

WE'RE ALL ANIMALS

Teaching kids tolerance,
humility, & compassion.



Sample Story

An Introduction

We're All Animals is a story series for young children whose attitudes about our place in the world are still forming. While entertaining us, the stories teach tolerance, humility, and compassion.

Meet Addie, Oliver, their parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, and teacher! As they go about their daily lives, they learn from and teach each other important truths about our human connections with non-human animals.

Each story has a distinct approach. Some offer insight into our attitudes, reminding us we're not a superior species; others simply give information about the specialized skills certain animals possess. Some stories advocate the same respect and compassion for animals we afford to humans; a few hint, in a non-threatening manner, at the brutal realities of animal slaughter and animal testing for the sake of human palettes and comforts. Still others highlight heartwarming or humorous similarities we share with animals.

Each story brings to light a human-animal intersection and is purposely short. The questions that follow the text will help stimulate discussion, and the stories can be used in an integrated curriculum as writing topics or art projects. Whatever the emphasis and however the stories are used, each one leaves the reader with an unmistakable and important message:

We're All Animals!



Why this is Important

Creating a Kinder World

Children have a natural fascination with animals. Kids squeal with delight at the sight of a puppy, marvel at the lumbering enormity of an elephant, and giggle at the mischievous antics of chimpanzees. It's no surprise that many of our most beloved and enduring childhood stories feature animals, purposely tapping into the innocent wonder kids have for our fellow creatures. As adults, we look back with fondness at the pets with whom we shared our childhood homes. They often introduced us to the meaning of loyalty and friendship, and in their passing, taught us the ultimate price of love.

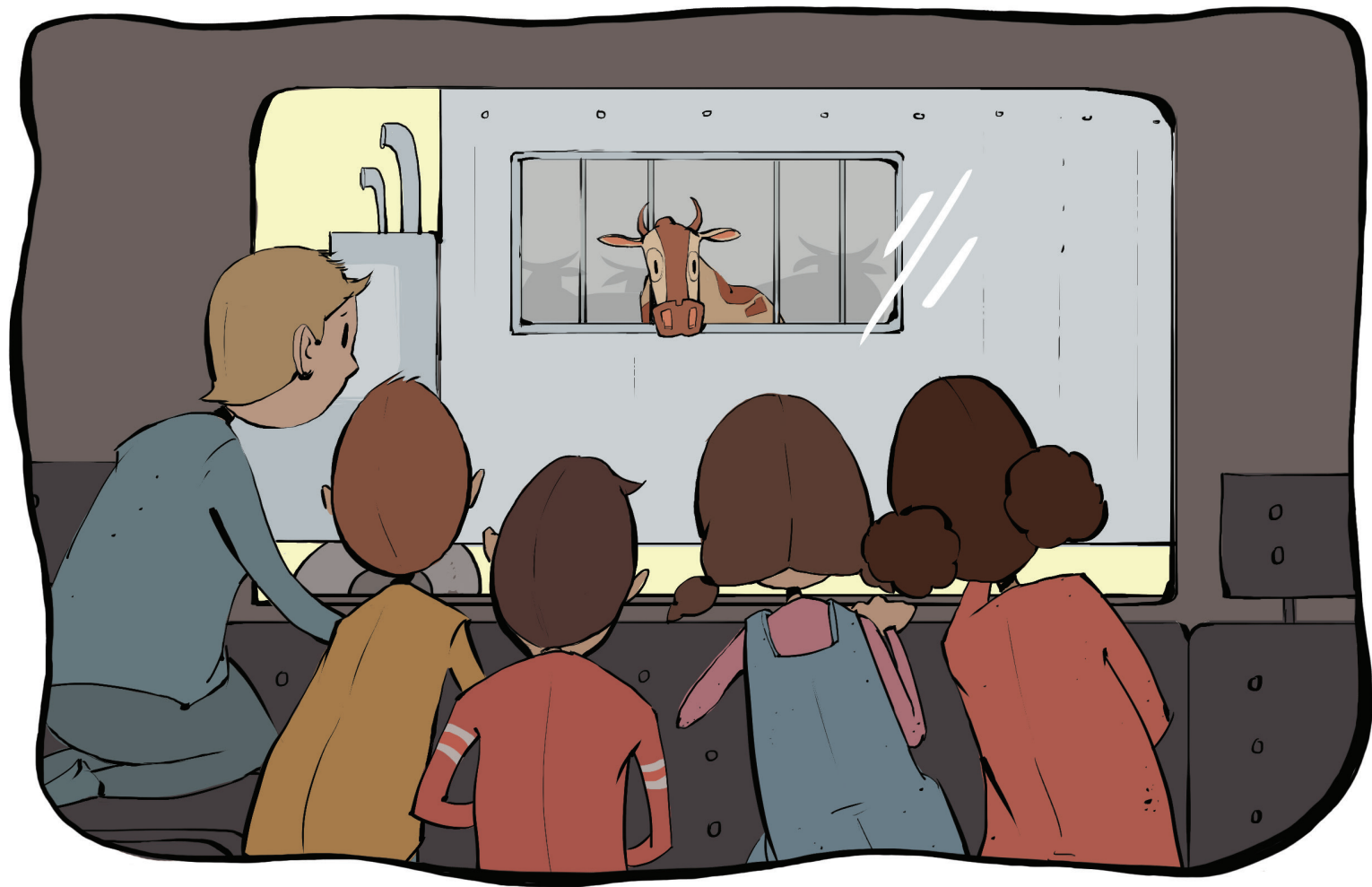
There is a goodness that comes from loving animals. At the same time, there is great value in learning to *respect* them. In almost every interaction they are at our mercy, and the importance of handling that power with gentle kindness cannot be overestimated.

