

# Talk about it

SECTION

5

## Andy's friend

**Objective:** To discuss characters' feelings.

**What you need:** Copies of *The Suitcase Kid*.

### What to do

- Ask the children to work in threes.
- Explain that although Andy has lost her friends, for this activity they are to imagine she has a friend at school. The activity is a role-play conversation between Andy and this friend.
- The groups' first task is to decide who will be Andy and who will be Andy's friend. The third person will play Jacqueline Wilson and make suggestions to the two actors. Note: this may need planning to ensure the groups are mixed, and you may need to change The Suitcase Kid to The Suitcase Boy or Jacqueline to Jack to ensure boys don't 'turn off'.

- Ask the groups to select an event and re-read that section. Ask the two role-players to start up the conversation the following day at school.
- Ask 'Jacqueline' to listen and make suggestions on dialogue. Suggest that after the groups have acted and discussed the role play, they run the conversation again, incorporating suggestions.
- Then ask them to select another event, but to change roles beforehand.

### Differentiation

**For older/more able children:** Ask the group to discuss and write a letter from Andy to a problem page and consider what advice the agony columnist might give her.

**For younger/less able children:** Ask children to work in pairs, removing the Jacqueline Wilson character from the scenario.

## Andy wants, Andy gets

**Objective:** To look at how the story concludes a character's dilemmas.

**What you need:** Copies of *The Suitcase Kid*, paper, writing materials.

### What to do

- In pairs, ask the children to flick through the book and list the things that Andy wants. Examples include friends, a happy home, Mulberry Cottage, Mum and Dad back together. The children can also include ones the reader can infer: nice grandparents, a better journey home.
- Ask the children to look at what Andy has lost as a result of her parents' break up. Answers can range from security to mulberries! Again, children can add losses that can be inferred. Tell them to add these to their 'wants' list.
- Now ask each pair to join with another to compare their lists. Ask each group of four to agree on a list of Andy's eight most serious wants. Explain that they will need to defend their choices within the group. For example, *I think*

*losing her friends at school is more important than losing her bedroom because... I agree with Simret that losing friends is important, but...*

- Next, ask the groups to find ways in which Andy's losses are countered. Ask them to come up with something that Andy finds or gains for each of their eight losses/wants. For example, she misses Mulberry Cottage but gains Larkspur, she has no grandparents but gains Mr and Mrs Peters, she loses her friends but gains Graham.
- Then ask the children to reflect across the story on the things Andy doesn't receive and issues that are not solved. For example, her parents don't get back together. Direct the children towards chapter U – a sad chapter in which we are given access to Andy's dream life.

### Differentiation

**For older/more able children:** Ask children to discuss whether they think that the good things that happen to Andy helped her through the tough losses.

**For younger/less able children:** Keep to the list of things Andy wants, working through the text to find a long list of examples.