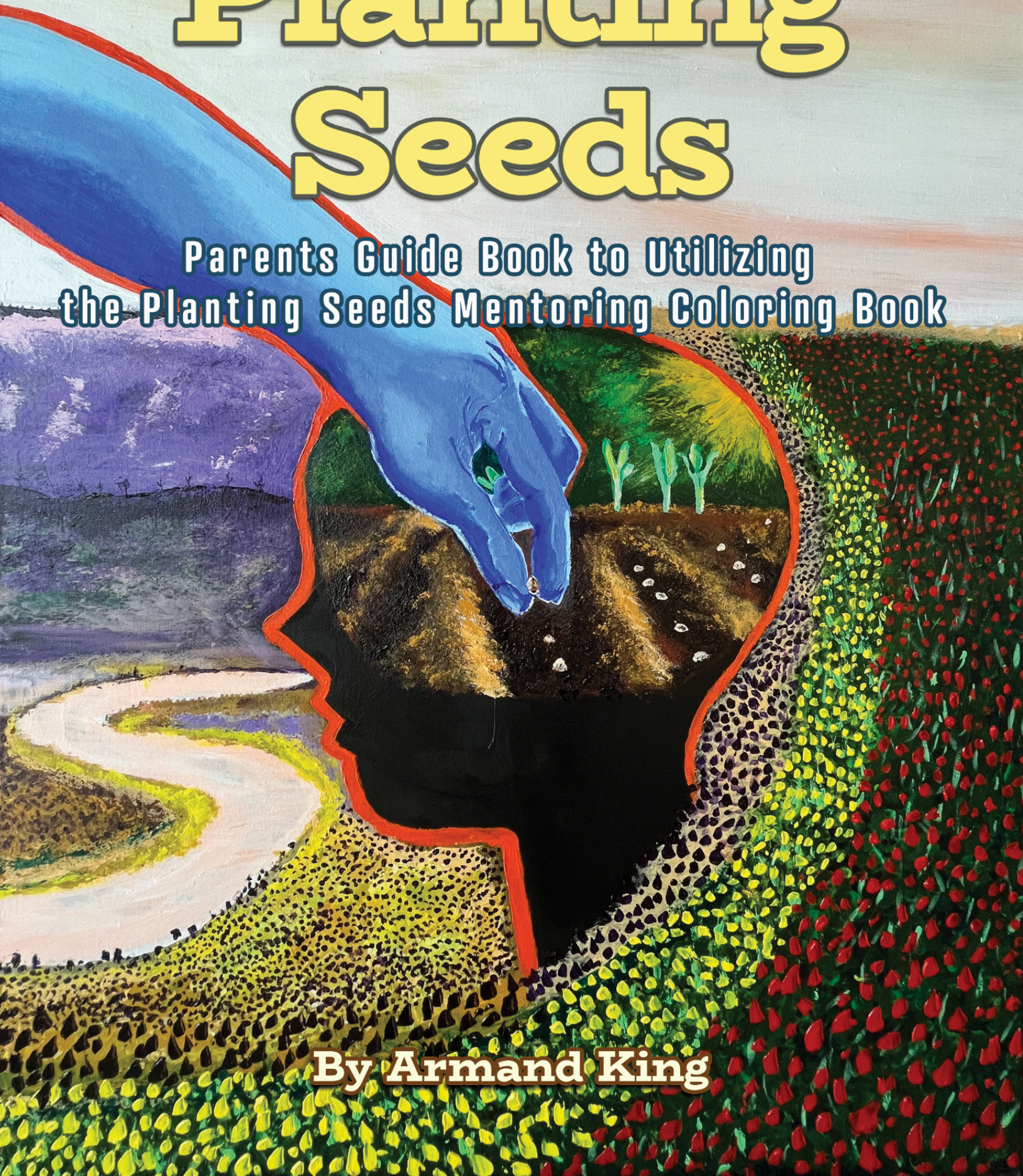


Planting Seeds

Parents Guide Book to Utilizing
the Planting Seeds Mentoring Coloring Book



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Welcome Message

Welcome to the *Planting Seeds* Usage Guide for Guardians & Mentors. This guide is intended to help users understand how to use the mentoring coloring book to support and inspire their children.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the youth who inspire us every day, and to the parents, guardians, mentors, and educators who guide them. Your light brightens the path for future generations. A special thank you to our supporters, whose belief in this project made it possible.

