

# HOW to HELP

when you really  
want to help



DAVINA BELL + HILARY JEAN TAPPER

TEACHERS RESOURCES



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## Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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# INTRODUCTION

'Whenever you help,  
however you do,  
the person you're helping is actually ...  
you.' (pp 30–32)

This is a heartwarming and tender look at some of the big and small ways we can make a difference in the world – at home, around the neighbourhood, at school and in the community.

*A tissue for a tear.*

*A cloth to clean.*

*Somewhere to stay.*

*Something to snuggle.*

*How to Help When You Really Want to Help* explores everyday situations, sharing how to spot opportunities for helping others and showing the comfort, happiness and satisfaction that helping can bring.

From the award-winning and much-loved author Davina Bell and critically acclaimed illustrator Hilary Jean Tapper, *How to Help* shows little readers how to be an active participant in making the world a kinder place, whatever your age might be.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

### HELPING, BEING KIND TO OTHERS, AND EMPATHY

**Discussion Point:** In each image in this book a child is confronted by a situation that depicts someone helping someone else. Discuss the helping situations depicted in this text, such as cleaning up a mess, welcoming visitors for a night, making breakfast for your mother in bed. Select any image and invite students to describe how they might have responded in that situation.

**Discussion Point:** Brainstorm potential helping situations. Make a list of the situations suggested by students. Then choose one of them and write a brief text about it.

**Discussion Point:** Helping someone requires 'empathy' or being able to put yourself into someone else's shoes, and to feel the need, or the pain, they might be expressing. Discuss empathy and how important it is in human interactions. [See also **Worksheet 2.**]

**Discussion Point:** The book depicts not only individuals in helping situations but also communities helping, such as a choir of children entertaining adults in a retirement home, collecting litter, or a peaceful environmental protest. Invite students to discuss any community helping situations that they are aware of in their suburb, town or city, or regional area? Or perhaps the class might become involved in one?

**Discussion Point:** Read other books about helping, for example Bob Graham's *How To Heal a Broken Wing* (2008) or Shirley Hughes' *Alfie gets in First* (2009, 1981). [See **Bibliography.**]

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

**Activity:** Discuss the narrative voice employed in this text, which is in present tense, and consists of short descriptive phrases, for example, 'Checking in. Showing how.' (pp 17–18). Some phrases employ the second person, using 'you' or 'your' in addressing the reader, for example, 'Your voice. Your ears. Your heart.' (pp 8–10) Invite students to write their own brief text describing an incident where they have helped someone, or been helped by someone else. (Use the texts in this book as a model.)

**Activity:** Alliteration is used in some pages of this book, for example:

'A tissue for a tear.' (p 2)

'A cloth to clean.' (p 3)

'Somewhere to stay.' (p 4)

'Something to snuggle.' (p 5)

'A friendly face.' (p 22)

Invite students to write their own stories using alliteration in this way.

**Discussion Point:** Rhyming is also employed, for example, 'Baking. Making.' (p 6) Invite students to employ rhyme in their brief texts.

**Discussion Point:** At the end of the book, a quote from Shakespeare is included on the dedication page. Invite students to interpret the meaning of that quote.

**Activity:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written text. [See also **Author's Notes** below.]

## VISUAL LITERACY

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

**Discussion Point:** The **cover** of the book depicts a group of kids climbing a hill and helping each other along the way. This joyous image celebrates sharing good times together and also the joy of assisting others. Invite students to discuss what the cover scene suggests to them.

**Activity:** The **front endpaper** features an old man with a walking stick, on the right hand, walking away from the reader, with two children on the left hand observing that his shopping is falling out of this bag. On the **back endpaper** the children are giving the old man his dropped shopping items, and appear on the right hand page with him. The two endpapers represent a wordless story. Invite students to create their own wordless story in two endpaper spreads like this.

**Discussion Point:** The **title page** depicts two children, one having trouble tying her shoelaces up, and the other sitting on the path by her side, offering moral support, rather than running ahead. This is a perfect image to invite a young reader into the text, and to explain how kindness in everyday situations can be meaningful. Invite students to discuss what the image 'says' to them. Then examine the second last page, where the child is showing his friend how to tie her shoelaces. Then examine the final page depicting the same two children racing hand in hand down the same path. What does this image 'say' to the students?



**Activity:** Each character in this text reveals via their **facial expressions** and **'body language'** their feelings. What features did you notice in their facial expression, or their stance, or in their body language in any particular image?

