Rules
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Library of Congress Summary: Frustrated at life with an autistic brother, twelve-year-old Catherine longs for a normal existence but her world is further complicated by a friendship with a young paraplegic.

Book Information:
Genre: Contemporary Fiction

http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/lord_rules.htm

Author Information
http://www.cynthialord.com/

Pre-reading activities

1. Explain what autism is- teach a mini lesson about autism or have a special education teacher come in as a guest speaker to explain the disability.
2. Have students write a list of rules that they would like their brothers or sisters to live by. (If the student is an only child, have him or her write rules for a close friend or cousin.)

Chapter 1

Questions-

Do you think that Catherine should lie to David?

What might you suggest she do instead?

Why do you think Catherine is so bossy with David? How should we speak to others?
Journal- Why do you think Catherine is so embarrassed by her brother? Should she be? Why or why not?

Vocabulary:

Rule (Page 1) - a principle or regulation governing conduct, action, procedure, arrangement.

Crude (Page 2) - lacking in intellectual subtlety, perceptivity.

Shriek (Page 3) - a loud, sharp, shrill cry.

Flickers (Page 6) - a flickering movement.

Occupational Therapy (Page 11) - a form of therapy in which patients are encouraged to engage in vocational tasks or expressive activities, as art or dance, usually in a social setting.

Chapter 2

Questions-

Do you think that Catherine should have asked Jason for permission to draw him?

Have you ever been caught doing something and been embarrassed?

Do you know or have you seen someone with a disability?

Why do you think Catherine has such a negative attitude?

Have you ever given a gift to someone?

Journal- Has something ever made you uncomfortable? If so, what and how do you deal with this feeling?

Vocabulary:

Appointment (Page 14) - a scheduled meeting.

Musty (Page 15) - having an odor or flavor suggestive of mold, as old buildings, long-closed rooms, or stale food.
Vacancy (Page 17) – an empty or unoccupied place, as untenanted lodgings or offices

Chapter 3

Questions- Have you ever been laughed at?

Have you every laughed at someone with the intention to hurt them?

How do you feel when others hurt you?

Why do you think Catherine is waiting for the new neighbors to arrive? What do you think they will be like?

David loves the book, *Frog and Toad are Friends*; what is your favorite book?

Journal- David’s favorite place to visit is the video store. Where do you love to be?

Vocabulary:

Sound (Page 29) - vibrations transmitted through the air or other medium

Loud (Page 29) - strongly audible; having exceptional volume or intensity.

Pharmacy (Page 34) – Drugstore

Prescription (Page 24) - a direction, usually written, by the physician to the pharmacist for the preparation and use of a medicine or remedy

Preparation (Page 25) – to get ready for something in advance

Chapter 4

Questions-

How do you think Jason feels about being in a wheelchair?

Why do you think Catherine wanted to draw more cards for Jason?
Does it make you mad when people don’t look at you?

**Journal**- If you could invent a new way for Jason to communicate, what would you do?

**Vocabulary**:

Morse code (page 41) - either of two systems of clicks and pauses, short and long sounds, or flashes of light, used to represent the letters of the alphabet, numerals, etc.

Bobbing (page 42) - to move about with jerky, usually rising and falling motions.

Grimace (page 43) – a facial expression, often ugly or contorted, that indicates disapproval or pain.

**Chapter 5**

**Questions**-

Have any of you been to a museum? / What museums have you been to?

What words do you think Catherine should write on Jason’s cards?

**Journal**- What do you think Ryan was telling the girl next door?

**Vocabulary**:

Gauzy (Page 52) - resembling gauze; thin and transparent.

**Chapter 6**

**Questions**-

Do you think that Catherine’s parents should buy her everything she asks for?

Do your parents give you an allowance?

Why do you think she has such an attitude with her parents?

Would you be embarrassed to have company over if David was your brother?

Should Catherine’s mom baby David?
Journal- Why did Catherine lie to her parents? Have you ever told a lie?

Vocabulary:
Soothe (Page 64) - to calm someone’s feelings of anger, fear, or stress.
Thrashing (Page 64) - to wave ones arms uncontrolled and violently through the air.

Chapter 7

Questions-
Why do you think Catherine is nicer to Jason than her own brother?
Jason does not like the speech lady very well, why do you think this is?
Does it make you mad when other people speak for you?
What kind of words do you think she will make with the new cards?
Journal- What do you think it means to be a friend? Do you only have to be friends in one location?

Vocabulary:
Surround (Page 68) - to enclose on all sides.
Yanking (Page 68) – to pull or remove abruptly.
Startles (Page 68) – to disturb or agitate suddenly as by surprise or alarm.
Faint (Page 68) – lacking loudness, a very light or quiet sound.

Chapter 8

Questions-
If you were Catherine, would you like to babysit David?
What could she have done differently?
How should Catherine treat David?
Was it right for Catherine to not go to OT, when she told Jason she would be there?

How do you think Jason will react to Catherine not being there?

**Journal**- Has anyone ever stood you up before? How did that make you feel?

**Vocabulary:**

Frustrating (Page 78) – an emotion that is caused by stress and agitation.

Portrait (Page 78) - is a painting, drawing, sculpture, photograph, or other likeness of an individual.

**Chapter 9**

**Questions**-

Should Catherine feel guilty about not visiting Jason?

Why do you think the guinea pig squeals bother David?

Why was it wrong for Catherine to not go to OT today?

