

WORK IN
A GROUP

Talk about the kinds of problems you have overcome for the sake of a friend. Ask questions about what your classmates say. Talk about their answers.



Focusing on "I Want That Dog"

Think and Read

- ▶ Talk about a time when you were not tall enough or strong enough to do something that you wanted to do. Ask your classmates how they felt at a time like this.
- ▶ Look at the title and the picture on pages 150 and 151. Then read the introduction to the story. Think about the obstacles that people must face to do what they want to do.
 - Which character in the picture is Sally? How do you know?
 - How might having cerebral palsy keep Sally from wanting a dog?
 - What might happen in this story?
- ▶ Get ready to read a story about a handicapped girl named Sally. As you read, think about the problems she faces. Think about what you would add to this chart.

Sally's Daily Problems

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Now turn the page and read "I Want That Dog." Then you will talk about how it might feel to have a handicap.

I Want That Dog

From the novel *Mine for Keeps* by Jean Little

Illustrated by Dan Siculan

For a long time, Sarah Jane Copeland, nicknamed Sally, has been living at a special school. Because Sally was born with cerebral palsy, she has needed special training to learn how to care for herself. However, Sally's teachers feel she is ready to live with her family again and to attend a regular school. So Sally returns to her family's home in Toronto, Canada, to begin her new life.

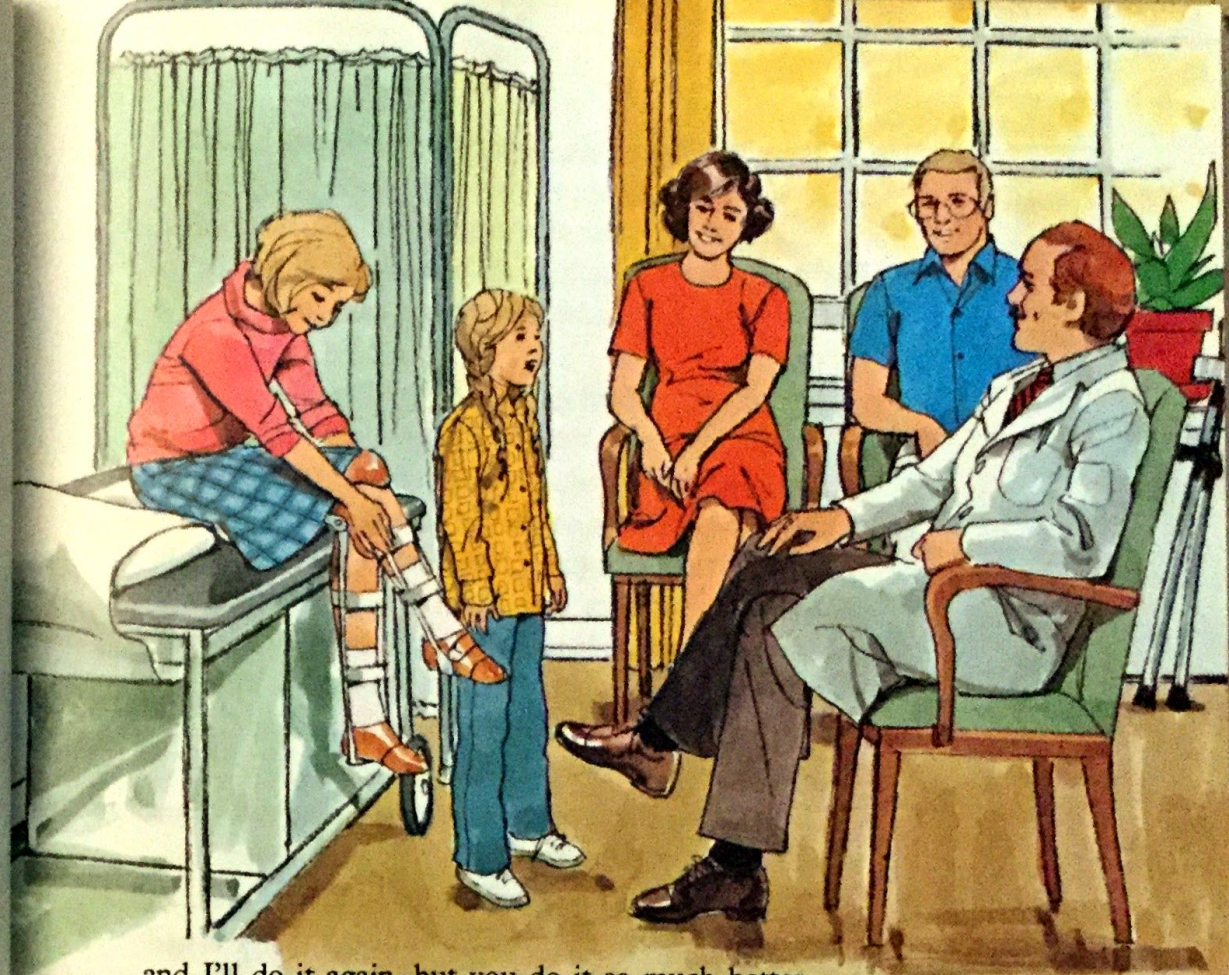
Sally's parents and her younger sister Meg decide that Sally might like a dog. They promise Sally that she can choose a puppy on the way home from her doctor's visit. Sally cannot tell them that she is afraid to own a dog!

