

# **Aaligator!**

## **Written By: Judith Henderson**

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**Synopsis:** While on a walk through the forest, a boy encounters an alligator which is stuck, hungry, and lonely. The boy befriends the alligator, and the town is not happy about it.

**Suggested Reading Date:** National Reptile Awareness Day is Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>. The focus of that day is conservation efforts. World Inclusion Day is another option, which is Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Activity Descriptions:** This delightful fable can be understood for what it is, a charming and witty folk tale or, on another level, for the message it conveys regarding inclusivity and accepting/welcoming the “other” in our communities. Also, the positive traits of the boy demonstrating kindness, empathy, and problem-solving are noteworthy as well.

- Watch the video listed below, called, *The Number 1 Way to Teach Kids About Inclusion*.
  - Ask: can they share an example of when they’ve been an includer? Can they think of a time when a friend of theirs has been an includer? Explain that when we include others, not just people who are like us, we make everyone feel happy and accepted.
- This book begs for a type of discussion format for the lesson. After reading the book, consider passing an alligator or other reptilian stuffy you might have around the class. When you have the stuffy, it’s your turn to pass or share.
  - Start a discussion by asking students: What does it mean to 'include' others? Was the alligator included in the boy’s community? How did he feel when he was not included? Who included him/who did not? Did anyone change their mind, over time, about including the alligator?
  - Ask: Can you give an example of a time you have been included in a game or activity? How does it feel when you are included? Explain that someone who includes others is called an *includer*. Ask students who in the story was the includer and who was not an includer?
- Alternately, you could choose to pair a nonfiction book about alligators with this book and highlight what makes *Aaalligator* a fiction book (Alligators can’t really walk around on two legs or promise to not to eat us, etc.). Elementary students are always fascinated by facts about reptiles. You can use a Venn diagram to highlight the similarities and differences.

### **Related Websites:**

- Author Website through Kids Can Press: <https://www.kidscanpress.com/creators/judith-henderson/918>
- Illustrator Website: <https://www.andreastegmaier.com/>
- A kid authored and inspired video, *The Number 1 Way to Teach Kids About Inclusion*: <https://youtu.be/2FCwiVrJdHE>

### **Text to Text Connections:**

*If You Ever Want to Bring an Alligator to School, Don't* by Elise Parsley, *We are All Under One Wide Sky* by Deborah Wiles, *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson, *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold

**Created By:** Sherry Loniewski