

Habit 5 – Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood

Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krause Rosenthal, Two voices debate the identity of the creature shown. One thinks it's a duck, the other a rabbit. When the debaters start to see each other's perspective, a new ambiguous 'combination creature' appears. The "right" answer is never given, and your class/children will likely have differing opinions, making this is a great discussion starter for talking about how two people can think differently about something, and both be right.

The Blind Men and the Elephant, by Karen Backstein, Six blind men travel to the palace of the prince to meet his new elephant. Each man touches a different part of the elephant and then describes what the elephant is like, a wall, a snake, etc. This fable from India shows that a person cannot always rely on their limited understanding of something.

Black and White, by David Macaulay, Four seemingly unrelated stories are told and continued on each two-page spread, but a fifth story is created through the interaction of the four stories, and that fifth story becomes a surrealistic tale with several levels of reality. In fact, it begins to be seen as a puzzle or game (ie: are characters in one story riding on the train in another?) Answers are never given. The reader must take all points of view into account to get the whole story here.

The Runaway Bunny, Margaret Wise Brown, The Runaway Bunny follows the thoughts of the little bunny who thinks he would like to run away. By Seeking First to Understand, Mother Rabbit truly listens to her little bunny. She then Seeks to Be Understood by offering assurance that she will always come and find him.

Under the Lemon Moon, by Edith Hope Fine, Rosalinda awakes one night to see a man stealing all the lemons from her family's lemon tree, leaving it stripped and damaged. Unsure what to do, she asks La Anciana, a wise woman, who shares a plan that will help the ailing tree and the thief who was stealing the fruit to feed his impoverished family. Soft watercolor illustrations beautifully depict the Mexican countryside

Great Joy, by Kate DiCamillo, Frances sees an organ grinder and monkey sleeping on the street just outside her apartment, and can't stop thinking about them--even when it's her turn to speak during the Christmas pageant. Then, just in time, she comes up with the perfect thing to say.

The Three Questions, by Jon J. Muth, A short story by Tolstoy is recast into a tale about Nikolai, who wants answers to his three questions on how to be a good person. He finds the answers by helping others and listening to others.

The Lady in the Box, by Ann McGovern, Ben and his sister see a homeless woman named Dorrie living in a box over a heating grate. They worry about her and decide to give her food and warm clothing, and convince a deli owner to let her stay next to his

shop. The two also start helping at a soup kitchen, and smile at Dorrie when they see her in line. Powerfully communicates that small efforts can make a big difference in a person's life.

Stellaluna by Janell Cannon

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka

Are You My Mother? by P.D. Eastman

Is Your Mama a Llama? by Deborah Guarin

The Island of the Skog by Steven Kellogg

Grandfather Counts by Andrea Cheng

It Looked Like Spilled Milk by Charles Shaw

Alejandro's Gift by R.E. Albert

Amelia Bedelia books