

Zilly Teaching and Learning Guide



Zilly by Kelly Parks Snider

ZILLY'S story provides children and caring adults with a springboard to introduce thoughtful discussions about the influence of media on our lives.

ZILLY is the story of a wonderfully, out-of-the-ordinary flyer who strives to fit in. Wanting acceptance from the conforming crowd around her, ZILLY tries to hide the quirky and spontaneous qualities that

define her individuality. Mirroring kid culture, a billboard encourages ZILLY to join a school for flyers who want to fit in, a place that allows little room for self expression and creativity. Signing up means that ZILLY will lose touch with her originality. By the end of the story, the closed and competitive culture transforms into one of cooperation, acceptance, and collaboration. ZILLY and the other flyers celebrate their own uniqueness and the uniqueness of others.

Discussion Questions

Who is Zilly? What does Zilly love to do? What do you love to do?

Zilly loves to fly because it delights her. She doesn't fly to win. She flies because of the joy it brings to her life and eventually she realizes that her uniqueness bring joy to others.

Who is Mingle? Would you like to be friends with Mingle? Why or why not? Is Mingle a good friend? Is ZILLY always a good friend? Why or why not? What makes you a good friend?

ZILLY becomes influenced by the other flyers and a billboard. Do you ever feel pressure to change who you are? How does this pressure make you feel?

What is media and where do you see it?

TV, radio, internet, magazines, newspapers, books, music, video games, billboards, signs, labels. Media is everywhere. We can't escape it. We are all influenced by advertising to some degree.

Have you ever bought something or changed something about you because of promises made in an ad? Were you ever disappointed with what the product did for you?

Advertisements try to make us believe that we need to buy things to make us happy and to solve our problems. Advertisements confuse us. They try to make us feel that we aren't good enough so that we keep buying their products. They want us to feel insecure so they can sell us whatever they are selling. They do this so they can make lots of money. Advertisements try to make us believe that we need to buy stuff to make us happy and solve our problems. Going to the mall and buying and buying and buying doesn't change anything about who we really are or solve our problems. It only changes how we look on the outside. We are the only ones who can solve our own problems.

Who can solve your problems?

You are the only one who can solve your own problems, but you can get help from people you trust.

Who may be able to help you solve your problems?

Parents, friends, teachers.

Why do you think the pictures were made on paper bags? How do the pictures make you feel? Is it important to reuse things and take care of our environment?

What kinds of things do you do to take care of your world?

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Zilly's suggestions on how to un-mediafy your Life

Love yourself just the way you are.

Be a true original (like Zilly)

Focus on the things that make you unique and special.

Pay less attention to magazine advertisements and commercials.

Stop comparing yourself to others.

Be your own trendsetter.

Devote your time to doing the activities that truly bring you happiness.

Stop spending time in front of a mirror trying to look like someone else.

Take care of yourself.

Stop talking about your weight.

Voice your opinions.

Be a role model.