In the morning, Dad drove Mother, Sally and Meg to Toronto to see Dr. Eastman. Dr. Eastman was Sally's specialist. Their family doctor had referred them to him as soon as they had realized that Sal had cerebral palsy.

After he had checked her over, watched her walk and lifted her onto a table while he examined her to see she was "still working properly" as he put it, the doctor turned to find Meg standing at his elbow, her face one big question.

"What's the matter with her, do you know?" Meg asked him.

"Do please," Mother said. "I've done it before



and I'll do it again, but you do it so much better than I."

Dr. Eastman shook his head as though he did not believe that, but he sat down facing Meg and Sally.

"Your brain is like a motor," he told them. "Part of this motor makes you walk. Part of it makes you talk. Part of it makes you able to use your hands easily. Another part helps you to see, another to hear, and so on. If you are going to be able to walk and use your hands well, you have to have the motor part of your brain in good working order besides having well-built arms and legs."

"I walk just on legs," Meg remarked, not believing a word of it.

"Sure you do—just as a car runs on its wheels. But if the motor wasn't in the car too, or if the motor in the car was broken, then what would happen?"

Meg thought about it.

"It wouldn't go," she admitted.

Dr. Eastman smiled. "You're right. It wouldn't," he said. "And it's the same with the brain. Most babies are born with the motor part of their brain all ready to go. But once in a while a baby is born with part of its motor broken—or injured, in other words."

Sal's eyes were bright with excitement. So that was why children with cerebral palsy were handicapped in so many different ways!

"Do you fix the broken parts or do you buy new parts?" Meg had more questions ready.

"I wish we could buy new parts," Dr. Eastman said. "We can't fix the broken or injured parts, Meg, and there isn't any place where you can buy new brains. But sometimes we can get other parts of the brain to do the work of the injured or broken part. It's as though you had to fix your car motor by getting another motor and working with it and trying it over and over until it worked—not as well as the right motor would have, but well enough to get the car moving. You learned how to drive the motor part of your brain when you learned to walk. Now Sally has to do that too—but she has to start off with the wrong motor and work a lot harder at it and teach it how to work."

"Who is the teacher?" Meg asked, looking Sal over as though she expected to see some special little person peeking out of her ear.

"The therapists who give her treatment help," he answered, "but the person who does most of it is, as I said, Sally herself."

Sal stared at him, sure he was mixed up, but he only nodded, smiling.

"Yes, you. Every time you do something yourself, getting yourself dressed maybe, or walking across a room, or anything that means putting the brain to work for you, it gets more used to its new job and does it a bit better. Mind you, it takes years and years for it to learn. Brains aren't too brainy, I guess," he finished.

Sal was still thinking about what her doctor had said when they were out in the car. She wished somebody had told her about it years ago, but maybe it wouldn't have seemed so simple then. Meg still had it muddled.

"Be careful, Daddy," she said, as Dad lifted Sal down the steps. "You might break her brains more."

Halfway home, they began to notice the kennels.

"BOXERS: PUPPIES FOR SALE," Dad read out. "And there is a cocker kennel. We might just buy that dog of yours this afternoon, Sally."

