

Wellie wishers™

Learning
Guide





About the Books

The WellieWishers are a group of fun-loving girls who each have the same big, bright wish: to be a good friend. They love to play in a large and leafy backyard garden cared for by Willa's Aunt Miranda. When the WellieWishers step into their colorful garden boots, also known as wellingtons or *wellies*, they are ready for anything—stomping in mud puddles, putting on a show, and helping friendships grow. Each day brings new adventures and new opportunities to learn that being kind, creative, and caring isn't always easy, but it's the best way to make friendships bloom.

About This Guide and Emotional Intelligence

Empathy, or “standing in another child’s wellies,” is a core theme in the three WellieWishers books featured in this guide: *The Riddle of the Robin*, *Ashlyn's Unsurprise Party*, and *The Muddily-Puddily Show*. In their preschool and early elementary years, it is just as important that children learn proper social and relational skills as it is to master academic and knowledge-based skills. A strong foundation in both emotional and academic intelligence will set students up to be successful as they continue to develop and grow. These books will reinforce the important emotional and social skills young people need to become empathetic, compassionate, and thoughtfully motivated people.

The importance of teaching empathy and building social skills is perhaps best described by the author of the WellieWishers books and early education expert, Valerie Tripp: “In our world where we’re inundated by factual information, EQ is more important than IQ; a resilient attitude is more important than aptitude; and perseverance, responsibility, empathy, and compassion are the most important abilities we can teach our children for the future. . . . Kindergarten has become so academic that there is little time for what used to be its main purpose—teaching social skills.”



Pre-Reading Activity: Put Yourself in Someone Else's Wellies

Play this game with your students to help them understand the idea of empathy. Write some emotions on slips of paper, and let your students pick them from a container. Have definitions on hand for any emotions that your students might not understand. Here are some suggestions for emotions that you might use:

Confident

Sad

Happy

Surprised

Excited

Brave

Angry

Afraid

Bored

Silly

Tired

Cold

Hot

Jealous

Embarrassed

Sorry

Shy

Disgusted

Calm

Grouchy

Strong

You can introduce the game with the following talking prompt:

We're going to play a game called "Put Yourself in Someone Else's Wellies." The WellieWishers are learning every day how to be a better friend, and part of being a good friend is realizing what emotions someone else is experiencing. In this game, one person will pick out a card and read the emotion on it, but keep it to him- or herself. Then he or she will act out that emotion, and the rest of us will guess what it is. Once we get it right, then we'll all act it out.

[After each action, try to ask a question, such as "That was *surprised*—what might a friend feel surprised about?"]



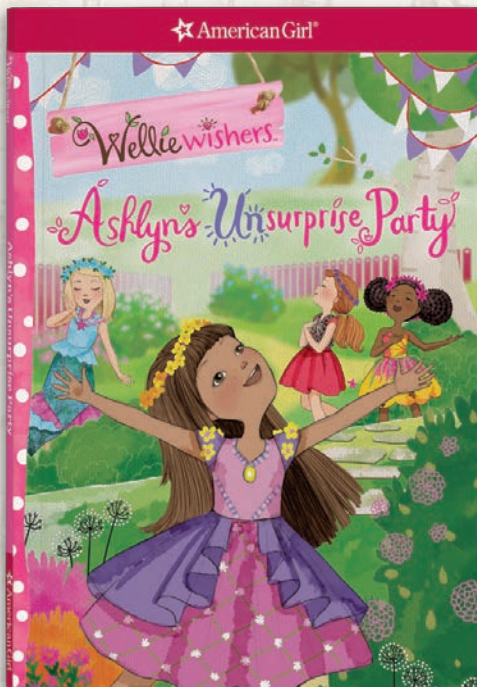
The Riddle of the Robin

In this book, the WellieWishers experience the wonders of spring and changing seasons. These changes are exciting for young children, and a garden or park is a perfect setting for exploring and learning about the natural world! Part of learning about nature includes learning about how to respect and take care of it. In the story, the WellieWishers learn to understand why the robin seemed to attack them—because it was protecting its nest!

