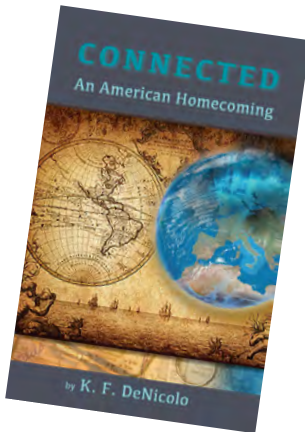


In the Age of Covid-19

A Virtual Study Guide 7

*for Parent and
Children*



to accompany K.F. DeNicolo's book

Connected An American Homecoming

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ISBN: 978-1514312384

Study Guide



7

Choices: “People You Meet”

Prologue: Were you ever scared of being tested? Could you speak courageously?

The years passed and unlike Papa had promised, life was far from perfect, but it was manageable. There were friends who seemed closer. She could depend on them. One of those people was Theresa. There were other people who seem to always find ways to be mean, especially, Jack and his friends. Jo was always a little uncomfortable in school. She missed the familiar sounds and, smells and personalities of her home. What made things even more uncomfortable were incidences like those with Nick and Jack “or a thorn by any other name.” Oh, she could remember it all!

“Move over twerp or I’ll push you out of the way,” Nick snarled.

“Leave me alone” Jo smarted.

“You little guinea pig, leave me alone or what? Hey Jack, come listen to this runt.”

“Leave me alone,” Jo whispered as she left her locker and went to her classroom.

“What’s going on here? You’re not making any friends children, stay away from each other if you can’t get along!” Mrs.Jones, the fifth grade teacher, chided the students this way daily.

The bell rang as Jack and Nick rushed from the classroom bumping into Jo and causing her to drop her books in the hall.

“ Jo Piggy, you dropped your books-too bad! What’s that smell Nick?”

“I don’t know,-maybe it’s Jo-Piggy,” Nick sneered. “Come on, we’re out of here.

It’s not over Jo-Piggy. See you later.”

The little girl continued picking up the books that had been kicked down the hall somehow many bystanders didn't seem to notice. Just one person just caught sight of the last few moments. Thankfully, it was the right person. Mrs. Jones stepped out of the shadow of the hallway just seeing the end of the nasty little encounter. She handed Jo's math book to her and said, "Jo, some people don't take no for an answer Nick and Jack for instance. Freedom of speech doesn't mean that people can make prank calls, or stalk others, make up lies or pass rumors. Even the strongest people have to ask for help if they aren't treated fairly. Remember in school today we talked about liberty and justice. Understood?" She shook her head in agreement and went to class. Jo had learned to ask for help from teachers, counselors, and parents.

Mrs. Jones went to the office to phone reassurances to Jo's family, who would later welcome her with open arms. Mrs Jones' discipline complaint against the boys and related parent conferences would bring less joyous gatherings that evening. The teacher thought to herself that today was just another day when simple cruelty volleyed with academics and various other pressures for center court. Score one point for yourself and the power of one person to do the right thing, and be on time for your next class Mrs. Jones thought as she sprinted though the hall.

Later that afternoon, Jo went home and headed straight for her room. She had looked for Theresa to walk home with but tonight was soccer practice. It was scary to walk home and wonder where Jack's friends were lurking.

Mama came in her room to ask the news of the day but Jo didn't want to talk. Mama had gotten the call from Mrs. Jones and shared the news with Tav. Neither of

them knew how to respond without making the matter worse for their daughter. Jo never wanted her parents to have anything to do with coming to school, but fortunately, her parents had their own ideas about leadership, community and family. There had been many parent meetings. Everyone knew that the key was to set the course to survive peacefully and law abiding.

Jo was thinking it over as she waited for mama. What was it, social justice and Constitutional study and civics? She'd heard so many voices? Whose voice would she listen to-maybe, a plan to form her own opinion? Those were the words and experiences she was learning to live with in school, her neighborhood and at home.

She knew that Mama would begin shortly and she did. "Jo, you can't hide. Day by day, you're sending the message that you are going to do more than ignore people who bother you. If that doesn't work, you're going to tell dad and me and your teachers and whoever else needs to know. You are going to take responsible action. Do you understand?" questioned her mom.

"Good question mom," she could hear herself whisper.

Readers' Guide: Summary: This chapter tells how Jo is struggling to learn how to make responsible choices. Sometimes people get confused. Step 1? Step 2? Speak up?

Readers' Guide: Exercises & Activities: Make a plan for Jo to build her self-confidence. Make a board game whereby people make healthy choices in the following scenarios: people getting even, helping hands, demanding attention, pressure, setting things right.