

Different ways
brighter days

Poppy's Words

A Gus Story

Discussion & Reflection Guide

Kindness. Inclusion. Brighter days. ♥

LISTEN
BELONG
BE KIND
SPEAK
UP ♥
CHANGE
TOGETHER
♥

Suggested Age Range

Ages 6–10

Best used with:

- Parents and caregivers
- Teachers
- School counselors
- Therapists (OT, SLP, school-based)
- Siblings and family members
- Disability inclusion programs
- Classroom discussions
- Library story time
- Book clubs



Key Themes

- Disability and communication
- Sibling relationships
- Empathy and understanding
- Different ways to communicate
- Inclusion and belonging
- Patience and kindness
- Speaking up and advocating
- Everyone has something to say
- Love without limits
- You are not alone

All voices make a brighter world. ♥

♥ Why This Book Matters

Poppy's Words helps children see that everyone communicates in different ways and that all voices are important. It gently shows some of the real challenges children with disabilities face, like being misunderstood, overlooked, or left out—but it also highlights the kindness, patience, and inclusion that can make a big difference.

This story helps children understand:

- ♥ Different does not mean less.
- ♥ It's important to be patient and kind when someone communicates in a different way.
- ♥ Everyone deserves to be heard and included.
- ♥ Siblings can be powerful allies and advocates.
- ♥ Small actions can help make school, friendships, and communities more inclusive for everyone.

It opens the door for meaningful conversations about acceptance, respect, and how we can all help make the world a more inclusive place.

Kindness helps
everyone belong. ♥



About the Book

Poppy's Words: A Gus Story follows Gus, who loves his younger sister Poppy, but sometimes it's hard when other people do not understand the way she communicates.

As Gus watches Poppy move through the world in her own way, he begins to see that being heard does not always sound like the same. With patience, courage, and a little help from kind people, Gus learns that love can make room for every voice.

Poppy's Words is a warm and encouraging story about sibling love, disability, understanding, and the many ways children can learn to listen.

Different abilities.
Same big love. ♥



Before Reading

You might ask:

- 1 What do you think it means to communicate?
- 2 Can you think of different ways people can talk or share their thoughts?
- 3 What are some ways we can be a good friend to someone who is different from us?
- 4 What does inclusion mean?

There are no right or wrong answers. Let children share as much—or as little—as they feel comfortable.



Let's Talk About Gus and Poppy

- 1 What do you think Gus loves most about Poppy?
- 2 What are some challenges Gus and Poppy face?
- 3 How do you think Poppy feels when people don't understand her?
- 4 What are some ways Gus shows kindness and support?
- 5 What did you learn about the different ways people can communicate?
- 6 How can we make sure everyone feels included at school, in our community, or with friends?
- 7 What is one kind thing you can do to help someone feel heard?
- 8 What would you say to Poppy if you could talk to her?



Try This: Be a Kindness Detective

Invite the child to look for acts of kindness during the week. They can draw or list what they see—big or small.

You might look for:

- ♥ Someone including a friend
- ♥ A person being patient
- ♥ Someone using kind words
- ♥ A creative way to communicate
- ♥ A time you were a kindness detective yourself!



A Note for Adults

This book can be a helpful tool for starting conversations about disability, communication differences, sibling relationships, and inclusion. Some children may have personal experiences, while others may be learning about these topics for the first time.

- ♥ Use the story to build empathy, not pity.
- ♥ Answer questions honestly and at an age-appropriate level.
- ♥ Celebrate different ways of communicating.
- ♥ Encourage inclusive language and actions.
- ♥ Help children see the strengths and abilities in everyone.
- ♥ Reassure them that kindness and acceptance make a real difference.

More
Understanding.
A Kinder World. ♥

Steady Heart Studio

Stories for Brighter Tomorrows ♥

"Different can be wonderful
when kindness leads the way."

– Steady Heart Studio