**Discussing the Idea of Friendship based on the novella –**

***The Friendship* by Mildred D. Taylor**



**For Caregivers**

**About the novella The Friendship by Mildred D. Taylor**

This 53-page novella is set in the 1930s rural Mississippi demonstrating the context of black and white relations during that time in that region of the United States. However, the book is primarily about the concept of friendship and what that means to different individuals. The cover of the back book indicates that it is for ages 7-10 years of age. Note that it is written in the dialect of the time and area. Caregiver warning: there is an act of violence that occurs at the end of the book.

Caregivers, before your child or you and your child read this novella, discuss friendship choosing from the questions provided. You may want to choose a couple of questions to discuss before each reading. Once the novella is finished, go back over the questions you have discussed considering the events that happen in the book. An example has been provided.

**Spoiler Alert – Brief Summary**

Mr. Tom Bee who is African American saved John Wallace’s life, who is white, twice when John was a teen. Mr. Tom Bee also took him in and raised him for a period. John promised Mr. Tom Bee that he would never have to call him ‘Mr.’. When Mr. Tom Bee insists on calling him John without the ‘Mr.’, it leads to a violent confrontation.

For more a more detailed summary of the novella, google ‘summary of the friendship by Mildred D. Taylor’.

**Questions to Consider Prior and After Reading the Novella**

Why do you think ‘The Friendship’ is the title of this book?

After previewing the book, beyond the general idea of friendship, what do you think the book will be about?

What is your definition of friendship?

What are your ideas about loyalty and friendship?

How do you think friends should treat each other?

Have you ever ‘dissed’ a friend when you really didn’t want to? What made you ‘diss’ them? Or - Have you ever made the choice not to be friends with someone because of peer pressure?

 If a fiend is ‘diss-able’, are they truly a friend?

How did you feel after you had ‘dissed’ them?

Did you apologize? Did they accept your apology?

What is peer pressure?

Would you like to share about a time that you experienced peer pressure or witnessed it?

Could peer pressure make you disloyal to a friend?

“She/he’s a *true* friend”. What does that quote mean to you?

If someone saved your life and they lived near you, do you think you all would be friends? Why or why not?

**After reading the novella, revisit your questions and answers and discuss in terms of the events of the novella. For example- What type of peer pressure did Mr. John Wallace face? Is that what made him disloyal to Mr. Tom Bee? Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?**