


Book Title: *The Invisible String*
Author: Patrice Karst

Illustrator: Joanne Lew-Vriethoff

Ages: 3-7 years

Identities/Lived Experiences/Themes in This Book

- Feelings
- Friendship
- Families separated
- Grief/Loss
- White/European American
- School success

Anti-Bias Education
Social-Emotional Learning

- **Empathy and Understanding**
- **Healthy Complex Identities**
- **Respect Across Differences**
- Notice, Name, and Reject Bias
- Responsiveness and Action
- **Self-Awareness**
- **Self-Management**
- **Social Awareness**
- **Relationship Skills**
- Responsible Decision-Making

Persona Doll Guide Units
Persona Doll Connections

- **Creating Safety and Belonging**
- **Understanding You and Me**
- **Valuing Families**
- Building a Community

- **Extended Family Lives in Cuba**
 - All About Amara - p. 26
- **Learning to Understand Feelings and Navigate Conflict**
 - Amara's older brother doesn't want to play with her - p. 101
- **Experiencing Loss**
 - Amara experiences a hurricane evacuation - p. 128

Background Information for Educators

This story helps children identify who they are connected to and the strength of those connections. Readers can also think about how our loved ones help us deal with strong emotions such as fear, anger, and sadness, even when physically apart.

It is important for children to understand that people can stay connected even while they are apart, angry with each other, or struggling with life's circumstances. A strong sense of connection to others is important to feeling like you belong.

Many families are experiencing separation from loved ones or loss. Often, adults struggle with how to talk about these things with children. This book can be a tool for educators to help children talk about connection, belonging, and comfort during times of separation, grief, or transition.

Reflection Questions for Educators

1. What relationships in your life feel like "invisible strings"? How do you nurture and honor those connections?
2. How can you model healthy coping strategies for missing others, such as naming feelings, telling stories, or finding comfort in rituals?
3. How can you remind children that they are never truly alone, even when apart from loved ones?

Book Summary: Read this to children before reading the book

Liza and Jeremy learn from their mother about an invisible string. Even though they can't see it, they know that it always connects people who love each other. The string can travel across time and space and remains intact even if people are angry or disagree with each other. The string ensures that no one is ever alone. Let's read to find out more about how the invisible string works to keep them connected to their loved ones.

Discussion Questions

Questions for all ages:

1. What were the twins afraid of?
2. Is the “invisible string” real? Can you see it with your eyes, or is it something you feel in your heart?
 - a. Who is your invisible string connected to?
 - b. How does it feel to know you’re always connected to the people you love, even if you’re not with them?
3. When do you miss someone the most?
 - a. What helps you feel better when you are apart from someone you love?
4. What did Jeremy mean when he asked, “Does the string go away when you are mad at us?” The mother shared several examples of circumstances or emotions that would not break the string. What were they?
5. What emotions, other than fear, did the characters show? (look at the illustrations for help)
6. At the end of the book, Liza and Jeremy dreamed about all the invisible strings that connected them to their friends and their friends and so on. What pictures do you see in your head (or imagination) when you think about invisible strings?

Extension Activities

Adapted from *The Invisible String Workbook: Creative Activities to Comfort, Calm, and Connect* by Patrice Karst and Dana Wyss, PhD, 2019.

1. **Show Your Strings:** Give children a large piece of paper with a heart in the middle. Then, have them write the names of or draw the people or pets they feel connected to by an invisible string around the outside of the heart. Once they are done, assist them in “sewing” their drawings to the heart using a plastic needle and yarn.
2. **What I Bring to My String:** Tell children, “Everyone has qualities that are unique to them that help them build stronger strings. What qualities do you

like about yourself that you can share with others?" Give each child a piece of paper with a string attached or a line representing the string. Have them draw pictures, add words that represent the strengths they bring to their strings. Afterwards, ask children to share. Then, discuss:

- a. What quality is most important to you?
- b. Which quality do you wish you shared more with others?
- c. What similarities or differences do you notice between your lists?

3. Bracelets of Love: Tell children, "One way to know we are *always connected is to have a memento we can have with us all the time.*" Then, put out materials to make beaded bracelets for children to share with one person in their life they share a string with. A few ideas include:

- a. Children can make two matching bracelets – one for them and one for the person they want to gift the bracelet to
- b. Make letter beads available, and tell children they can put their name on the bracelet to give away and the name of the person with whom they feel connected on the one for them to wear.
- c. Have heart beads, and give each child one heart bead per bracelet to use. Remind children about the strings connecting to and tugging on our hearts

4. Invisible String Icebreakers: Icebreakers are a great way to increase connectedness and healthy interaction among children. They are a fun way to start and/or end a day. Use some of these prompts over the course of a week to reinforce the lesson:

- a. If your invisible string had a dance, what would it look like?
- b. If your invisible string made a sound when tugged, what would it sound like?
- c. If your string had a color, what color would it be? Why?
- d. Name one new string you made this week.
- e. What can you do to strengthen one of your strings?

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