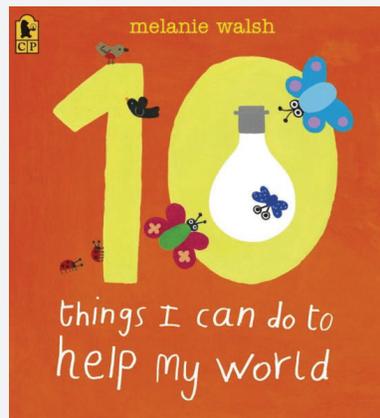


Second Reaction: 10 Things I Can Do to Help My World

Walsh, Melanie. *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*.
Atheneum, 2018.

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What happens when young children read *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* by Melanie Walsh with their teacher? How does this book that encourages kids to take care of their planet play out with preschoolers and kindergartners? To find out we took this book to a Head Start preschool and a kindergarten classroom where a teacher read *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* to students.

In the Head Start preschool classroom, reading aloud to the class is a common enjoyable practice. During her read alouds, the teacher, Miss Linda (pseudonym), enjoys helping her students construct meaning and is especially engaging as she reads aloud to them. She uses gestures and facial expressions as well as altering her voice tone, volume and rate of speech. Miss Linda previewed *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* and immediately knew her students would love it. She especially appreciated the primary, first-person child voice and the secondary, adult-affirming lines of text because they complement how she models and reinforces positive language use in her classroom in order to teach things such as behavior and self-regulation. For example, a child in Miss Linda's class might say to her, "I just used my words to tell Johnny to stop bothering me while you were reading." Miss Linda would respond, "Using your words is a positive way to ask Johnny to stop bothering you. Good job!" The book models this same first-person child talk and then the adult-affirming voice. An example of this is on the first and second pages, where the child says, "I remember to turn off the light when I

leave the room,” followed by the adult affirming statement, “Turning off lights and using more efficient lightbulbs saves valuable energy.”

During the reading, Miss Linda related the text to things the children do in their classroom in order to draw on their background knowledge to aid comprehension. For example, she reminded the children how, at school, they turn off the water when they brush their teeth. In the book, the child voice says, “I try . . . to turn off the tap when I brush my teeth,” and the adult voice replies, “Every time you do this, you save eighteen glasses of water.” Another example of similarities between the children’s classroom life and the book was when a child commented how they have used boxes to make instruments in their classroom. The child in the book says, “I enjoy . . . making toys from things around the house”, and the adult voice responds, “We can reuse lots of things before we throw them away.”

One of the book’s illustrations was confusing to the children. On the page with an illustration of car exhaust, the primary text reads, “I like . . .” and on the following page, the primary text continues, “to walk to school.” The secondary text reads, “Avoiding car trips saves gas and cuts down on air pollution. Walking is also good exercise.” The illustration on the second page spread of this topic shows the legs of two children from the knees down. Also, in the gutter of this two-page spread is a dog. The preschoolers focused on the dog in the center, and not the legs of the two children walking, missing the idea about how walking saves the environment.

The kindergarten students especially enjoyed seeing the different unique text features, such as the flaps on each page. After the first flap was flipped up, many of the students reacted in awe of how this book worked! The teacher could almost see their minds making connections to experiences in their own lives as she read both the primary and secondary texts. The kindergartners were engaged with the text and remained focused for much of the read aloud. After the reading, the teacher asked the children to think of other ways they could help our world. Rather than generating novel ways to help the world, the students thought of some additional reasons why we should turn off the lights or throw away the trash. One student even reminded the teacher to turn off the lights when they left the classroom to go outside for recess. Another student asked if they could pick up trash on the playground.

10 Things I Can Do to Help My World is written and illustrated in a child-friendly way that invites engagement and motivates children to put their thoughts into action to help our world. The children in these two classes began acting on their thoughts immediately after the book was read to them, and I sense that they will continue to think of ways to help our environment with encouragement from their teachers.

Works Cited

Walsh, Melanie. *10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*. Atheneum, 2018.