

This month, 2nd & 3rd graders and their grown-ups will read about Jada Jones, a smart, curious 4th grader who loves to collect, examine, and learn all about rocks. When her best friend and rock collecting partner moves away, Jada worries that she'll have trouble making new friends. Why should she even try, when finding rocks is so much easier than finding friends?

Jada Jones is a great early chapter book for kids ready to read longer books on their own. The chapters are short, and there are plenty of illustrations throughout. However, even if your young reader can read this book independently, she might prefer to alternate reading with a grown-up or to listen so she can focus on the story (readers often lose steam when their brains have to juggle word-work and story-thinking!). Any combination of reading to self and reading out loud that works for you is just perfect. And, as always, if you'd like to swap for another title altogether, there are lots of resources to help you find a great book. Check out the alternate titles listed at the end of every discussion guide - there are lots in this guide - I couldn't narrow it down! If none of those works for your group, look through the Girls Leadership book suggestions from other grades or previous years. You could also check websites like *A Mighty Girl* or talk to your local children's librarian.

The theme for Girls Leadership Book Clubs this month is getting outside to enjoy the many benefits of engaging with nature. Consider whether your book club could tie this theme into your November meeting. Perhaps you could go for a hike together, or hold your meeting in a park. The crafty blog *The Artful Parent* lists several super simple project ideas using fall leaves (bit.ly/2yCieyW). Or, you could take a *page* out of *Jada Jones' book* (haha!) and collect interesting rocks, then give each one a name, a personality, and decorations just like Jada, Lena, and Simone do in the story. Draw, act, or write a story with the characters you've invented! The possibilities are endless.

Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes

As grown-ups and girls arrive, think about allowing some time for snacking and introductions or catching up.

Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

Everyone in the group should pair up with someone new (not the person you came with!). Pairs then ask each other questions and discuss for five minutes. Then, give 5-10 minutes for pairs to introduce each other and share a bit about each other's answers. Try to ask a question related to this month's theme. You could use one of the following examples, or make up your own:

- What is your favorite place to visit in nature?
- What kinds of things do you most like to do outdoors?
- How do you feel when you're outdoors?

Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so

You might decide to start the discussion with every member saying their favorite part of the book before reading discussion questions. Some groups might have time to get to all of these questions, but many groups will pick one or two questions and spend the whole meeting discussing those. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or discuss any ideas that came up while you were reading.

- How would you describe Jada's personality? What does she do or say in the book that tells you what kind of person she is?
- Jada has a passionate curiosity about rocks. What are *you* most interested in? Are there people in your life who share this interest?
- Why do you think Simone acts so mean to Jada?
- How are Jada and Simone similar? What happens once Jada begins to understand Simone better?
- Has Jada changed by the end of the book? How is she different?

- Talk about a time when you had to make new friends, like Jada does. Was it difficult? If you could talk to Jada at the beginning of the story, what advice would you give her about making new friends?
- Are there people in your community right now who might be feeling lonely and nervous about making new friends? What could you do to reach out to them?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Let's talk friendship. Whether you're in a new school or simply hoping to bond with someone new, making friends can be tough. Think about whether there's someone you want to get to know. What are some ways you could reach out? Invite them to play at recess? Strike up a conversation about something you're curious about?

Or, is there someone who might be feeling lonely and left out? Could you reach out to that person to make your community more inclusive and welcoming? What are some actions you could take?

Girls and grown-ups might decide to share out loud, going around the circle so everyone has a turn or giving time for anyone who wants to share can do so. If people feel shy about sharing these personal goals, maybe they could jot them down on paper. Whether through writing or out loud, articulating our plans and goals helps us achieve them.

Closing, 5 minutes

Due to busy schedules, we don't suggest a December book title. Before everyone goes off their separate ways, choose a date for your January meeting. Happy reading!

Further Reading

If you really loved this book, and you'd like to read more books like it, here are some suggestions. If there are other books you would like to recommend, we'd

love to hear them! Please share them on our **Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook Group** so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

Jada Jones: Class Act by Kelly Starling Lyons - In the next book in the Jada Jones series, Jada decides to run for class president, but when rumors start to fly about her secret fear of public speaking, she isn't sure who she can trust.

The *Calpurnia Tate, Girl Vet* series by Jacqueline Kelly - Kelly brings back the characters from her beloved Calpurnia Tate middle-grade books in these early chapter books. Calpurnia lets her love for animals lead her on many adventures!

Nim's Island by Wendy Orr - Nim relies on her wits and outdoor skills to survive on the remote island where she lives with her dad. Yet, when her dad's ship goes missing for several days, Nim emails her favorite author, who embarks on a journey to help the girl.

The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps by Jeanette Winter - Even for those well-versed in Goodall's life story, Jeanette Winters' picture book biography is worth picking up. This award-winning celebration of Goodall's work is full of beautiful illustrations, and connects her patient animal watching as a child with her great accomplishments in science.

Isadora Moon Goes Camping by Harriet Muncaster - Isadora is from a magical family: half-vampire, half-fairy. So, even when they spend their weekend doing something as simple as camping, there are many surprises in store!

Violet Mackerel's Natural Habitat by Anna Brandford - As the smallest in her family, Violet has an admiration for small things. She especially loves observing small creatures in the natural world.

Pets in a Jar by Seymour Simon - This nonfiction picture book from the master of children's science books guides curious children in the process of collecting bugs and other small critters for close observation.