

While the provided sources focus on the themes of invasion and anxiety related to fantastical creatures in a children's book, the underlying concepts of encountering those who are different and the hope for positive interactions can be thoughtfully adapted to create a teacher's guide for second and third graders about welcoming new people into communities.

### **Teacher's Guide: Welcoming New Friends in Our Community (Grades 2-3)**

This guide will help you explore the importance of welcoming new people into our communities, understanding and appreciating differences, overcoming fears of the unfamiliar, and recognizing and addressing bigotry. We will use the "Friendly Creatures" books by Kevin Denley as a starting point to think about these ideas.

#### **Central Ideas (Inspired by the "I Hope They Are Friendly" Series):**

- Just like the narrator in the books encounters new and unusual creatures, we often meet new people in our communities who might seem different from us.
- The narrator's initial feelings of **uncertainty** and **anxiety** about the creatures ("How many? I wish I knew. Can it be more than thirty?", "If they are not, whatever will we do?") can be similar to how we might feel when we meet someone new who looks or acts differently.
- The central refrain, "**I hope they are friendly too**", highlights the importance of hoping for positive relationships with those who are different from us.
- The idea of an "**invasion** of my privacy!" can help us think about how new people might feel when they come into a new environment and how important it is to make them feel welcome, not like they are intruding.
- The diverse appearances of the creatures in the images can remind us that people also have diverse appearances and backgrounds, which makes our community interesting and rich.

#### **Exploring Themes and Making Connections:**

Use the following questions and activities to help students connect the themes in the "Friendly Creatures" books to the experience of new people moving into their communities:

- **Encountering the Unfamiliar:**
  - In the books, the narrator is surprised by the arrival of the creatures. Can you think of a time when someone new came to your school or neighborhood? How did that feel?
  - The creatures look very different from the narrator and from each other. When you meet someone new, they might look or sound different from you. How can we be curious and respectful about these differences?
  - The narrator asks, "How many? I wish I knew". When many new people come to a community, it might feel like a big change. Why is it important to remember that each new person is an individual?
- **Addressing Feelings of Uncertainty and Fear:**
  - The narrator expresses anxiety by asking, "If they are not, whatever will we do?". Sometimes, when we meet people from different cultures or who look different, we might feel a little scared or unsure. Where do these feelings come from?
  - The books show the importance of **hoping** that the creatures are friendly. How can we choose to be hopeful and open when we meet new people?

- Just like the creatures are not what the narrator expected, sometimes our worries about new people might not be true. How can we get to know someone and learn if our fears are unfounded?
- **Understanding "Invasion" and Welcoming Others:**
  - The narrator feels like the creatures are an "invasion of my privacy!" because they are in their home where they don't usually belong. When new people come to our community, it is now their home too. How can we make them feel like they belong and are welcome, rather than like they are invading?
  - Think about how the creatures make a mess and do silly things. Sometimes, people from different cultures might do things differently than we are used to. How can we be understanding and learn about their ways of doing things?
- **Celebrating Differences:**
  - The creatures in the books are described as fantastical and diverse. How does this diversity make the story more interesting?
  - In our communities, people have different cultures, speak different languages, eat different foods, and have different traditions. How do these differences make our community richer and more interesting?
  - Just like we learn about the creatures in the books, how can we learn about the cultures and backgrounds of the new people in our community?
- **Being Aware of Bigotry (Drawing a Contrast):**
  - The narrator's initial uncertainty is about whether the creatures are **friendly**. Bigotry is when we have negative opinions or treat people unfairly **simply because they are different** (e.g., because of their skin color, where they come from, or their religion).
  - It's important to remember that everyone deserves to be treated with **kindness and respect**, no matter how different they might seem.
  - How can we stand up for others if we see someone being treated unfairly because they are new or different?

### **Possible Activities:**

- **"Friendly Faces" Drawing:** Have students draw pictures of friendly faces that represent the diverse people in their community.
- **"Hopes for New Friends" Chart:** Create a class chart where students write or draw things they hope for when new people join their community (e.g., "I hope they like to play games," "I hope we can learn from each other's cultures").
- **"Welcoming Words" Activity:** Brainstorm words and phrases that make people feel welcome (e.g., "Hello," "Welcome to our community," "We're happy you're here"). Practice using these words in role-playing scenarios.
- **"Our Community Quilt":** Have each student create a square representing something unique about themselves or their family. Put the squares together to create a quilt that celebrates the diversity within the classroom and, by extension, the community.
- **Story Time and Discussion:** Read age-appropriate stories about children from different backgrounds or about the experience of moving to a new place. Discuss the characters' feelings and how others in the story showed kindness and understanding.
- **"What If?" Scenarios:** Present hypothetical scenarios about new students or neighbors and ask students how they would respond in a friendly and inclusive way.

**Important Note:** It is crucial to emphasize that while we are using the "Friendly Creatures" books as a way to start thinking about encountering differences, **real people are not fantastical creatures.** We should always treat everyone with respect and recognize their individuality and humanity. The books provide a safe and imaginative space to discuss initial reactions to the unfamiliar, but our goal is to move beyond potential anxieties to genuine acceptance and friendship in our communities.