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1. Introduction to Planting Seeds

- **Purpose of the Coloring Book:** This coloring book is unlike a typical coloring book. It is intended to help have conversations with children about hard topics and other topics of positive mentoring.
- **Why Mentoring Matters:** In communities affected by negative influences such as gangs, drugs, and other risky behaviors, mentoring emerges as a critical shield for youth, especially those ages 5-11. The "Planting Seeds" mentoring coloring book leverages this protective relationship by introducing young minds to vital lessons on making positive choices through interactive and engaging activities. By providing a consistent and caring presence, mentors can foster a sense of safety and possibility, encouraging children to envision a future beyond their immediate environment. This foundational support is essential for nurturing resilience, developing healthy relationships, and building a positive sense of self that can guide them towards successful and fulfilling lives.

2. How to Use the Coloring Book

Preparation: Before starting, we recommend reading the caption on each page to ensure the content is appropriate for the child. This helps tailor the experience to their needs and understanding.

Utilizing the Book Effectively: Use "Planting Seeds" as a proactive tool for discussions on sensitive topics—it's more than just a coloring book. For instance, if a child has been exposed to drugs, you might turn to page 28 titled "Making Good Choices":

- First, review the caption yourself to ensure you're comfortable with its content.
- Prepare crayons or other coloring tools.
- Read the caption aloud to the child.
- Engage actively by coloring together and discussing the message of the page. Use this opportunity to guide the conversation towards making safe choices and avoiding drugs.

Engagement Tips: While working on a specific page, read the text aloud, discuss its themes with the child, and encourage them to ask questions. This interactive approach helps deepen their understanding.

Coloring as a Bonding Activity: Encourage parents to color alongside their children. This not only makes the activity more enjoyable but also strengthens bonds and reinforces the positive messages contained within the book.

3. Discussion Prompts for Each Page

- Below are discussion prompts for each page. We encourage you to help the child or children express their thoughts and relate the statement on the page

Being Nice To Everyone

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Being Nice To Everyone" page that you can use to guide conversations with children:

1. Question:

- "Can you think of a time when someone was really kind to you? How did that make you feel?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Let's think about words that can make someone smile. What are some nice things you could say to a friend or even someone you don't know very well to make their day better?"

Be Careful

These questions are designed to help children reflect on their own experiences and understand the impact of their actions and words on others, reinforcing the importance of kindness.

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Be Careful" page to engage children in important conversations about safety and boundaries:

1. Question:

- "What are some things you love to do that make you feel happy and safe? Can you think of a time when something didn't feel right? What did you do?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Imagine if a friend told you something that made them feel uncomfortable or scared. What advice would you give them? Who are the safe adults you would tell if something like that happened to you?"

These prompts aim to encourage children to recognize their own feelings about safety and comfort, empowering them to make decisions that protect their well-being. They also reinforce the importance of discussing uncomfortable situations with trusted adults.

Good Relationships

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Good Relationships" page to help guide conversations with children about the qualities of healthy relationships:

1. Question:

- "Can you think of a friend or family member who makes you feel really happy when you spend time with them? What do they do that makes you feel so good?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Let's talk about respect. What are some ways you can show respect to your friends and family members? How do you feel when someone shows you respect?"

These prompts are designed to encourage children to reflect on their personal relationships and understand the importance of respect and kindness in building positive connections with others. They also help children identify the feelings associated with healthy versus unhealthy interactions.

Be a Leader, Not a Follower

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "Be a Leader, Not a Follower" page to help children understand the importance of independent thinking and leadership:

1. Question:

- "Have you ever been asked to do something you knew was wrong? How did you handle it? What did you decide to do?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Let's talk about making our own choices. Why do you think it's important to make your own decisions instead of just doing what others are doing? Can you think of a time when you felt proud for making a good choice on your own?"