**Journal**- How do you think Catherine is going to make it up to Jason on Tuesday?

**Vocabulary:**

Bureau (Page 90) – is a chest of drawers, often with a mirror at the top.

Squirming (Page 91) - to feel or display discomfort or distress.

**Chapter 10 & 11**

**Questions**-

What do you think is in Catherine’s backpack?

Why do you think it is so easy for Catherine to be nice to Jason, when she is so bossy to David?

Why do you think Jason’s speech therapist speaks so loudly to him?
Do you think that bullying should be tolerated?

Why do you think Ryan is so mean to David?

Do you notice any changes in the way Catherine is treating David?

Journal- (1) If you needed to cheer up one of your friends, what would you do?

(2) Write about a time that you were bullied or maybe a time that you bullied someone else. How did it make you feel? If you were the bully, how do you think the other person felt?

Vocabulary:

Communication (Page 99) – is the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.

Murky (Page 111) – is something that is dark, gloomy, and cheerless.

**Chapter 12 & 13**

**Questions-**

Should Jason learn the bad words that Catherine gives him?

Why do you think Jason feels so lonely?

Do you think that Catherine’s dad is too busy for his kids?

Do you think that Catherine might worry about her parents getting a divorce? Why?

Journal- (1) Pretend you are Jason; how do you feel about your ride in the parking lot? What is the experience like?

(2) How would your life be different, if you were in a wheelchair?

Vocabulary:

Traffic (Page 114) – are vehicles or people, moving in an area, along a street.

**Chapter 14**
Questions-

Do you think Kristi will call?

Would you like to swim in a pond?

Why do you think Catherine tries to change the subject every time Kristi talks about her parents’ separation?

Do you think Catherine should ask Jason to the dance?

Journal- If you could have one wish, what would it be?

Vocabulary-

Ordinary (Page 133) – means to be plain or undistinguished.

Shiver (Page 138) - to shake or tremble with cold.

Scramble (Page 138) – to move quickly.

Chapter 15 & 16

Questions-

Do you think Jason will invite Catherine to his birthday party?

Do you think Jason likes Catherine?

Why do you think Catherine tried to hide from Kristi?

Do you think Kristi is a good friend to Catherine?

Based on Kristi’s answer, do you think she is only allowed to go with Ryan if Catherine goes?

Journal- Do you think Catherine should go to the dance? Why or why not?

Write your predictions as to what will happen next.

Vocabulary:
Motorized chair (Page 145) - is a wheelchair that allows the persons confined to the chair to operate the machine independently.

Surge (Page 146) - is a strong, wavelike, forward movement, rush, or sweep.

Snatch (Page 151) - to take something away abruptly.

**Chapter 17 & 18**

**Questions**

What do you think Catherine will get for Jason?

Have any of you been to an antique store?

How do you think Jason will react to his guitar?

Why do you think Jason was so upset by Catherine’s picture on the card that said together?

Do you think Catherine is worrying too much about bringing David to the party?

Are you surprised that Jason likes to play the piano?

Do you think that Catherine is making excuses not to go to the dance?

Should she go with Jason?

**Journal** - (1) If you could own a store, what would you sell?

(2) Has anyone ever said anything to you that has made you cry? What did you do to resolve the issue?

**Vocabulary**:

Broach (Page 162) – a jewelry pin.

Acoustic Guitar (Page 163) – is a musical instrument whose sound is not electrically enhanced or modified.

Mysterious (Page 176) – to be puzzling, curious, or unrevealed

**Chapter 19 & 20**
Questions-

Who does Catherine blame for what happened at the party? Why?

Do you think Catherine is embarrassed of Jason?

Why do you think it is not a good idea to say there is an emergency if there is not one?

Do you think Jason will come to the dance?

Journal- How do you think the story will end?

Vocabulary:

Bitter (Page180) – having a harsh, disagreeable taste, something that is hard to bear.

Hollow (Page187) - an empty space within anything.

Chapter 21 & 22

Questions-

Do you think Catherine will leave without seeing if Jason will arrive?

Do you think Kristi and Catherine will ever be the kind of friends that Catherine would have hoped?

Why should we not make excuses when apologizing?

How do you think Catherine views her brother at the end of the story?

Journal- What do you think Catherine learned about herself this summer? What did you like about this book?

Vocabulary:

Equipment (Page191) – is materials for aiding in different sports activities.

Twines (Page 192) - a coiled or twisted object or part.
Interdisciplinary Activities

Science/Health-This book could be used or referenced in a health lesson to demonstrate some of the different characteristics of children with disabilities. Children with autism like David may have very similar tendencies such as: not liking loud noises, shrieking, persistence in questions, having the inability to know what is acceptable and what is not, etc. Autism varies in severity. Have students identify the characteristics that David possesses in the health lesson.

Language Arts and Art- Give each student a piece of white cardstock or computer paper. Have students write any word of their choice on one side of the page. On the other side, have the students draw a picture that describes the word that they chose.

Other Books By Cynthia Lord

Touch Blue
Hot Rod Hamster
Happy Birthday Hamster

Related Websites
http://iautistic.com/free-autism-games.php This website is designed for children with autism or Asperger’s, but could be used during this story unit to help other children understand they different ways that these children think. The website is designed to help children with these disabilities understand the different emotions that people express. There are other interactive programs for students to view and experiment with on this page.

http://autismparents.net/top-10-fun-websites-for-kids-with-autism/ This website is great for parents and teachers; it provides links to different sites for students with autism.
This file contains more discussion questions to go along with the book. It may be helpful for more advanced students.


