

Jayden's Impossible Garden

A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Themes: Friendship, Imagination, Perseverance

Book Brief: Jayden notices nature all around his busy city neighborhood, but his Mama disagrees. Determined to prove her wrong, he starts a community garden with help from his friend Mr. Curtis, bringing neighbors—and Mama—together to experience nature's magic in the city.

Author:
Mélinda Mangal

Illustrator:
Ken Daley



TIME TO READ!

The Cover: Look at the cover of the book with students and ask, “What do you see on the cover of this book? What is the boy doing?” Discuss student responses and keep them in mind for the picture walk.

Picture Walk: Flip through some pages and ask students what they notice. Remind them of what they shared about the cover. Ask students if they still think the same things based on the pictures in the book, or if they have some new ideas about what will happen in the story. What makes them think that?

Vocabulary: This story will introduce vocabulary relating to gardening. Use Picture Cards: *nature, air, spring, seeds, garden, recycle, summer, watering*. Ask students if they know of words in their home language(s) that mean the same thing as these words.

Purpose for Reading:
“As we read, pay attention to how Jayden grows a garden in the city.”

WHILE WE READ

AS YOU READ, PAUSE AND ASK...

Throughout the story, pause and ask...

- **Level 1:** “Where are the seeds? Point to them.”
- **Level 2:** “Does Jayden make a garden in the city?” Students can answer yes/no, thumbs up/down, nod, or any physical response.
- **Level 3:** “How does Jayden make a garden?”
- **Level 4:** “What else could Jayden use to hold the seeds for his garden?”

LET’S THINK ABOUT

Our Purpose: Say, “Jayden figures out how to grow a garden in the city. How does he do it?”

Extending Our Thinking: What would you grow in your garden? Why?

BOOK ACTIVITY: Growing Seeds

Materials: chart paper, pen, empty cardboard egg carton, potting soil, seeds (beans or sunflower seeds work well), water, small labels or a marker, spray bottle (optional)

Begin by asking students what they think seeds need to grow and write student ideas on chart paper. Cut the top off an egg carton, leaving the cups intact, and fill each cup with potting soil. Place 1–2 seeds in each cup, cover them lightly with soil, and water gently. Set the carton in a sunny spot and water daily. Observe the seeds each day to check for sprouting and measure their growth if desired. Have a class discussion by asking questions such as, “What did your seeds need to grow? What did you notice about how quickly they grew?”