These questions encourage children to think critically about peer pressure, recognize the value of personal decision-making, and understand the characteristics of true leadership. They also help kids articulate their thoughts on resisting negative influences and choosing actions that reflect their values.

Jail Isn't Cool

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Jail Isn't Cool" page to help children understand the consequences of bad choices and the importance of freedom:

1. Question:

- "Why do you think it's important to make good choices? What are some good choices you can make every day?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Imagine not being able to see your friends or choose what you want to do each day. How would that make you feel? Let's discuss why freedom is valuable and how our choices can protect or risk our freedom."

These prompts aim to help children reflect on the impact of their actions and the value of personal freedom, encouraging them to think critically about the consequences of engaging in negative behaviors and the importance of adhering to rules.

Music

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Music" page aimed at helping children critically evaluate the content of songs and distinguish between entertainment and real-life values:

1. Question:

- "Have you ever heard a song with words that didn't seem very nice? What did you think about those words, and did you like the song anyway?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Songs can be really fun to listen to because of their beats or tunes, but sometimes they say things that might not be good to do. Why do you think it's important to remember that what we hear in music isn't always good to do in real life? Can you think of ways we can enjoy music but still make good choices?"

These prompts encourage children to think about the influence of music and its separation from real-life behavior, fostering an understanding of critical listening and responsible enjoyment.

Movies

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Movies" page designed to help children critically assess the portrayals in films and understand their own unique value:

1. Question:

- "Can you think of a movie where the characters didn't make the best choices? How did that make you feel about the actions shown in the movie?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Movies are like stories—they're not always true, and they sometimes show characters doing things we wouldn't do. Why do you think it's important to remember that you are different from the people in movies? What are some good qualities or actions you would like to see more in movie characters?"

These prompts help children distinguish between the fictional nature of movies and real-life behaviors, encouraging them to think critically about the content they consume and aspire to embody positive real-life qualities.

Social Media

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Social Media" page, aimed at guiding children to use social media responsibly:

1. Question:

- "Have you or someone you know ever posted something online that they wished they hadn't? What happened, and what did they learn from that experience?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Social media can be a lot of fun for sharing and connecting with friends, but we need to be thoughtful about what we post. Why is it important to think carefully before sharing something online? What are some things you should always consider safe and nice to share?"

These prompts encourage children to think about the long-term impact of what they share online, promoting safer and more thoughtful engagement with social media.

Growing Up Poor

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Growing Up Poor" page, aimed at discussing financial challenges and responsible ways to handle them:

1. Question:

- "Can you think of any jobs or tasks that kids your age can do to earn money safely? What are some of the jobs you might like to try?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "It can be tough not having as much money for things like new clothes or even enough food. What are some ways you can earn money safely without getting into trouble? How can being creative or helpful around your neighborhood be a good way to start?"

These prompts help children think about constructive responses to financial difficulties and encourage them to explore safe, age-appropriate ways to contribute to their households or save for their own needs.

Losing Friends

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Losing Friends" page, which discusses dealing with loss and making safe choices:

1. Question:

- "Have you ever lost something or someone important to you? How did that make you feel, and what helped you feel a little better?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "It's very tough when we lose friends or people we care about. Why do you think it's important to make good choices about where we go and who we spend time with? How can making safe choices protect us and the people we care about?"

These prompts help children process feelings of loss in a constructive way, encouraging them to think about personal safety and the impact of their choices on their lives and the lives of others.

Finding a Way to Make Money

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Finding a Way to Make Money" page, focusing on the importance of making ethical choices and the potential of education:

1. Question:

- "Can you think of some ways that people can earn money safely? What are some jobs or tasks that you think would be good for someone your age?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "It's important to make money the right way, even when times are tough. Why do you think education is important for having a better life in the future? How can learning now help you and your family later?"

These prompts aim to encourage children to think creatively and ethically about earning money and to reinforce the value of education as a long-term investment in their future and the well-being of their family.

