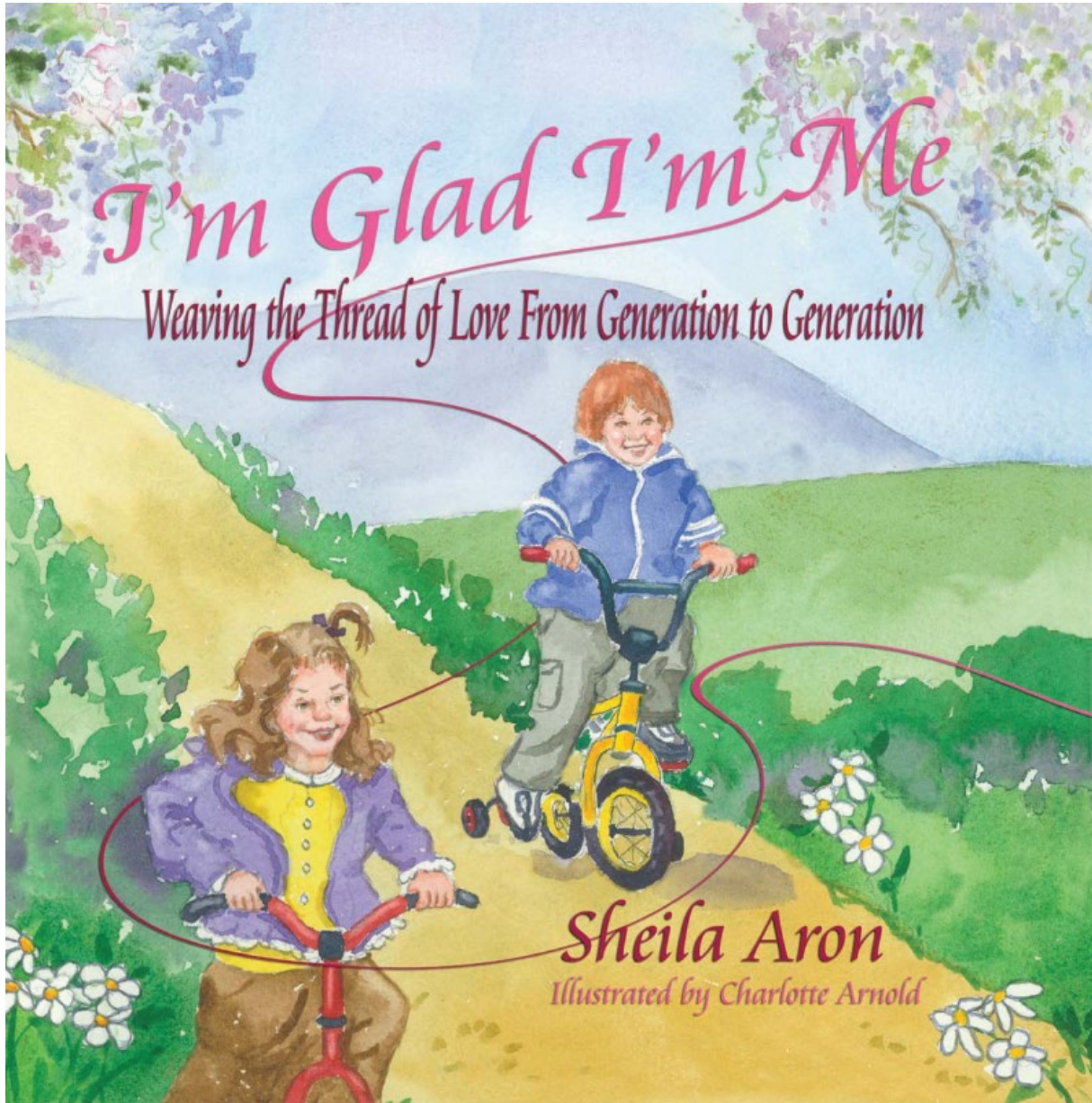


# Reader Enrichment Guide

for



## Reader Enrichment Guide

### What is Love?

As William Shakespeare said, “They do not love that do not show their love.”

From the moment of birth, everyone needs to feel loved – an important element in everyone’s life. Like a thread that weaves throughout our lives, love is passed from one generation to the next. When the thread has been broken, love may be concealed or denied from those who need it the most, children. Hearing the words “I love you,” seeing a warm smile, and experiencing a gentle hug – all help shape a child’s personality. Children who fail to receive the language of love in the early years of development may, as adults, be disadvantaged in loving relationships and find it difficult to express love to their own children. Love, expressed openly and unconditionally, allows children and parents to make a connection and strengthen their bond. ***I’m Glad I’m Me, Weaving the Thread of Love From Generation to Generation*** emphasizes the importance of sharing love, the fulfillment that it brings, and the lasting effect that it has on generations to come.

