



SPROUT STREET NEIGHBORS

A New Arrival

Curriculum Guide & Friendship Building Activities

Sprout Street Neighbors: A New Arrival

By Anna Alter

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Chapter book for Ages 4-8

About the Book

Mili has just moved into the empty apartment on Sprout Street all the way from Hawaii—and her new neighbors can't wait to meet her! Violet is happy there's someone in the building who shares her love of art. Emma is excited to have a new breakfast buddy. Henry is eager to show off his model ships. Mili is quick to lend a hand when she finds Wilbur in a pickle, and Fernando always welcomes another voice at the weekly Sprout Street meetings.

Of course, sometimes a new friend can take some getting used to, but with neighbors like these, it's not long before Mili is part of the Sprout Street family, too.

* *A Junior Library Guild Selection* *



About the Author/Illustrator:



Anna has lived in many apartment buildings and come across a variety of interesting characters along the way. She is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and the author and illustrator of many treasured books, including *A Photo for Greta*, *Disappearing Desmond*, and *Abigail Spells*. Her books have been a CCBC Choice best book of the year, Bank Street College best book of the year, Junior Library Guild selections, and Texas 2x2 Recommended Reading. Anna lives in Western Massachusetts, but travels around the country to visit schools and talk about her work.

Visit Anna at www.annaalter.com!

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The Sprout Street books bring up a variety of social and emotional issues that explore friendship, community, and kindness. Here are some tips for guiding the conversation with students.

BEFORE READING: Talk about what it means to be a good friend and neighbor.

Ask children: What can you do to show your friends you care about them?
If a friend is having a problem, what can you do to help?
What do your friends do that make you feel that they care about you?
Do you know your neighbors?
If you don't know your neighbors, how might you introduce yourself?
What does it mean to be a good neighbor?

AFTER READING - DISCUSSION STARTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

In chapter one, Mili joins the Sprout Street neighbors and Violet is worried. She feels jealous of What Mili can do and thinks that her friends will like Mili better.

Ask children: Have you ever felt nervous when meeting someone new?
How did those feelings change when you got to know them better?
What can you do to welcome someone new to your classroom or neighborhood?

Activity: Help children make a welcome basket for a new person in your community. It could be for a new student, a new teacher, or a new neighbor. The basket can include drawings of what is special about your community, a list of favorite things to do there, a sweet treat, and a decorated frame with a picture of your school or classroom. Be creative and ask children for ideas about what they would like to include.

In chapter two, Emma is very excited to have a new neighbor. So excited, she wants to be with her all the time. But Mili needs "me time" too. They learn to balance being together and being alone.

Ask children: What do you think "me time" means?
What kinds of things do you like to do alone?
What kinds of things would you rather do with friends?

Activity: Have children make a "me time" collage. Fill a page with pictures of things they like to do by themselves, that are important to them.

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In chapter three, Fernando feels torn between impressing his new neighbor and pleasing his old friend. He makes a pros-and-cons list to try to figure out what to do.

Ask children: Have you ever had to choose between doing what two different people wanted you to do?
If someone is asking you to do something you don't want to do, how could you tell them the way you feel?
When you have a big decision to make, how do you decide what to do?
Does it help to hear other people's opinions or do you like to make decisions by yourself?

Activity: Help children make a pros-and-cons list for a decision. It could be as simple as which shoes to wear a particular day, where they'd like to go on vacation, or which book to read. Make sure there is more than one solution to the decision so that they can compare the choices. Are some reasons more important than others?

In chapter four, Henry doesn't want to disappoint Mili, so he doesn't tell the truth about his ship. He learns that she likes him for who he is, not the things that he has or does.

Ask children: Have you ever said something that wasn't true, because you wanted to impress someone? What happened when they found out the truth?
Has anyone ever stretched the truth to impress you? If so, how did you feel about it?

Activity: On a large piece of poster board, draw a line down the center. On one side have children list things that they like to do, such as run, play soccer, go to the beach, or play with a friend. On the other side, have them list why. Does liking to run mean you like to feel free, like you're flying? Do you like to play with a friend because they make you laugh? Does going to the beach mean you like to feel peaceful? Engage them in conversation about the differences between what you *do* and who you *are*.

In chapter five, Wilbur feels lonely because all of his friends are busy. Mili cheers him up by spending time with him.

Ask children: Can you describe a time when you felt left out by your friends?
What could friends have done to help you feel better?
What can you do if you notice a friend being left out?

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Activity: Have students sit in a circle. Choose someone to pick up a ball of string or yarn and say their name, along with something about themselves. Then have them hold onto the end of the string and roll the ball to someone else in the circle. The next person does the same, holding onto the string, then rolling the ball to someone else. When all children have had a turn, you will have a spiderweb that everyone is holding up as a group. Talk about how we need each other to keep the web together and leaving someone out could make the web fall apart.

In chapter six, Mili misses Hawaii and feels out of place. The Sprout Street friends show they care about her by celebrating where she is from.

Ask children: Have you ever moved somewhere new?
Are there other times when you've felt out of place?
What can others do to help you when you feel that way?
If you notice someone else feeling out of place, how could you help them?

Activity: Have children draw a picture of things that remind them of home. Take a picture of each child holding up their drawing and then print them out. Make a board in the classroom where the pictures can be posted, so that students can visit when they need a reminder of home and can share with each other what home means to them.