**Discussion Point:** Read any of the double page spreads in this book and invite students to comment on what the images mean to them, for example, 'Cleaning up. Standing Up! Or standing aside.' (pp 12–13)

**Activity:** The medium or style employed by Hilary Jean Tapper is watercolour and pencil, and each image is hand-done. The **colours** used in this book are warm, charming pastels. Invite students to interpret a scene in the book in a similar style and medium. Discuss the differences between each interpretation.

**Discussion Point:** Examine the double page spread containing this text: 'Your voice. Your ears.' (pp 8–9) What acts of kindness are depicted here?

**Discussion Point:** The image accompanying the words, 'Showing up.' (p 18) is visually very arresting. It depicts a sporting audience dressed in blue team colours, watching an on-field player dressed in yellow, and a child in the audience cheering, also dressed in yellow. This image is both literal and symbolic. Showing up for your friends or family can mean standing out from a crowd, or resisting peer group pressure. Invite students to respond to this image.

**Discussion Point:** Who are the repeated characters in the images in this book? [See also **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

**Activity:** Invite students to draw, paint, or collage a scene to accompany the brief text describing a helping situation which they wrote about above. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1.** below.] [See also **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

**Activity:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written text. [See also **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

## CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Invite students to role-play or to act out a helping situation**, and different responses to the situation.
2. **Invite the class to practise singing a number of songs like the class depicted in this book (p 8).** Then entertain an audience in a facility such as a retirement home or a hospital ward, or if an excursion isn't possible, then sing for one of the other classes in your school.
3. **Various gatherings** are depicted in this book, such as a garage (or yard) sale and a community feast. How does your neighbourhood or community come together? Create an image of that celebration.
4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
5. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]



## LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

**Activity:** Research the topic of empathy with students by visiting relevant websites. [See **Bibliography**.]

## MATHEMATICS

**Activity:** Have fun counting things in this visual text, for example, how many dogs can you find in the pictures? How many birds?

## FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Davina Bell. Compare this to her other books.
- Research the work of Hilary Jean Tapper. Compare this to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books about helping people such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.

## CONCLUSION

Davina Bell and Hilary Jean Tapper have created another very warmly felt and insightful book, this time about helping situations. Text and image are subtle and yet emotionally poignant. Together they have created a highly engaging work that will remind children of the value of kindness and empathy, and encourage them to translate these feelings into helpful actions in their everyday lives.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

The most important words, I think, for any human to hear are: 'You matter.' If we can hear this and believe it, it can give us the confidence to use our gifts and talents in the world, to stand up for what we believe in and to pass that feeling of belonging to someone else, making a chain of kindness through space and time. With this book, I wanted to show readers small ways they can add to this chain, and in doing so help others, the world – and themselves. 'It feels good to do good' is something I remind myself when I am feeling glum, and when I act on it, I always feel better.

We are often presented on the news, the internet and in the world around us a lot of problems that seem hard to fix. Some people have the desire or chance to do big, important things to make a difference and change history. But for most people, living their lives each day, it can feel hard to believe that we can make a difference.

I hope this picture book can convey that even small acts make change. That change might be as simple as making someone feel seen or heard or allowing them to tell their story. Or it could be a sacrifice, like giving or lending something you own. It might be as easy as giving your presence or time – volunteering or even just being there to witness a moment in someone else's life. These things are not any less important than giving a speech in front of thousands of people or raising lots of money for a cause. How you help each day in your own unique way adds a



chapter to the story of how the world turns.

Sometimes when I write a picture book, I think for ages – sometimes years! – about what it should and could be. And sometimes, it flows out of me in hours or sometimes minutes, like I have turned on a tap. *How to Help* was one of the second kinds of books – the type that trickles out of my fingers so easily, it's like it is writing itself. I was so excited when I finished to see how Hilary was going to illustrate these moments of care and compassion. She is a genius at capturing a whole story in a single image, and she has outdone herself here! Every page tells its own tale of connection and uplifting. I feel so very privileged to have had her interpret my words. Through our work, I hope readers can see how much they matter and the potential they have to change the world, one act of helping at a time.

## ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

*How to Help* is the third book in this series, which was just as much fun to make as the previous two books. Like the other books, this one has its own set of characters – 21, in fact! Plus a bird, two dogs and a kitten. It's quite a lot of work to draw 21 characters, especially when a lot of them appear in the same scenes! I have to be very clear which character is which, who is related to who, what they were wearing in the previous scene and what is about to happen in the next scene. It is almost like organising a party and making sure everyone is taken care of properly.