Exploring nature is often a child's first "scientific" experience, where she or he can observe nature up close and find new and interesting things to examine. Take your students outside to the playground or to a nearby park or garden, and prompt them to share stories about the things they experience and find. This activity will build their observation muscles and encourage them to appreciate the wonder of the natural world.

Back in the classroom, ask your students to think of what they love about nature and what they do to respect and care for it. Do they recycle or compost? Do they help their mom or dad plant flowers and vegetables in a garden? Or do they help out at a community garden? You can ask students to either write about or draw a picture of their favorite nature scene, and share this with the class.





Ashlyn's Unsurprise Party

Throwing a party is sometimes an endeavor taken on by a do-it-all host. But as Ashlyn and the other WellieWishers discover in this story, the best parties are ones where everyone can lend a hand and contribute.

Encourage your students to have an “Unsurprise Party” as well. Lead a discussion among your students as they choose party themes, decorations, snacks, and games. Students can develop their cooperation and leadership skills by working on a team that is responsible for a certain party item.

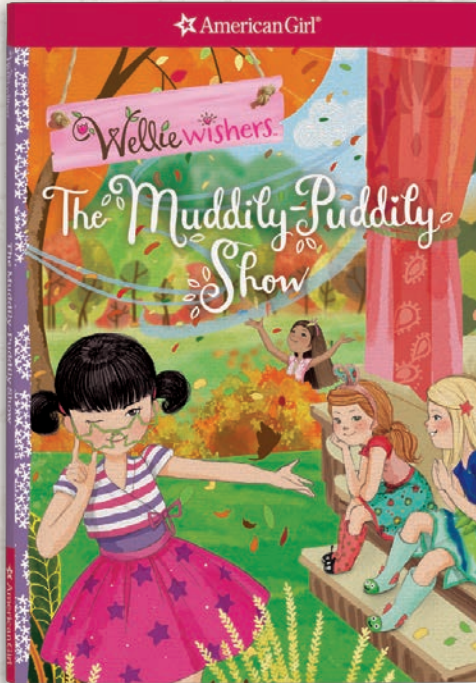
Similar to how the storm rained out the WellieWishers' party, your students probably have had experiences with things going not as planned.

Ashlyn's idea for having a surprise party is inspired by Camille losing her teeth. Though her kindness runs a little bit away from her, Ashlyn's intentions were good and thoughtful. Encourage your students to share with the class some of the ways they have shown kindness to

others recently—it can be as simple as giving a friend a hug when he or she is having a bad day or helping set the table before dinner.

You can then prompt your students to think about kind acts they can perform at their school and in their communities. Write their ideas on a large sheet of paper, and hang it up in your classroom.





The Muddily-Puddily Show

Emerson loves to take center stage and be in charge, and some of your students might feel the same. On the other hand, some students are more comfortable taking a “supporting role” in group settings.

Playing off the show that the WellieWishers put together in this book, prompt your students to come up with skits that focus on being patient and listening. This may require more than one class session to complete as students create their skits, memorize their lines, and perhaps use costumes or props.

For a fun word and language arts game, suggest that your students rewrite the lyrics to a familiar song, just as the WellieWishers do for the show. Adding music and experimenting with word choices will expand your students’ writing skills. You might also add some rhyming and other word games to get your students’ creative juices flowing.



Embracing Individuality

When the WellieWishers play in the garden, they don't want to worry about getting dirty or muddy, so they always change into their wellies first. The WellieWishers each have a favorite pair of boots that they wear in the garden. The special patterns and designs are clues to things that are important to each girl. Encourage your students to describe each of the WellieWishers' boots and how the designs connect to the characters.

Then either provide sheets of paper with outlines of a boot (see the template on the back of this guide) or have students draw their own boots and decorate them in a way that describes and portrays their interests, favorite things, or style.

