

*Benji, the Bad Day, and Me*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades PreK-2

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Activate prior knowledge: This story is about a boy named Samuel and his little brother, Benji, who has autism. Have you every heard of autism? It means that Benji has some differences in the way his brain works. In this story, Benji is comforted by his blanket. Just like all children, no two children with autism are the same.
- The title of the book is “Benji, the Bad Day, and Me.” Have you ever had a bad day? What happened? What do you think will happen in this story?
- Frontload vocabulary: tiptoe, wiggle, appear, fault, clinic, shivery

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- Why is Samuel upset when he gets off the bus?
- Why do you think Samuel and his mom need to tiptoe and speak softly when Benji is in his box?
- How does Samuel feel about Benji’s box? What makes you think that?
- Look at the picture of Samuel karate kicking over Benji’s block city and the picture of Samuel with the spilled milk. How is Samuel feeling? What details did the illustrator include to show Samuel’s feelings?
- Why does Benji wrap Samuel up like a burrito in his fuzzy blue blanket?

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

Discuss problems and solutions from the story. Who was having a bad day in this story? How did they solve the problem? What can you do to feel better when you have a bad day? Make as many connections with the story as you can such as being frustrated with a sibling or feeling ignored.

Read the author’s note at the end of the story. Discuss the ways that all children have different needs, strengths, and challenges.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.