

“How Katie Got a Voice (and a cool new nickname)”  
by Patricia L. Mervine, M.A., CCC-SLP  
Available from [www.PatMervine.com](http://www.PatMervine.com)

## Discussion Guide and Writing Prompts

### **Communication:**

Katie can't talk but she does communicate throughout this book.

1. In what ways does she communicate? How effective are those methods?
2. How does she communicate at the end of the book? In what ways will this make a difference in her life?
3. Besides speaking, in what other ways do people communicate? What are some ways that you communicate nonverbally every day?

### **Acceptance and Inclusion:**

The students in Mrs. O'Brien's class wanted to interact with Katie and include her in their activities but they didn't know how.

1. What are some ways they could have involved her?
2. How can they include her now that she can communicate?
3. Do you know any children or adults who have disabilities? What are some things they can and can't do? If there are things they can't do, how does this affect their lives? Can you think of any ways to overcome these limitations?
4. Are you comfortable in interacting with people who have disabilities? Why or why not? What can you do to become more comfortable?
5. Imagine that you suddenly had a disability--loss of vision, hearing, balance, use of arms/hands/legs/feet, or ability to speak. How would you feel about this? How would your life be changed? How would you want people to treat you?

### **Nicknames:**

Everyone in the story has a nickname, and finally Katie gets one, too.

1. Nicknames can be positive or negative. What makes a nickname positive? What makes a nickname negative? How can a negative nickname affect someone's life? Are the nicknames in this story positive or negative?
2. What should you do if you hear someone calling another person a negative nickname, even if the name sounds funny and other kids are laughing?
3. Do you have a nickname? If so, who gave it to you? Why do you have that nickname? Do you like your nickname?
4. If you don't have a nickname, can you think of a nickname to describe your personality, interests, or talents?
5. Why was it so important to Katie that she have a nickname?