When I am presented with the manuscript from the author, Davina, I'm given the words (which for this book, are quite sparse) and some suggestions for what activities might be happening in the scene. I love this part of the illustration process – coming up with ideas and characters. I just let my pencil move around on the page and try not to think too much. I try to let the art lead the process. As a result, I am often surprised by what comes forward. I couldn't have planned it this way! Along with Davina, and our editor and publisher, we go back and forth on different ideas and seeing what visual ideas fit the text best. This is also quite a creative process, because we are ultimately holding how all the images work together as a cohesive book, so while one idea might be really cool, it might not work in connection with all the other images. It's a real practice of thinking small and big at the same time.

It was very enjoyable creating pictures about kids helping out, being kind and doing good things. Sometimes these moments go unnoticed by others and sometimes they seem somewhat ordinary (like doing the dishes!). It's a wonderful thing to recognise when someone has done something helpful and it can sometimes feel really good to do something kind with no expectation of being recognised for it. It feels good to do the right thing and it ultimately makes the world a better place.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Davina Bell** is a children's book editor and a writer for young people of many ages. Her picture books include *All the Ways To Be Smart*, *All of the Factors of Why I Love Tractors* and *Under the Love Umbrella*. Her debut young adult novel, *The End of the World is Bigger than Love*, won the 2021 CBCA Book of the Year for Older Readers and the NSW Premier's Literary Awards' Ethel Turner Prize for Young Adult Fiction. *What to Say When You're not Sure What To Say* and *What to Do when you're not sure what to do* were her previous collaborations with Hilary Jean Tapper, and the first won the ABIA Award for Children's Picture Book of the Year 2023 and was a CBCA Notable Picture Book of the Year 2023. For more information, visit [www.davinabell.com](http://www.davinabell.com)



# ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Hilary Jean Tapper** is an international award-winning illustrator based in New Zealand. She creates picture books, works as a creative arts therapist, lecturer and researcher, and facilitates creative arts workshops. Her awards include the ABIA Children's Picture Book of the Year and Forevability Book Award. You can find out about Hilary and her work at [www.hilaryjeantapper.com](http://www.hilaryjeantapper.com), or Facebook and Instagram @hilaryjeantapper

