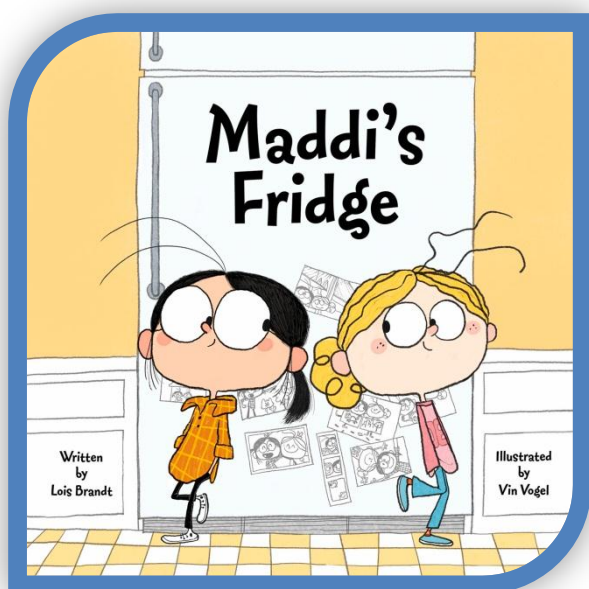




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



Maddi's Fridge

Lois Brandt (Author), Vin Vogel (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1936261291

Publisher: Flashlight Press

Year Published: 2014

Age Range: 4–8

Book Themes

Poverty, Friendship, Empathy, Helping others

About the Book

Best friends Sofia and Maddi live in the same neighborhood, go to the same school and play in the same park, but while Sofia's fridge at home is full of nutritious food, the fridge at Maddi's house is empty. Sofia learns that Maddi's family doesn't have enough money to fill their fridge and promises Maddi she'll keep this discovery a secret. But because Sofia wants to help her friend, she's faced with a difficult decision: to keep her promise or tell her parents about Maddi's empty fridge. This story addresses issues of poverty with honesty and sensitivity while instilling important lessons about friendship, empathy, trust and helping others.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What was the story about?

- What is Maddi and Sofia's friendship like? What aspects of their friendship are similar to or different from your friendships?
- How do you think you would feel if you discovered your friend didn't have any food in their refrigerator?
- Why do you think Maddi didn't want anyone to know her refrigerator was almost empty? How did she feel?
- Do you think it was easy or difficult for Sofia to break her promise to Maddi? How so?
- What would you have done in Sofia's situation?
- What happened after Sofia told her Mom that Maddi didn't have enough money for food? What do you think we should do if we are ever in that situation?
- How did Sofia and Maddi help each other?
- How do you think Maddi and Sofia felt in the end?
- How might we help people who don't have enough money to buy food?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Friendship

This book spends a lot of time exploring the friendship between Maddi and Sofia. It provides a good opportunity to have a conversation with your child about their own friendships, what their friends mean to them and how they deal with differences and conflict in their friendships. The story paints a complex picture of friendship, acknowledging that differences are part of friendship and we can't always keep our promises if we feel our friends are hurting and need help. Maddi confides in Sofia her secret and asks Sofia not tell anyone that her family does not have enough food and that they are poor. This becomes a difficult promise for Sofia to keep because she grows more and more concerned about Maddi. Emphasize that even though Sofia "broke her promise," friends look out for and support each other when they are in trouble or need help.

2. Empathy

As you read the book, ask questions about how each of the characters are feeling and also ask questions that get your children to try to imagine how they might feel if they were in the character's situation. This builds empathy and expands children's feelings vocabulary. Sofia expresses some conflicting feelings throughout the book; she wants to be loyal and trustworthy to her friend but she is also concerned about her and wants to help. Sofia tries to help by bringing Maddi lunch everyday but realizes she needs to do more than that and has to break her promise to Maddi. Maddi also has some conflicting feelings of embarrassment and at the same time, she wants to reach out to her friend and share what is happening. Model empathy and compassion by expressing how you feel about Maddi's situation and let your child know that helping our friends in need is important and that there is always something they can do. Use empathic language and questions such as "what could we do to help or support Maddi?" to convey caring behavior.

3. Understanding Hunger and Poverty and Taking Action

Children in this age group may begin to recognize poverty in various forms and understand that not everyone has the same amount of money. At this age, children may notice homeless people living

on the street, understand that people have different size houses and material objects and they may start to ask why. When you and your child see someone who is homeless, it is important to acknowledge what you are seeing. If you say nothing at all, you are telling your child the topic is “off limits” and you also convey indifference. First, express empathy (not pity) for the person so your child understands that you care and you are not judging. If they ask questions, keep it simple, explaining the various reasons why people become homeless and/or are poor (e.g. “some people don’t have enough money to buy a house/rent an apartment” or “that person may have lost their job and now they don’t have enough money for food.”). In explaining people’s different economic situations, you can use terms like “not enough,” “enough,” and “more than enough.” Finally, find a way to take action the way that Sofia and her Mom helped Maddi’s family—this can either be an individual act or something larger like volunteering at a homeless shelter or food bank.

Other Books You May Like

A Chair for My Mother by Vera B. Williams, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/a-chair-for-my-mother.html

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt De La Peña, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/last-stop-on-market-street.html

The Can Man by Laura E. Williams, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/the-can-man.html

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/those-shoes-1.html

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on socioeconomic bias, empathy and activism.

Educational Resources

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism, www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in.html

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying, www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-bullying.html

Love Has No Labels Family/Caregiver Guide and Educator’s Guide www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/love-has-no-labels.html

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources, www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/parent-family-and-caregivers.html

The Question Corner, www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html

Children’s Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Socioeconomic Bias, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/general-books.html?generalsub=socioeconomic-bias

Community Activism, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice-books.html?subsocial=community-activism