Yet too often, we see humans wielding power with brutal cruelty. The news is littered with school shootings, sexual assaults, armed robberies, and other violent crimes by children against both humans and animals. *Where is the disconnect?*

Studies have shown that violent and aggressive criminals are more likely to have abused animals as children than criminals who are considered non-aggressive.* Children who abuse animals may be acting out lessons learned at home by responding to their problems with violence, a reaction that tends to amplify over time. Violence begets violence, and it is troublesome when directed toward animals and humans alike.

We're All Animals is our attempt to reinforce in children a sense of tolerance, humility, and compassion for others. Small acts of kindness in isolation may not mean much in the balance of life and death and all that happens in between, but they tend to be contagious. The lessons in this series are designed to teach kids, in a fun and engaging way, that all beings matter, that no life is insignificant, and that it's good to take others into consideration as we go about our lives, in big ways and in small. And if our children see kindness expressed by adults who they respect and admire, the foundation for an expanding circle of compassion will take root.

* Sara C. Haden and Angela Scarpa, "Childhood Animal Cruelty: A Review of Research, Assessment, and Therapeutic Issues," *The Forensic Examiner* 14 (2005): 23-33.



At A Stoplight

It was summer vacation. Mom was driving Addie, Oliver, and several of their friends to a day camp. The kids played a game where they had to guess the color of the next car. Suddenly, all became quiet. A giant cattle truck had pulled up next to them at the stoplight. It carried many cows, and one of them seemed to be looking right at Addie.

"Gee, that cow looks so scared," she said.

"Well, all those cows are going to become food for people who eat meat," Mom said, "so I don't think any of them are happy."

"I brought peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for my lunch!" Angelo said, cheerfully.

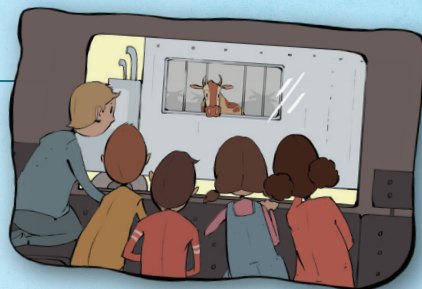
"Yeah, me too!" Oliver, Tony, and Addie all chimed in.

"And I brought a hummus wrap!" Leah announced, proudly.

"Great!" Mom said. "We're all animals, and those cows would be happy to know that we're all eating plants today!"

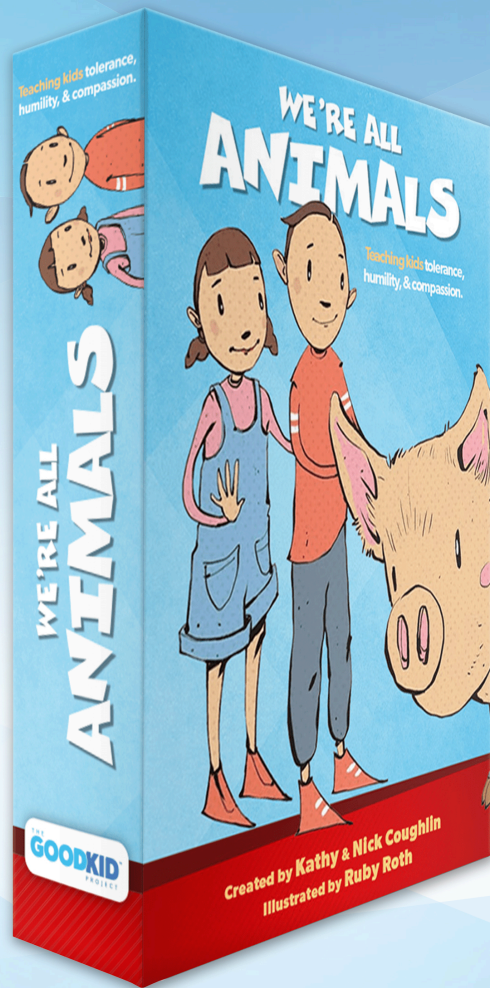
Discussion

What do the kids realize about the cows they see in this story? How do the children show, in their own way, their compassion for the cows?



Challenge

Research some of the grim statistics about world meat consumption. Is it going up or down? How many animals are killed each year for food?



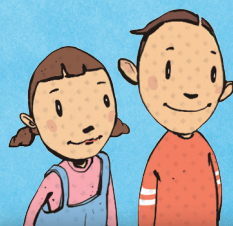
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As a special thank you for **TeachKind** visitors, use the coupon code below for 20% off the complete We're All Animals box set, including 30 beautifully illustrated stories, an adult guidebook, and all the discussion questions and challenges to enrich the experience!



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