Breaking a Bad Cycle

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "Breaking a Bad Cycle" page, aimed at empowering children to make positive changes and break negative family patterns:

1. Question:

- "What are some good choices you can make every day that might be different from things you see around you? How can these choices change things for you and your family?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Sometimes, people grow up in tough situations that might make it hard for them to know the best thing to do. Can you think of ways to help yourself or a friend make good decisions, even when it's really difficult? What might be some first steps to breaking a bad cycle and starting a good one?"

These prompts encourage children to reflect on their own circumstances and consider how individual actions can lead to positive change, fostering resilience and a proactive attitude toward life's challenges.

Making Good Choices

Here are a couple of discussion prompts and questions based on the "Making Good Choices" page, which addresses the dangers of drug use:

1. Question:

- "Why do you think it's important to avoid trying drugs, even if someone says they are fun? What are some other fun and safe activities you can do instead?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Drugs can be very harmful and have dangerous things in them that you can't see. How can you stay safe and help your friends stay safe too? What are some ways to say 'no' if someone offers you something that could be dangerous?"

These prompts are designed to engage children in thinking critically about peer pressure, the risks associated with drug use, and making healthy choices that contribute to their well-being. They also encourage discussion on strategies for resisting dangerous substances and suggest positive alternatives to risky behaviors.

You Can Stop

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "You Can Stop" page, aimed at encouraging children to make positive changes and avoid negative behaviors:

1. Question:

- "Can you think of any habits or activities that might not be good for you or your friends? What are some positive activities that you could do instead?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "It's never too late to change a behavior, even if it might seem cool or hard to stop. What are some steps you can take to start making better choices? How can your unique skills and talents help you focus on doing good and safe things?"

These prompts are designed to help children recognize their ability to change their actions and reinforce the concept that they possess unique strengths and talents that can be directed towards positive and safe activities.

Making Good Choices

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "Making Good Choices" theme, focusing on the importance of positive decision-making and avoiding negative influences:

1. Question:

- "Have you ever been in a situation where friends or people around you were making unsafe choices? What did you do?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Being part of a group that does unsafe things, like being in a gang, can be harmful. What are some safe activities you can do instead? How can helping at home or participating in community groups make a positive difference in your life?"

These prompts encourage children to think about the choices they face and to consider safe and positive alternatives. They also help children understand the value of contributing positively to their family and community.

Helping Yourself and Your Friends

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "Helping Yourself and Your Friends" theme, aimed at encouraging children to support their peers in making safe choices:

1. Question:

- "What would you do if you saw a friend doing something dangerous or making bad choices? How would you talk to them about it?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Sometimes, talking to a friend who is making unsafe choices can be hard. What are some ways you can show you care about them without putting yourself at risk? Why is it important to choose friends who make safe decisions?"

These prompts guide children to think about how they can positively influence their friends while maintaining their own safety. They also help kids understand the importance of surrounding themselves with peers who uphold similar values of safety and good judgment.

Making Safe Choices

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "Making Safe Choices" theme, focusing on the consequences of negative behaviors like bullying and the importance of making positive decisions:

1. Question:

- "Why do you think bullying or making others do bad things isn't a good way to be in charge or make money? What are some consequences that might happen?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Sometimes people think doing risky things might be a quick way to make money or seem cool. What are some safe and honest ways you can earn money or gain respect? Why is it important to choose these methods?"

These prompts encourage children to think critically about the impact of their actions on themselves and others. They also guide them to consider safer and more positive alternatives for earning money and respect, reinforcing the importance of integrity and safety.

The Golden Rule

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "The Golden Rule" theme, which emphasizes treating others with kindness and respect:

1. Question:

- "How do you feel when someone treats you nicely? Can you think of a time when you treated someone else the way you like to be treated? How did they react?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Imagine you're in a situation where your group of friends doesn't get along with another group. How can the 'golden rule' help you act in this situation? Why is it important to remember that other kids are just like you, even if they come from different places or backgrounds?"