Vocabulary

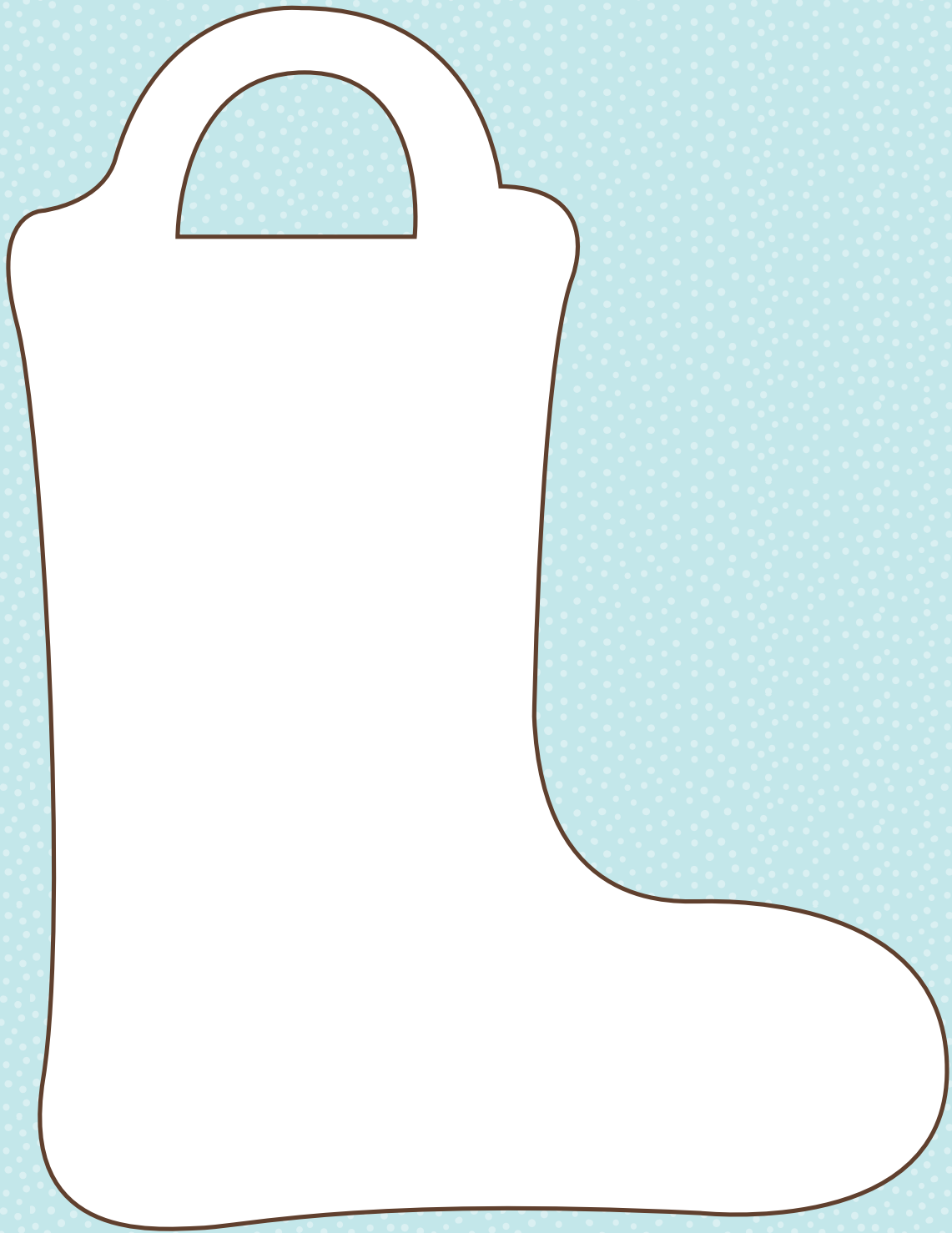
These early chapter books can improve your students' vocabulary. Students should be encouraged to jot down or ask about unfamiliar words and try to define them using clues from the context. Such words may include (from *The Riddle of the Robin*): impatience (p. 8), admire (p. 17), gusto (p. 21), dangling (p. 36), canteen (p. 53), slumped (p. 64), and shuddered (p. 77).



About the Author

Valerie Tripp says that she became a writer because of the kind of person she is. She says she's curious, and writing requires you to be interested in everything. Talking is her favorite sport, and writing is a way of talking on paper. She's a daydreamer, which helps her come up with her ideas. And she loves words. She even loves the struggle to come up with just the right words as she writes and rewrites. Ms. Tripp lives in Maryland with her husband.





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