Through 18 everyday situations, ***I’m Glad I’m Me*** shows parents and children how to communicate the love they feel for each other by expressing their feelings openly and unselfconsciously. At the end of the book are 8 interactive, thought provoking questions which encourage parent and child to share and express their feelings and, thereby, begin the process of weaving the thread of love.

You may be asking, “Why do I need a guide for reading a simple book to a child/children?” Please indulge yourself for twenty minutes in this meaningful preparation. Unanimous feedback from parents, grandparents, and teachers is that the guide improves and enriches the entire experience of ***I’m Glad I’m Me***. Don’t shortchange yourself!

The thread of love should be strong, unbreakable, and never ending.

## Introduction

### *I'm Glad I'm Me*

#### ***Weaving the Thread of Love From Generation to Generation***

**Goal:** This supplemental training guide brings the lessons of *I'm Glad I'm Me* alive through discussion and suggested activities. Through guided interactivity, it reinforces the goal of

- ❖ Helping create a safe environment where children can experience hearing “I love you” in the context of everyday life.
- ❖ Establishing an atmosphere of trust and wellbeing.
- ❖ Encouraging intergenerational involvement instilling the importance of continuity to future generations.
- ❖ Building self-esteem through positive self-talk and positive feedback.
- ❖ Assuring children daily that they are loved, valued, and appreciated.

**Objectives:** Examine opportunities to deliver and use *I'm Glad I'm Me* with the Reader Enrichment Guide.

**Timing:** Approximately 15 minutes

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ❖ *I'm Glad I'm Me* book
- ❖ 24" length of thread
- ❖ *Thread of Love* about 6" long

\*Please note: any reference to the word “parents” refers to any adult care giver.

## Let's Get Started!

### About the Title and Cover:

*I'm Glad I'm Me, Weaving the Thread of Love From Generation to Generation* sends two messages:

One of the most important relationships a person has is the one they have with their self. The title, *I'm Glad I'm Me*, is positive self-talk that validates one's self-worth and helps develop a sense of self-respect and confidence. Learning to accept and be comfortable within oneself allows one to be open for new experiences and loving relationships.

The subtitle, *Weaving the Thread of Love From Generation to Generation*, reminds us of the importance previous generations play in our lives. We are the generation of today and it is up to us to keep the "thread of love" weaving for future generations to come. The book teaches parents and children that the "thread of love" should be strong, unbreakable, and never ending. A multicolor thread weaves throughout the book symbolizing the importance that loving memories play throughout our lives. We need to always remember that our words and actions today become memories of tomorrow.

### Thread of Love:

Show child (children) the book cover and read the title and subtitle. Begin to trace the brightly colored **thread** on the cover with your finger starting with the word "Me" to emphasize the importance it plays throughout the book. The thread on each page, symbolizing the "thread of love," is not mentioned anywhere in the book until the last page. Its presence is prominently seen, just as the "thread of love" that surrounds all of us is not seen but is always there. The presence of the thread on each page should be pointed out as the symbol of the "thread of love" and talked about as the book is being read.

## Planned Activity

### Materials Needed:

- ❖ A piece of knitting yarn about 24" long
- ❖ "Thread of Love" – strands of yarn 6" long to give to each child after book is read

### Children Ages 1 – 4:

Begin by doing a picture walk-through. Let the children talk about what they see and ask what they think is happening on each page. Point to the expressions on the children's faces and ask if they think each boy and girl is happy, sad, mad, etc. Let the children describe their interpretation of each situation. Point out the "thread of love" on each page. At the end of the book reading, give each child a "thread of love" to hold onto or tie it around their wrist as a remembrance of the book's message – to be kind and loving to yourself by saying, **"I'm Glad I'm Me!"**

### Children Ages 5 – 8:

Have the class sit in a circle and begin by asking everyone the question, "What is love?" Let everyone who would like to speak do so. Praise them for sharing their thoughts with the rest of the group. Show them the book cover and read the title, pointing to the thread that weaves across the cover. Tell them that before you read the book to them, you want to play a game that will help explain what the "thread of love" means.

Show the class the long piece of yarn and explain to them how thread entwines and hold things together when it is woven – like our sweaters which were a ball of yarn before it became a sweater and our clothes which are sewn together by thread. There is another kind of thread that is invisible but wraps around each of us and holds us together. This thread shows us how important we all are to one another and it is the "thread of love."