For once, Sal was paying attention, and she opened her mouth to tell him, once and for all, that she did not want a dog, when suddenly Meg squealed, "Oh, stop, Daddy, STOP! Look at the tiny white puppies!"

Dad slowed down. Behind a wire fence, set well



back from the road, four balls of lively white fur were tumbling over each other in a spirited game of I'm the King of the Castle.

"What breed are they?" Mother wondered. "Oh, there's a sign. WEST HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIERS. They are sweet. Do you suppose they're for sale?"

"No time like the present for finding out." Dad swung the car into the driveway of the kennel. From inside the nearby house, a cheery voice called, "I'll be out in just a second. Make yourselves at home."

"Let's go look," Meg begged, her head already hanging out the window.

The Copelands piled out of the car just as a woman left the house and came to meet them, her hand out in welcome.

"Those pups lured us right in off the highway," Mother said, smiling warmly. "We're in the market for a dog just now . . ."

Sal drew a deep, protesting breath but it turned into a relieved sigh as the woman shook her head ruefully.

"I'm sorry, but they aren't for sale yet. In another month they'll be old enough. We keep some of our dogs to show and we like to be sure we don't lose a champion. I do have one dog for sale, but she's not a pup any longer. I'll show her to you, though."

"Oh, we'd want a pup . . ." Mother began, but the lady was off already back to the house. Sal studied Mother's face. She was safe. Mother had no intention of buying this dog.

The screen door slammed. Sal turned. And her eyes fixed on a bundle of shivering fur in the kennel-lady's arms.

"What's her name?" Meg asked, peering at the shaggy little dog.

"She has a fancy kennel name, but I've just been calling her Susie. You could give her any name you wanted. She's a bit timid with strangers yet, but she'd get over that in no time."

"No," Mother said, smiling and stretching out a

hand to pat Susie's back, which was all she could see of her. "I think Sal wants a puppy."

But Sal took a sudden step forward. She had been staring at Susie ever since the woman had brought her out. One thing was certain—Susie was scared stiff. She was shaking, and she kept burrowing her head into the woman's arm as though she wanted to hide. Her tail was tucked under her and her coat was all rubbed up the wrong way.

Just then, the woman reached down and set her on her feet. Susie cowered before them, head hanging. She didn't run. She curled up as though she hoped somehow she would drop into the earth and disappear. Meg had turned back to the pups, but Sal leaned over as far as she could and looked at this small dog. Then, all at once, Susie lifted her shaggy face. Through the mat of tangled hair that almost covered it, Sal saw her brown eyes gleaming, begging someone to rescue her, saying that she knew all about what a queer lost feeling in your stomach felt like.

Sal drew a shaking breath. Then—"I want that dog," said Sarah Jane Copeland.

And, stunned by what she had said, she said it again, her voice wobbling wildly. "I want that dog right there, for mine!"

"Sally, what in the world," Mother started, but before she could say more, Dad announced, "That settles it. We'll take her."

Sal stood there, a little dazed, watching the arrangements being made. Mrs. Miller told the Copelands a great deal more about Susie. She was already housebroken. She had a fine pedigree. Her kennel name was Roseneath Rosette.



Then they were back at the car. Dad helped Sally into the back seat.

"Here's your dog, Sal," he said, and placed Susie on the seat beside her.

At that moment, Sal understood what she had done. She wanted to dive to the other side of the car and yell: "No. I didn't mean it! Take her away!"

But Susie did not even look at her. She lay down on the seat with her nose plunged out of sight in the corner by the far door. The hump of her that she couldn't hide looked so miserable that Sal sat back and felt miserable along with her. The car swept out of the drive. They were bound for home—and she had a dog!



Before they had gone ten miles, Sal could not stand it any longer. Timidly, ready to jerk back if Susie so much as sneezed, she inched her way closer to the small lonely dog. Gently, her hand as light as a feather, she reached out and patted her. Susie lay still. Sal's touch grew surer, more comforting.

Susie didn't move away, although she was still shivering. At last, Sal cleared her throat and said huskily, "Don't be scared, Susie. Please, don't be scared."

When her mother glanced back at her ten minutes later, she was patting the shaggy little rump steadily and crooning, "Good girl . . . good little Susie. . . . Don't be scared. . . . I'll look after you."