These prompts are designed to help children apply the "golden rule" in their interactions and to recognize the value of empathy and kindness in resolving conflicts and building positive relationships. They also encourage children to think about the consequences of their actions in a group context and the importance of maintaining personal freedom and happiness through positive behavior.

Believe in Yourself

Here are some discussion prompts and questions based on the "Believe in Yourself" theme, designed to inspire self-confidence and resilience:

1. Question:

- "Can you share a time when you felt really proud of something you did? How did believing in yourself help you achieve that?"

2. Discussion Prompt:

- "Sometimes we all face tough situations or people who might doubt us. How can remembering to believe in yourself help you overcome these challenges? What are some ways you can remind yourself of your strengths and capabilities during tough times?"

These prompts encourage children to reflect on their own experiences of self-belief and its impact on their actions. They also help kids think about strategies for maintaining self-confidence and pursuing their goals despite external challenges.

4. Guidance for Parents: Supporting Emotional Growth

● Recognizing Growth Opportunities:

To effectively use the messages from the "Planting Seeds" coloring book to support children, especially during moments of frustration or challenges, here are some tips for identifying and utilizing these opportunities:

1. **Recognizing Signs of Emotional Distress:** Observe the child for signs of frustration, such as withdrawal from activities they usually enjoy, expressions of sadness or anger, or verbal cues like statements of self-doubt or defeat. These are moments to reinforce messages of resilience and self-belief, similar to the "Believe in Yourself" theme.
2. **During Peer Interactions:** Watch how the child interacts with others. If they seem to be influenced easily by peers in a negative way or are involved in conflicts, it's a good

opportunity to discuss the themes of "Making Good Choices" and "Be a Leader, Not a Follower". Encourage them to reflect on how they can apply these ideas in their daily interactions.

3. **After Mistakes or Failures:** Any time a child experiences a setback or fails at a task, use it as a teaching moment. Encourage them to treat it as a learning experience, echoing the messages about persistence and learning from the "You Can Stop" and "Breaking a Bad Cycle" sections.
4. **Witnessing or Experiencing Bullying:** If a child is involved in or witnesses bullying, it's crucial to intervene and use it as a moment to reinforce the "Golden Rule" and the importance of treating others kindly, as discussed in the book.
5. **Observing Risky Behaviors:** If you notice a child showing curiosity about or engaging in risky behaviors (like those mentioned in the book regarding drugs or joining groups that encourage negative behavior), it's vital to address these curiosities safely and informatively. Reiterate the consequences and healthier alternatives as described in "Making Safe Choices."
6. **During Creative Play:** As the child engages in coloring or other creative activities, use this relaxed time to talk about the themes in the book. Discuss the stories and lessons related to the pictures they are coloring, making the connection between the activity and the learning points more tangible.

By staying attentive to these situations and understanding how to apply the lessons from the "Planting Seeds" coloring book, you can provide children with the tools they need to navigate their world more positively and safely.

- **Encouraging Self-Expression:** Encourage parents to let their children express themselves openly and to listen actively to their thoughts and feelings.

A Note from the Author

Dear Mentors and Guardians,

Thank you for taking the time to explore the Planting Seeds Mentoring Coloring Book. Your commitment to your child's growth and well-being is inspiring. Parenting and mentoring are some of the most rewarding yet challenging roles we can undertake. This guide and coloring book were created with you in mind, to help make those challenges a little easier and those rewards even greater.

Through the simple act of coloring together, you have the opportunity to connect with your child on a deeper level, spark meaningful conversations about serious issues, and plant the seeds of confidence, resilience, and positive thinking that will grow throughout their lives. Every page is designed to empower both you and your child to face life's challenges with understanding, courage, and hope.

Remember, the time and effort you invest now are shaping the leaders, dreamers, and changemakers of tomorrow. Your guidance and love are the foundation they will stand on as they navigate the world. Thank you for believing in the power of this journey and for being a steady light in their lives.

With gratitude and encouragement,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping loop that ends with a smaller, more intricate flourish.

Armand King

Author of *Planting Seeds*