Begin to loosely weave the yarn around you at the same time explaining that we all have a "thread of love" in our life – our parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, friends, pets, teachers, clergy – let the children add to the list if they want to. Tell them that we are going to play a game called "Weaving the Thread of Love." Explain that you are going to pass the "thread of love" yarn to someone and they can pass it on to someone else until everyone in the room has held it.

Letting someone know that they are loved is the greatest gift you can give and knowing that you are loved is the greatest gift that you can receive. The nice thing about the "Weaving the Thread of Love" game is that everyone is a winner and each person will receive a "thread of love." The

game reinforces the book's message and gives children an understanding of the symbolism that the thread plays throughout the book.

**Children Ages 9 – 15:**

Let each child pick a page in the book about which they would like to write an essay. Ask them to describe what the page makes them think about, how it makes them feel, and to find a way to include the words "I'm Glad I'm Me" anywhere in the essay demonstrating acts of kindness, forgiveness, acceptance, and love. If time permits, ask if anyone would like to share their essay with the rest of the group!

**"I'm Glad I'm Me" teaches the language of love, regardless of age.**

## Opening Pages

The opening pages show family members – parents, grandparents, and children – enjoying time together. The words on this page convey the three concepts that are echoed throughout the book. **Understanding these three concepts will enable the reader to emphasize their importance as each page is read.**

**Love, like a thread, weaves and entwines.**

**Love leaves memories that last throughout time.**

We are all a compilation of the people who came before us. This can be explained by defining the term “Generation to Generation.” Explain the sequence of grandparents – parents – children – and that one day they will be parents with their own children and grandchildren. A simple summary is to say, “From oldest to youngest.”

Point to each member of the family describing who each one is as you explain the concept of “Generation to Generation.” One day they too will pass on childhood memories to their children and grandchildren, just as their parents and grandparents have told them about their childhood memories.

**Love can be shared anytime anywhere.**

**Love is being there – showing that you care.**

There are many situations in the course of a child’s day when he/she may experience feelings of happiness, sadness, frustration, loneliness, excitement, anger, etc. It is times such as these that a parent has the opportunity to give a child words of love and encouragement.

**Love is the key to be all you can be.**

**Love makes you think, “I’m Glad I’m Me!”**

The words “I’m Glad I’m Me” are positive self-talk that are repeated several times in the book by the parents and grandparents demonstrating to a child how to show love, kindness, forgiveness, and acceptance of one’s self.

## Question Page

There are eight questions at the end of the book that allow the child and parent to share their feelings, thoughts, fears, and joys. This very important sharing activity allows the child and parent to hear how the other feels. Examples of how the questions can be used are given below.

**\*Note to reader:** The following pages walk readers through a variety of situations that occur in a child's day showing how easy it is to say, "I love you."

### **Situation 1: Love can be shared when you wake up in the morning.**

Among many morning rituals, hearing the words "I love you" can set the tone for the rest of a child's day. Children need role models – a parent, grandparent, or loving care giver – who have the ability to instill a positive sense of self-worth.

#### **Question: How does being loved make you feel?**

This question, as all of the questions from the Question Page, can be asked at any time.

### **Situation 2: How does being loved make you feel when you have done your best?**

Praise and encouragement for the simplest accomplishment helps build a child's confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Question: How does being helpful make you feel?**

### **Situation 3: How does being helpful make you feel when you are sad?**

#### **Question: How do you know when you can trust someone? Can you trust everyone?**

These two questions begin a dialogue that helps reassure a child of the security that the feeling of trust instills.

Children are very trusting but for children who have had their trust broken, it can be very hard for them to trust again. Sharing your feelings and personal thoughts tells a child that you trust them. Communicating thoughts and feelings with someone you trust forms a loving bond.

### **Situation 4: How do you know when you have been helpful?**

Helping with household chores allows a child to contribute to the family group by making a connection through shared responsibility and can be used as opportunities to praise them. Children need to know that their contribution impacts the family and is appreciated.

#### **Question: How have you been helpful lately? How did being helpful make you feel?**



**Situation 5: How do you know when you are shy?**

**Question: Compose your own question or choose from the list at the end of the book.**

Children may feel shy or uncomfortable for various reasons. Acceptance and reassurance of the importance they play in your life and the value they have as an individual show supports and helps build confidence. There are times everyone feels uncomfortable. Knowing you have someone who accepts you as you are is a comforting and safe feeling.

**Situation 6: How do you know when you are having fun?**

Continue tracing the “thread of love” or let the child/children do it. Comments made by the children about what they see on any page of the book should be met with patience, praise, and approval.