Every so often, Sal caught the tip of Susie's ear flicking back just a little, as though she were hearing every single word. "There it goes again," she thought, her hand steadier, her voice soft as a spring wind. "She knows I'm talking to her."

In the front seat, Meg had fallen asleep. Her mother spoke very softly to her father.

"Blessings on you, Andrew," she said. "I think you were right. She's coming out of her shell already."

Sal wriggled over a little closer to Susie. Shyly, she moved her hand up to where the dog's head was turned into the corner of the seat cushion.

"Do you like to be scratched behind your ears?" she whispered to that one ear, flicking back at her. "All dogs in books like it."

Her fingers worked through the coarse coat till she could feel the short soft fur right next to the terrier's skin. Susie gave no signs of knowing her fingers were there, unless perhaps she trembled a

little more. Sal scratched, and scratched—and went on scratching. At last, so slightly that Sal wondered if she might be imagining it, Susie moved her head. She pressed closer to the hand that felt so good, so consoling, just behind her ear.

Deep in the warm fur, Sal's fingers kept up their scratching, and above the little dog's head her voice still crooned. But now Sal's voice was breathless with excitement, and Susie was not the only one who trembled.

Then, unbelievably, Susie twisted her nose out of the crack between cushion and door, and a wet ribbon of tongue darted out for one hurried lick at Sal's hand. The hand was still. Sal could not move it. Susie, too, seemed frozen into a statue of a small waxy dog, taken aback by her own daring. But then, she turned her body even further around with a rough little thud and began to sniff at Sal's fingers.

She's stopped trembling, Sal thought, dazed. She's stopped trembling. She's beginning to like me.

She looked out through the window at the October sky ablaze with blue and at the glowing maples. Everything seemed so bright, brighter than ever before, even at noon, as though someone had doubled the sunlight. The loveliness of it made her eyes sting, but although she blinked, the blurred, shining beauty did not vanish nor dim to an ordinary day.

Sal sat blinking and wondering why she was almost crying when, for once, she was happy clear down to her toes. Then she felt the rough, doggy tongue begin licking away at her hand with steady devotion.

As they neared Riverside, Meg wakened and, at once, her tousled head popped up over the front seat. For several seconds, she simply gazed at Susie, who went right on washing Sal's fingers as though nobody were watching.

"That's your dog, isn't it, Sally?" she said, at last.

"Yes, she is," Sal said, almost whispering lest she break the spell in the back seat.

