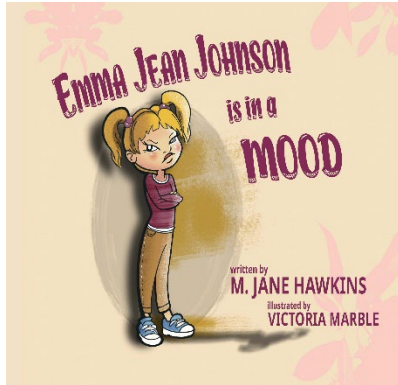


Resource Guide: *Emma Jean Johnson Is in a Mood*

Book summary



Emma Jean Johnson Is in a Mood by M. Jane Hawkins (Illustrations: Victoria Marble) follows Emma Jean through a day when she feels “off” and grumpy. After trying (and failing) to “shake it off,” she meets Harmony, who is also having a hard day. Together they stomp, yell, twirl, and laugh—until Emma Jean’s mood passes and a friendship begins.

Recommended age/setting

- Ages: 5–7 (K–2)
- Best for: Social-emotional learning (SEL), friendship skills, self-regulation, empathy.
- Time: 20–30 minutes read-aloud + 20–40 minutes activities.

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Identify and name feelings and mood changes.
- Notice body clues that signal emotions.
- Practice respectful ways to express big feelings.
- Demonstrate empathy toward peers having a tough day.
- Explore strategies that can help when they feel “in a mood”.

Key themes & vocabulary

- Themes: moods, self-control, friendship, kindness, second chances.
- Vocabulary (kid-friendly): *mood, bubbly, cheerful, pout, rude, frustrated, calm, teamwork, empathy.*

Before reading (5–10 minutes)

- **Mood check-in:** Ask students to point to a “mood face” (happy/okay/sad/mad/worried) or show a number 1–5 with fingers.
- **Activate background knowledge:** “Have you ever woken up feeling grumpy for no reason? What did your body feel like?”
- **Preview:** Show the cover and ask: “What do you think Emma Jean’s mood might look like?”

During reading (interactive prompts)

Pause to ask quick questions:

- “How is Emma Jean acting today? What clues do you see?”
- “What do Jalen/Christy/Miss McNulty say to Emma Jean? Do you think it helps? Why or why not?”
- “What are some safe ways to show you’re upset?”
- “When Emma Jean meets Harmony, what changes? What do they do together?”

After reading (discussion questions)

1. What was Emma Jean like on a usual day? What was different on this day?
2. What are some words Emma Jean uses when she’s in a mood (“Yellow is yucky,” etc.)? What might she be feeling underneath?
3. Why didn’t “shake it off” work for Emma Jean?
4. How did Harmony help Emma Jean? How did Emma Jean help Harmony?
5. What are kind things we can say to someone who’s having a hard day?
6. What could Emma Jean do next time before she smashes/kicks something?

Social-emotional skills focus

1) Name it to tame it

- Teach: “When we name our feeling, our brain can calm down.”
- Practice: Students choose a feeling word and complete: “I feel ____ when ____.”

2) Body clues

- Ask: “Where do you feel grumpy in your body—tight fists, hot face, wiggly legs?”
- Make a class list of “body clues.”

3) Helpful vs. unhelpful responses

- Sort statements into two columns:
 - Helpful: “Want to take a breath with me?” “Do you want space or help?”
 - Unhelpful: “Knock it off.” “Straighten up.”

Classroom activities

Activity A: Mood meter & color feelings (10–15 minutes)

- Students draw a simple “mood meter” with 3–5 faces.
- Connect to the book’s color line: “Yellow is yucky.”
- Ask: “What color matches your mood today?” (No wrong answers.)

Activity B: Emma Jean’s Toolbox (15–25 minutes)

Create a class anchor chart: “**When I’m in a mood, I can...**”

- Take 3 belly breaths.
- Ask for a break.
- Squeeze a stress ball.
- Draw chalk/sidewalk art (or paper art)
- Stomp in a safe place (feet on the floor)
- Talk to a trusted adult.
- Try again with a friend.

Activity C: Try-Again Together role-play (15–20 minutes)

In pairs, students practice:

1. One student says: “I’m in a mood.”
2. The other responds with a kind script: “Do you want to try again together?”
3. Choose a calm strategy (breathe, count to 10, draw, stretch).

Activity D: Friendship mini-book (20–30 minutes)

Students make a 4-page mini-book:

1. “Sometimes I feel...”
2. “My body feels...”
3. “I can try...”
4. “A friend can help by...”

Writing & literacy extensions

- **Opinion writing:** “Which part of the story was your favorite and why?”
- **Narrative writing:** “Write about a time you were in a mood. What helped?”
- **Word work:** Find alliteration or fun phrases (e.g., “Poo on periwinkles,” “Waffles are wacky”). Create new silly phrases that are school-appropriate.

Cross-curricular connections

- **Art:** Create “chalk art” on black paper with crayons/pastels.
- **PE/Movement:** Safe “stomp, twirl, stretch” routine for emotional reset.
- **Music:** Sing a “Try Again Together” chant (call-and-response).

Home connection (send-home note)

Invite families to use the same language:

- “Looks like you’re in a mood. Do you want space, a hug, or help?”
- “Let’s try again together.”
- Share a simple “toolbox” list for home.

Assessment (quick, informal)

- Students can name at least 2 feelings and 2 calming strategies.
- Students can describe one kind/helpful phrase to say to a classmate.
- Observe role-play: respectful words, safe body choices.

Differentiation & supports

- Provide picture cards for feelings and strategies.
- Offer sentence starters: “I feel ____.” “I need ____.” “Can we try again together?”
- For students sensitive to noise/movement: offer quiet options (drawing, breathing, sensory tools).

Teacher note

This story is a helpful reminder: moods happen. The goal isn’t to “stop” feelings, but to notice them, express them safely, and reconnect with others through empathy and friendship.

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