**Situation 7: How do you know when you are afraid?**

Everyone has experienced fear of some sort at one time or another in our lives. As adults, we understand that children experience inexplicable fears that seem very real to them. Helping a child through these difficult times with patience, understanding, and love will help them try to overcome their fear. Sometimes just knowing that you are there for them may be all that is needed to help overcome their fear.

**Situation 8: How do you know when you need a friend?**

A friend is kind, considerate, loving, and fun. These characteristics build trust between two people. A true friend is someone you can trust.

**Situation 9: How do you know when you go to school?**

A child should be sent to school each day with a mind that is free of stress and ready to learn all that is being taught. The words “**I love you**” will give them a sense of belonging and connection that will stay with them throughout the day. The greeting upon returning from school is just as important as the one before going to school. The sense of belonging is what the “thread of love” is all about – strong, unbreakable, and never ending.

Note: the bus license plate – **1-2-3-I-G-I-M** (123 I’m Glad I’m Me)

**Situation 10: How do you know when you disagree?**

Gentle, loving discipline and patience help avoid difficult situations that cause fear, frustration, miscommunication, and harsh words. Showing kindness and respect allows a child to learn in a setting of warmth and security. Emphasize the “threat of love” as a reminder that love is always there – strong, unbreakable, and never ending – even when we disagree.

**Situation 11: How do you know when you are working together?**

Children experience the world through their senses. When they grow up they remember how they felt as a child and who gave them that feeling – good or bad. Valuable time with a loving grandparent or parent is an important element in weaving “the thread of love from generation to generation.”

**Question: How do you share your love?**

**Situation 12: How do you share your love when you are just being you?**

Saying “I love you” for no reason at all is the best reason of all.

**Situation 13: How do you share your love when you feel unloved?**

Children need to learn to think lovingly of themselves in order to feel it and make it part of who they are. By teaching positive self-talk to a child, they learn to be kind, forgiving, and loving to themselves as well as others.

“How do you show love to yourself?” is asked on this page and repeated again as the final question on the Question page because...

*Thoughts become words – words become actions – actions become habits.*

The words “I’M GLAD I’M ME” encourage children to make positive self-talk a habit.

Note: Point out the “thread of love” as it entwines around the family.

**Situation 14: How do you know when it is time to say “goodbye?”**

Whether it is for long or short periods of time, a child can find separation from a parent or loved one unsettling and difficult. Reassuring a child of your love helps make this moment easier to accept.

**Question: What do you say to someone you love?**

**Situation 15: What do you say when you have been spoken to in a mean voice?**

At some point we all lose it. Taking responsibility for one's behavior gets us back on the right track. Saying the words "I'm sorry" teaches a child to admit their mistakes. Asking for forgiveness helps build a loving, respectful relationship. Children learn by example and imitate the people they respect and love.

Trace the "thread of love" and stress that, even in difficult situations, love grows stronger.

**Situation 16: How do you know when you are proud?**

Everyone likes to be recognized with praise and approval from the people they respect the most. For a child, loving recognition plays a large part in developing their self-esteem. Praise is motivating and propels one to succeed.

**Situation 17: How do you know when your day is done?**

Family time (dinner time) allows children to talk about their day, tell stories and talk about what is important to them. This is a time when parents can listen and respond in a loving and helpful way. Problems can be discussed and solved – another opportunity for being together and sharing your love.

**Situation 18: How do you know when it is time for bed?**

People of all ages need loving reassurances. It is just as important for a parent to hear the words "I love you" as it is for a child. Communicating feelings of love instills in both parent and child a sense of well-being.

**Last Page: "I'm Glad I'm Me"**

When a parent and child have shared their love for each other, they also share a connection that becomes stronger over time. They are filled with deep personal pride and reflect this by thinking **"I'm Glad I'm Me."**

**The last line of the book** reminds parents and children to keep weaving the thread of love for future generations to come. We owe it to our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and their great grandchildren so that they too can say, **"I'm Glad I'm Me."**

The final question is: **How do you show love to yourself?**

The answer that you want to hear from the child/children is on the facing page. These words will fill a child with pride, and it will spill over into every area of their life as they grow into loving adults. Encourage them to repeat it again – a little louder – to show how important the message is. Remember: ***Thoughts become words – Words become actions – Actions become habits.***

## **I'm Glad I'm Me**

### **A personal note to our readers...**

As you read my book to your child or a group of children, please remember – your words and actions affect how a child feels about himself/herself. Start weaving the “thread of love” today so that future generations will know the joy of the language of love!

- Sheila Aron