Giraffes Can't Dance: Friendly Letter to Gerald

Directions: After reading *Giraffes Can't Dance* there are many opportunities to discuss SEL concepts such as friendship, bullying, confidence, and encouragement. Students can apply these concepts by writing a friendly letter and reflecting on character actions from the story. Here are several ideas:

- Gerald feels sad because the other animals laugh at him. Write a letter to Gerald to cheer him up. What advice would you give him? What kind words would help him believe in himself?

- Imagine you are Gerald after the dance. Write a letter to another animal who feels like they aren't good enough. Explain what you learned about believing in yourself.

- Write a letter to the other animals. Explain why teasing hurts people and how they could have been better friends to Gerald.

- Write a thank you letter from Gerald to the cricket. Tell the cricket how their encouragement changed everything and why kind words matter.

Ideas for scaffolding:

- Complete this as a shared writing as a class. Work through the parts of a friendly letter, and think out loud as you share the pen with students to write a friendly letter.
- Create an anchor chart of what a good friendly letter includes and have students use it as a template for their own writing.
- Build a word bank together as a class of different words for feelings, encouraging words, and kind phrases that they might want to include in their own writing.
- Provide sentence starters for students such as
    - I know...
    - I noticed...
    - I am sorry...
    - I think...
    - Remember...
    - Sometimes...
- Provide a graphic organizer