

READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Max and the Purple Worry

By Kitty Black & Jess Rose

Before reading this story with your child, read the note from author Kitty Black in the back of the book about worry.

Although it is easy to think of childhood as a carefree time, children often carry big emotions such as worry, fear, and anxiety that they may or may not be able to articulate to the adults in their lives. This book playfully personifies two of these emotions: worry (a meerkat) and resilience (a cat). Reading this book can serve as a helpful launching point for conversations around emotions, and how everyone—kids and grown-ups alike—experiences them. Use this book as a way to normalize talking about the full range of emotions that we all have and how our bodies, minds, and spirits react to those feelings.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- A difficult math problem made Max wish he could run away. When have you felt the same way?
- As the story progresses, Worry begins to fade and eventually disappear. What might have caused this?
- *With Younger Children:* Max's worries made his tummy churn like a washing machine ("Whish-whoosh"). How do big emotions (such as worry, excitement, and fear) make your body feel?
- *With Older Children:* Max's Worry always seems to find new things that could go wrong. Even when Max came up with some good strategies, Worry found a reason why they wouldn't work. Think about a time when a big emotion inside of you acted like Worry did. How did you overcome those "loud" emotions inside your mind? What emotion replaced the loud one?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- The word *worry* is probably familiar to most children, but *resilience* may not be. Discuss what resilience means, thinking together about situations (past or present) when you've seen people show resilience. Celebrate those moments, and encourage your child to look for opportunities to be resilient as challenges arise.
- Max had Worry, a purple-striped meerkat, and, near the end of the book, Resilience, a purple cat. Using art supplies, have each member of your household create a character to represent one or more emotions they experience frequently (ideally both positive and challenging ones). Share your characters, including a name to describe them.
- Talk together about what the phrase "just do your best" means, sharing your experiences of what doing your best looks like.

PRAY

Loving God, we are thankful that you are always with us; when we are happy or sad, worried or excited. May we remember that we are strengthened by your presence with us, and that we don't have to be perfect, we just have to try our best. Amen.



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This story centers on a child moving through strong emotions to find their own resilience. Whether our emotions are everyday worries or more overarching anxieties, everyone experiences difficult or overwhelming emotions from time to time. Anxiety is the second most common mental health disorder diagnosed in children ages 3-17, with nearly 10 percent of children being diagnosed with it (<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>). Whether a child has an official diagnosis or not, talking openly about anxiety, sharing coping strategies, and offering support all help to equip children to deal with challenges they encounter. If you are ever concerned about your child's level of anxiety, it is always appropriate to talk with their pediatrician, school counselor, or other professional resource.

Although the book is titled *Max and the Purple Worry*, worry does not, in fact, win in the end. We see Worry disappear, and appearing in its place is Resilience. Below are some ideas on how to dig deeper in order to help children move through anxiety and worry in order to find their own resilience.

- Read some Bible verses together that offer assurance in the face of worry. Some suggestions include: Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 6:25-34; and Philippians 4:4-7.
- The 2015 Disney/Pixar movie *Inside Out* is another story that personifies the emotions of a child. Consider watching this movie with your child and discuss how Riley's emotions worked together to help her adjust to a new home in a new city.
- Introduce practices such as grounding techniques, meditation, yoga, deep breathing, or sensory tools to give your child a set of strategies to draw upon in times of worry.
- Seek out some of the many resources on raising resilient children including articles, YouTube videos, books, and more. Visit your local library or do an internet search to learn more.

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE FOR *MAX AND THE PURPLE WORRY*

- Download the [Discussion and Activity Guide](#)

ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT ACKNOWLEDGE & EXPLORE EMOTIONS

- [My Elephant Is Blue: A Book about Big, Heavy Feelings](#), by Melinda Szymanik and Vasanti Unka
- [One Thursday Afternoon](#), by Barbara DiLorenzo
- [Simon and the Big, Bad, Angry Beasts: A Book about Anger](#), by Ian De Haes
- [Grandpa's Window](#), by Laura Gehl and Udayana Lugo
- [Sidney the Lonely Cloud](#), by Tim Hopgood
- [What in the World Is Wrong with Gisbert?](#), by Jochen Weeber and Fariba Gholizadeh

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