

The Story Behind the Stories

Professional Development Handout 2 of 6

The Gracie Series grows from the idea that ordinary childhood and family experiences can become meaningful opportunities to learn. Relatable stories give children a familiar starting point for talking, thinking, and making connections.

Key Takeaways

- Children often engage deeply with stories when they recognize familiar feelings, relationships, questions, and everyday situations.
- A simple event can open the door to conversations about choices, consequences, emotions, responsibility, kindness, and problem-solving.
- Stories do not have to lecture children in order to teach. Adults can use thoughtful questions to help children discover meaning.
- Personal and family experiences can inspire learning while still being presented in an age-appropriate, respectful way.
- The adult's role is to help children move from 'What happened?' to 'What can we learn from what happened?'

Putting It Into Practice

Notice the ordinary	Look for everyday moments - sharing, waiting, helping, making mistakes, family routines - that contain a lesson.
Ask instead of tell	Use open questions before explaining the lesson yourself.
Invite connection	Ask children whether something in the story reminds them of an experience, feeling, or choice.
Protect the conversation	Allow different interpretations while guiding discussion toward respectful and constructive learning.

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Reflection & Discussion

1. Why might children connect more easily with an everyday situation than with an abstract lesson?

2. What kinds of ordinary experiences in your setting could become teachable moments?

3. How can adults discuss a character's mistake without shaming the character or the child?

4. What is the difference between telling children the lesson and helping them discover it?

My Next Step

Think of one everyday childhood situation you have recently observed. Write two questions that could turn that moment into a meaningful discussion.

Continue Learning: Watch the complete Professional Development series and explore the free Gracie stories and printable activities at GraceLaJoy.com/worksheets.