean things to you and call you names? What can you do?
3. Have you ever had a teacher or other adult be a champion for you? Believe in you? Who was it?
4. How did it make you feel to have an adult support you?

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BOOK: Okay for Now

AUTHOR: Gary D. Schmidt

*In this companion novel to *The Wednesday Wars*, Doug struggles to be more than the “skinny thug” that some people think him to be. He finds an unlikely ally in Lil Spicer, who gives him the strength to endure an abusive father, the suspicions of a town, and the return of his oldest brother, forever scarred, from Vietnam. Schmidt expertly weaves multiple themes of loss and recovery in a story teeming with distinctive, unusual characters and invaluable lessons about love, creativity, and survival.*

EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUNG ADULTS:

1. Do you have a special talent? What is it?
2. Who are the people in your life you can turn to when things are tough at home? At school?
3. Doug has a tough life at home and he has been physically and emotionally abused. How does he handle the abuse? What outlets does he have?
4. Who do you identify the most with in this book and why?
5. Doug’s first impression of Mr. Ballard, his father’s boss, is way off. Have you ever experienced this before? Did you make the wrong first impression? Did someone make the wrong first impression of you?
6. There are many people in Doug’s life who do care about him. Draw a diagram that shows how Doug is connected to the people in his life and indicate their relationship to him (e.g. friend, teacher, adult, neighbor).

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BOOK: Stargirl

AUTHOR: Jerry Spinelli

From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of “Stargirl, Stargirl.” She captures Leo Borlock’s heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first.

Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal. In this celebration of nonconformity, Newbery Medalist Jerry Spinelli weaves a tense, emotional tale about the perils of popularity and the thrill and inspiration of first love.

EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUNG ADULTS:

1. What would be your reaction if Stargirl walked into your cafeteria at lunch dressed in the white dress with the ukulele?
2. What things do you do that are unique to you? What are your unique talents?
3. Archie asks, “Whose affection do you value more, hers or others?” If you were Leo, what would your answer be?
4. Have you ever wanted to change your name? What would you change it to and why?
5. Stargirl changes her speech at the oratorical contest, what do you think she talks about that makes her win?
6. How important is popularity to you? Explain your answer.

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BOOK: Wonder

AUTHOR: R.J. Palacio

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. Wonder, now a #1 New York Times bestseller and included on the Texas Bluebonnet Award master list, begins from Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. These perspectives converge in a portrait of one community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.

EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUNG ADULTS:

1. How would you react if Auggie were in your school?
2. How would you react to others at school if you were Auggie?
3. What if you looked like Auggie? What do you think you would do?
4. If Auggie was your brother, what would your relationship be like?
5. If Auggie was your friend, what would your relationship be like?
6. Do you consider Auggie courageous? Why or why not?
7. What makes Auggie resilient?

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