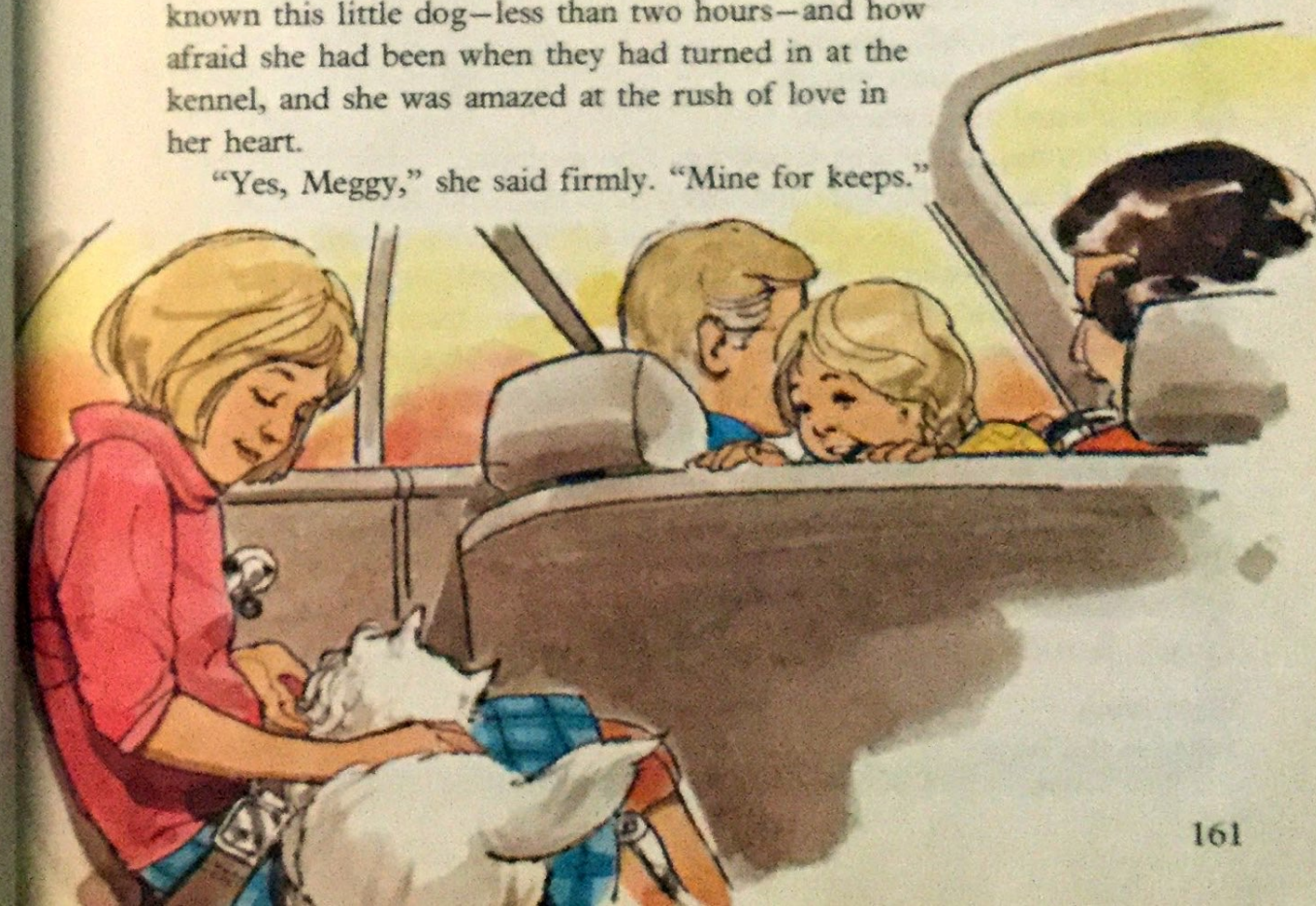
"Is she Kent's dog too?"

"No," Sal said, suddenly looking at Meg instead of at Susie. "She's mine."

"Yours for keeps?" Meg sounded deeply impressed.

Then Sal remembered how short a time she had known this little dog—less than two hours—and how afraid she had been when they had turned in at the kennel, and she was amazed at the rush of love in her heart.

"Yes, Meggy," she said firmly. "Mine for keeps."



About JEAN LITTLE

Jean Little was born in the country of Formosa. She was born blind and, though her sight improved, she has been almost totally blind all her life. Yet her disability did not prevent her from learning to read. Her mother taught Jean to read before she attended school, and reading soon became a favorite activity.

When Jean was still a child, her family moved to Canada. Jean began attending public schools with children who cruelly teased her and chased her home from school every day. Jean Little recalls that time by saying, "I had no armor at hand so I gave up the fight and retreated to the public library. I read and I daydreamed . . . so I prepared myself for becoming a writer."

Jean Little had written poems, essays, and stories throughout her school and college years. Yet she spent several years teaching children with motor handicaps before writing became her fulltime career. In her children's books, Jean Little often writes about children with disabilities. She develops her characters and tells their stories with warmth and feeling. In recognition of her talent, Jean Little and two of her books, *Mine for Keeps* and *Listen for the Singing*, have been honored with Canadian book awards.

More Books by Jean Little

From *Anna
Stand in the Wind*



Think about the story. Finish the chart on page 149 by filling in the problems that Sally faces. Then answer the questions.

