

Activity Books

[QuickSilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership](#), Karl Rohnke and Steve Butler

From the back cover: “QuickSilver includes ten years’ worth of new ideas: Icebreakers, Warm-Ups, Games, Stunts, Initiatives, Trust Activities, Closures and more. There’s a plethora of programmatic play in these pages, enough to delight even the more avid game collector.”

Excerpt: “We hope that as you read this book you will reflect upon your own past experiences with our nitty-gritty recommendations. We want you to recognize yourself as being successful and effective in your leadership efforts. More importantly, we want you to have fun making Adventure programs more exciting for yourself and for those with whom you work; to be capable, enthusiastic and effective.”

Note: This book is full of team-building games with names like Human Treasure Hunt, Transformer Tag, and FFEACH & MOOCH. Always fun and often zany, these activities are great for larger groups and probably wouldn’t work for one-on-one mentoring.

[Mind-Bending Lateral Thinking Puzzles](#)

Ages 12-up

From the back cover: “Made up of engaging questions that make you avoid the obvious and the orthodox, this book will give even the most tired of minds a refreshing rub-down!”

A Puzzle Sample: “A horse ploughs a field all day. If he takes twenty-four steps to reach from one edge of the field to the other, how many hoof prints will the horse leave in the last furrow?”

Answer: “None. The plough will turn the soil over and cover any hoof prints left by the animal.”

Activity: Use this book to play twenty questions. Have your mentee read you the question, read the answer to her/his self, then answer your yes/no questions to help you narrow down the answer. Then switch.

[50 Simple Things Kids Can Do To Save the Earth](#), The EarthWorks Group

For ages: 5-18

From the back cover:

“Full of experiments, facts, and exciting things to do. Learn to keep the Earth a safe, healthy place for yourself, for other kids . . . and even grown-ups.”

Excerpt:

“Kids have a lot of power. Whenever you say something, grown-ups have to listen. Whenever you care about something, grown-ups have to care too. Whenever you do something, grown-ups have to pay attention. They don’t always tell you this, but it’s true. So if saving the Earth is important to you, then grown-ups will have to follow along.”

Activity idea:

As far as hands-on activities to do with your mentee, this book is chalked full. From making milk carton birdhouses to learning about waste water and watersheds, this book has something for everyone.

Books for Kids

[Words Are Not for Hurting](#), Elizabeth Verdick

Ages 4-8

From the back cover: “Children learn that their words belong to them: They can *think* before they speak, then choose *what* to say and *how* to say it. They explore simple, positive ways to respond when others say hurtful things to them.”

Excerpt: “Your words are important. If you think before you speak, you can use your words well. It takes only 26 letters to make millions of words . . . so you’ve got lots of words to choose from!”

Activity idea:

Use the scenarios from the book to make up your own role plays. Ask your mentee to come up with something hurtful that kids say to each other, then role play different responses. Remember to switch roles so your mentee can understand both roles.

[Hands Are Not for Hitting](#), Martine Agassi, Ph.D.

Ages 4-8

From the back cover: “Simple words and warm, inviting illustrations reinforce two main themes: violence is never okay, and every child is capable of positive, loving actions. Children learn and practice fun and constructive things their hands can do.”

Excerpt: “Hands are for helping. Hands are for caring. Hands are for keeping you healthy and safe. Hands are not for hitting.”

Activity idea: Use a big sheet of paper to trace both of your sets of hands. Brainstorm together constructive, nonviolent things you can do with your hands and write the words inside or around the hands. You can especially talk about things to do instead of hitting when you are angry, sad, hurt, etc.

[Join In and Play](#)

Ages 4-8

From the Back Cover: “In simple words and real-life illustrations, this book teaches the basics of cooperation, getting along, making friends, and being a friend.”

Excerpt: “A person may do something that I don’t think is fair. I can say how I feel. If I also listen to how the other person feels, we may solve our problem.”

Activity idea: Just reading the book together and talking about real life examples could really help if your mentee has a hard time getting along with classmates. Doing simple role plays can also help. After reading the book together, you can say something like, “let’s practice what we just read about.” An example of a possible role play: Your mentee wants to play with you but you say no. Have you mentee play out different options to do at a time like that. Remember to switch roles.

[Shredderman: Secret Identity, Wendelin Van Draanen](#)

Ages 8-Adult

From back cover: “Bubba Bixby is a bully—he creeps, steals, cuts in line, and terrorizes little kids. Even teachers and principals can’t stop him. Nolan thinks it would take a superhero to make Bubba behave. But what no one knows yet is that there’s a little superhero lurking within Nolan’s nerdy exterior, just waiting for a chance to bust out. And when that happens . . . Bubba’d better beware!

Excerpt:

“No one can know a superhero’s identity.
Not even his mother.

