



Five Works of Jacqueline Woodson: A Social-Emotional Learning Journey

Self-Awareness Teaching Guide

Last Summer with Maizon
pp. 64-65

Learning Objectives

These learning objectives align with the CASEL framework and cultivate social-emotional learning skills.

Students will be able to understand how to:

- Identify their emotions
- Link feelings, values, and thoughts

Essential questions

- Who is your best friend?
- How do you fill up after a big loss?

Reflection questions

Before Questions

- How do you define best friend? Brainstorm the qualities that make someone a best friend.
- How does your definition of best friend impact how you act towards your friends and how you expect them to act towards you?
- What does it mean to be self-aware?

During Questions

- Why does Margaret think she and Maizon won't be best friends anymore?
- How does Margaret demonstrate self-awareness in the vignette?
- Margaret can turn to her mother when she feels sad or unsure. Who is someone you can turn to when you need help or advice?

After Questions

- How do you feel after reading the conversation between Margaret and her mother? What thoughts are you having?
- How would you feel if your best friend moved away? What might you do to help you understand a big change?
- Margaret says she feels empty not sad. What is the difference between feeling empty and feeling sad? How does your body feel when you are sad? How does it feel when you are empty?



Writing prompts

- Write about a time you experienced a major change in your life. What was the event? How did you feel? What helped you to identify the change?
- Write about a time when you were happy. Describe the event. Now think about how your body felt in that moment and describe it. What were your thoughts? What about a moment when you were sad or angry? How does your body feel different? What about your thoughts?
- Write about someone you can trust for advice or support when you are sad or uncertain. What has this person done to earn you trust? What do they do to support you?

Educator Tips: Going Deeper

- Using an [emotions wheel](#), ask students to identify how Margaret and Maizon might be feeling based on what they've read. Guide students through exploring a range of feelings, stopping to define ones that might be unfamiliar to them and asking for the meanings beneath the words. How might probing for a deeper range of feelings help students gain a better understanding about what Margaret and Maizon are experiencing? Then, ask students to use the emotions wheel to think about and define how they might respond in a similar situation to a best friend leaving or doing something that was hard for them to handle. What advice might students offer to Margaret and to themselves in similar situations?
- Margaret's description of feeling empty instead of sad at the loss of her father can help begin a conversation about grief with students. To help students understand grief, you want to start by asking students to describe how Margaret's body might feel when she is sad or empty. Students might respond that her body feels heavy, or she wants to cry. They may also respond that her heart hurts. Helping students identify and acknowledge how grief feels in their body is an important first step. Then have students write from Margaret's perspective on what is causing her sadness. Margaret has experienced the death of her father and her best friend moving away very close together. Finally, students will identify things that might make Margaret feel less sad. This could be writing letters to her deceased father, creating a memory box or [identity box](#) to help remember her father, or talking to her mother. Through this activity, students can begin to recognize grief and find ways to cope with it.
- Margaret worries about the changes that might come once Maizon leaves for boarding school. Encourage students to think about transitions and how they might manage them. What advice would they give to Margaret about how to handle her friend leaving? What actions might Margaret and her mother take to assure her friendship with Maizon remains strong? How can Margaret remain open to the possibility of change that can come when her friend returns? What might she want to remember about the nature of their friendship so she is able to remain friends with Maizon?