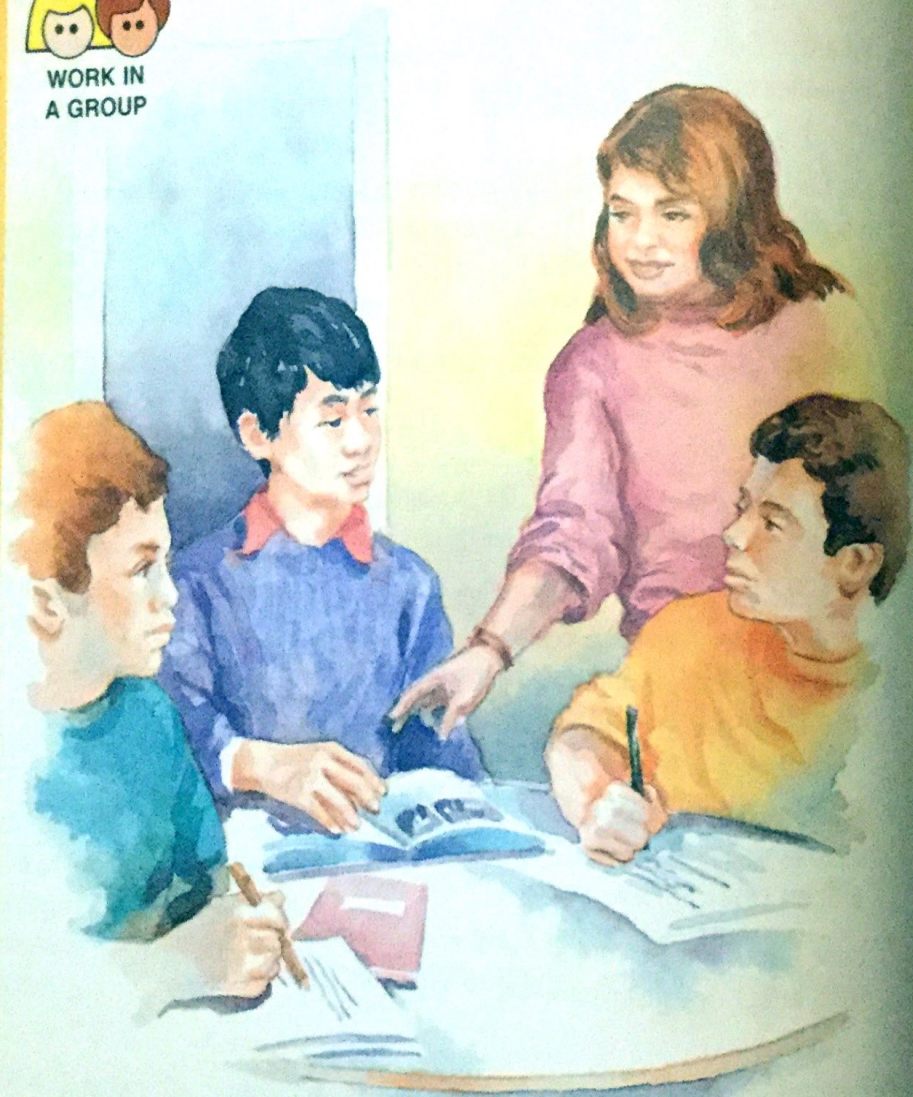
1. Where is Sally at the beginning of the story? Why might the writer open with this setting?
2. Dr. Eastman gives a long explanation of Sally's disorder. To what does Dr. Eastman compare Sally's brain? Why does he use the comparison?
3. Use your chart. Which character presents problems for Sally? Why might this be so?
4. At the beginning of the story, do you think Sally belongs in a unit about never giving up? Does your opinion about her change?
5. What are Sally's true feelings about having a dog? What does she do about these feelings?
6. Why does Sally choose Susie? What change does this show in Sally?
7. Think about Sally before and after she chooses Susie. What effect does owning a dog have on Sally?
8. Pretend you run the special school that Sally attended. What pets would you have at the school? Explain your choices.

Think and Discuss



WORK IN A GROUP

Discuss how it might feel to have a handicap. Ask questions if you want to know more about your classmates' feelings. Talk about the answers.



Focusing on "We Can Do Anything"

Think and Read

- ▶ Talk about a time when you did something that no one thought you could do. Discuss how you felt. Ask your classmates about their experiences.
- ▶ Read the title on page 166 and the paragraph that follows. Look at the pictures in the selection. Think about doing something that no one thought you could do.
 - What might the people in the pictures have in common?
 - What do you think "Anything" in the title refers to?
 - What might the selection be about?
- ▶ Get ready to read an information article about handicapped people and courage. Think about how hard it must be to overcome a handicap. Copy the chart. As you read, take notes on the people chosen for this information article.

Subject	Handicap	Reason Chosen
1.		
2.		
3.		

Now turn the page and read "We Can Do Anything." Then you will talk about courage.