So I wound up *promising* her I wasn’t doing anything bad, wound up *begging* her to trust me. Wound up on my knees, waving cash in the air, *praying* for her to give me her credit card number.”

Note: This book is an easy read and would be a great one to read aloud to your mentee, especially 3-6 graders. Follow it up with discussion about bullying.

[Shredderman: Attack of the Tagger, Wendelin Van Draanen](#)

Ages 8-Adult

From back cover: “Now that he’s had a taste of success, Nolan knows he’s so much more. Inside this nerd beats the heart of a superhero! So when a vandal spray-paints graffiti around town—and even on his teacher’s van!—Nolan decides tracking down the Tagger is a job for Shredderman.”

Note: This is a great read-aloud, especially if your mentee has trouble with reading. Read a chapter or two each session and have him/her read to you if it matches their reading level.

Books about At-Risk Kids

[No Such Thing As a Bad Kid: Understanding a Responding to the Challenging Behavior of Troubled Children and Youth](#), Charles D. Appelstein, MSW

From the back cover: “This empowering handbook opens by portraying misbehavior as a call for help. It then guides you through “decoding” the message and, via hundreds of hands-on tips and sample dialogues, into approached for revolutionizing your interactions with troubled kids and their interactions with the world.”

Excerpt: “If day after day a troubled child is disruptive, s/he may be feeling too unsafe and insecure to attach to significant adults in her environment. Schools are filled with such students, and although a solid education can be their ticket to a productive life, they are at great risk of losing this passport to success. For those who struggle with poor self-esteem and have highly developed defense mechanisms to avoid further emotional pain, acting out or truancy is sometimes preferable to studying for a test, completing an assignment, or tackling class work likely to result in yet another failure or cause them to look “stupid” in front of their peers and significant adults.”

[How To Be Bully Free Workbook](#), based on [The Bully Free Classroom](#) by Allan L. Beane, Ph.D.

Ages 5-13

From the back cover: “In words and pictures, questions and quizzes, checklists and games, this workbook helps kids become Bully Free. Kids learn what bullying is and what it look like.

Excerpt: “When someone hurts you, it’s normal to feel angry. You may feel so angry that you want to get back at the person by hurting him or her. Stop and think. Is hurting someone back really a good idea? No. You have the power to make a choice.”

Activity idea: Bullying has been identified as a huge problem in Grand County schools. In all likelihood your mentee has been somehow affected by bullying. This workbook is entirely worksheets and activities that can help guide discussions with your mentee about bullying. Kids often like to take quizzes when they know they won’t be graded. Check out the Bully Free Quiz on pages 24 and 25.

“The Trouble with Boys.” [Newsweek](#), by Peg Tyre 30 January 2006: 44-52

Summary: “It’s no longer just a case of ‘boys will be boys.’ In every phase of schooling in America, male students are losing ground. From absent fathers to distracting toys to

teaching that ignores how boys develop, we trace the causes—and profile a new generation of educators struggling to close the achievement gap.”

Note: This article is a good summary of the issues facing adolescent boys. If you have read “Raising Cain” or “Real Boys” this information will be very familiar. If you haven’t, this short article is a great introduction.

Books about Mentoring

[Mentoring for Meaningful Results: Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults](#), Kristie Probst

From the back cover: “Comprehensive in scope and organized around common mentoring issues, *Mentoring for Meaningful Results* addresses the needs of the entire mentoring team: program leaders, mentors, mentees, and the families of mentees.”

Note: Easy to read and full of discussion aides to help trouble shoot common mentoring pit-falls.

[The Miracles of Mentoring: How to Encourage and Lead Future Generations](#), Thomas W. Dortch, Jr.

From the back cover: “Whether you’re on the front line working one-to-one with a mentee, or are part of a collaborative/group mentoring effort, *The Miracles of Mentoring* will teach you: the ten tickets of mentoring; how to figure out if mentoring is for you; the five stages of the mentoring relationship; how to create a partnership in your community or workplace.”

Excerpt: “I mentor because I want kids to know that there are positive options in the world. It’s not a personal agenda; it’s an agenda for the future.”

[A Hand to Guide Me](#), Denzel Washington

From the back cover: “Denzel Washington shares his personal story of growing up and the guiding hands who helped shape his life. His message is echoed by 73 other leading personalities in sports, politics, business, and the arts. They all describe how their lives were changed for the better by mentors who inspired and motivated them.”

Excerpt: “Show me a successful individual and I’ll show you someone who didn’t want for positive influences in his or her life. I don’t care what you do for a living—if you do it well I’m betting there was someone cheering you on and showing you the way.”

Note: This *New York Times* bestseller is an awesome collection of stories from political, sports, and entertainment personalities. The sheer volume of stories really is incredible.