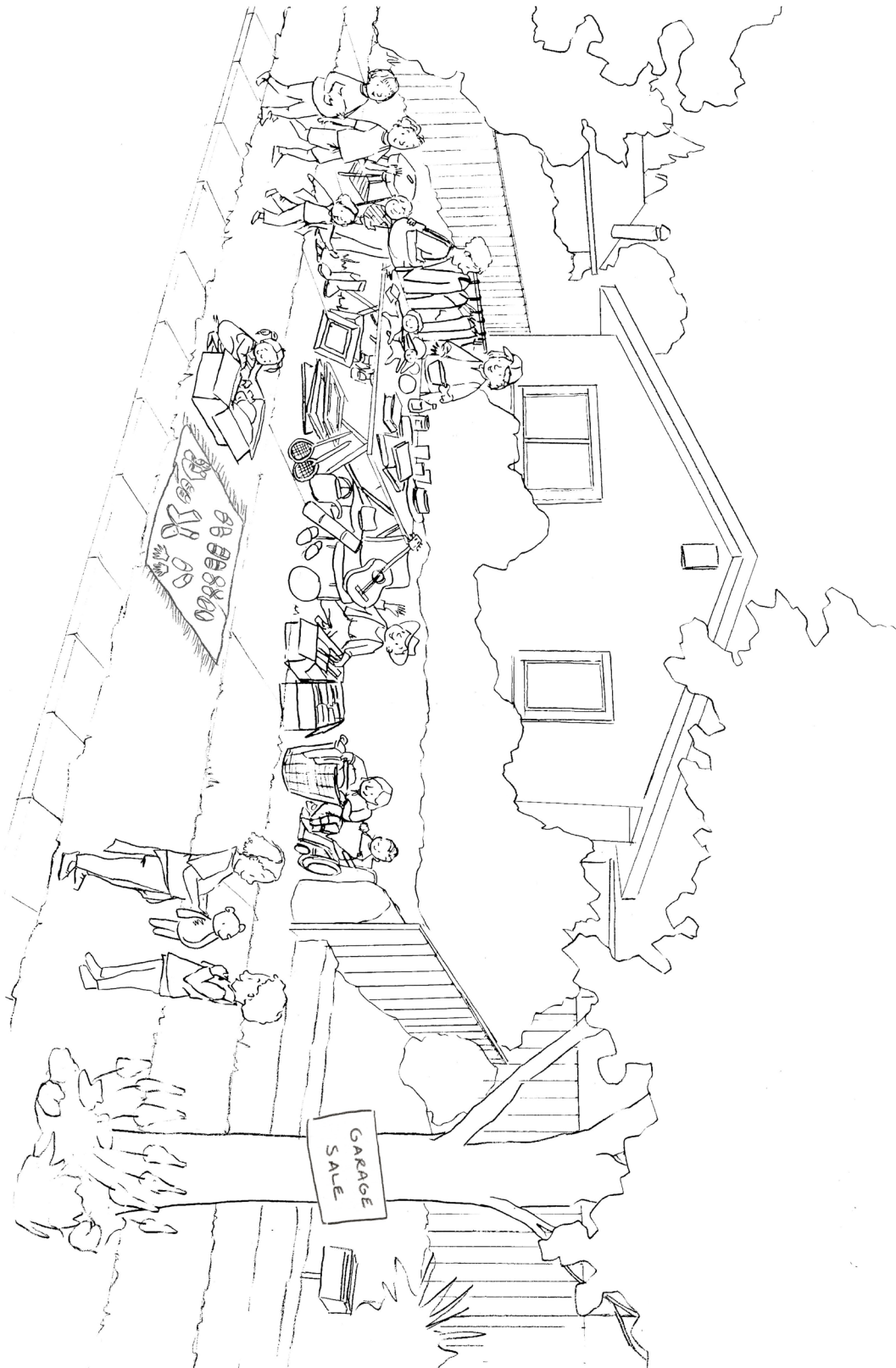




# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1. HELPING HANDS

The image below is Hilary Jean Tapper's drawing of 'Stopping by. Giving away.' (pp 14–15). Enlarge the image below on a photocopier and then colour and collage it.



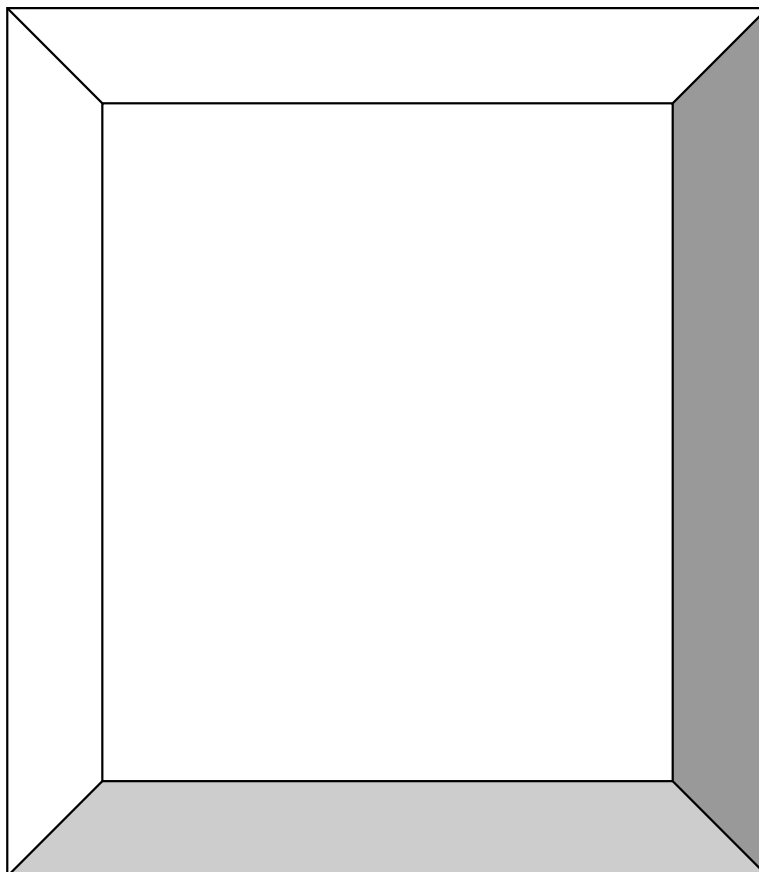


## WORKSHEET 2. HELPING SITUATIONS

**Write a sentence describing your reactions to any of the situations below.**

An elderly lady is standing in a bus, beside where you are seated.	
Your friend has forgotten to bring her lunchbox to school.	
A new arrival at your school is standing in the playground looking lost.	
A child is trying to open a door, but can't reach the handle.	
Your younger brother is struggling to read something.	
You are at the beach, and your younger sister is building a sandcastle.	

**Then draw one of the situations above, below. Add a sentence to explain it, using the text in the book as a model.**





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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

