

Ages 4–8: Gentle Conversation Starters

These prompts focus on **story understanding, emotions, and simple number ideas**.

1. What did the kittens buy that surprised you the most?
2. How do you think Mother felt when she came home? Why?
3. Were the kittens spending money or earning money at the beginning of the story?
4. What happened to their money when they kept buying things?
5. What did the kittens do to fix their mistake?
6. How did earning money feel different than spending money?
7. If you were one of the kittens, what would you have done differently?

Goal: Build early awareness that choices affect outcomes and that numbers can go up and down.

Ages 9–13: Deeper Thinking & Math Connections

These prompts encourage **reflection, cause-and-effect reasoning, and mathematical thinking**.

1. Why do you think the kittens didn't realize how much they were spending at first?
2. What does it mean to be "below zero" in the story? How is that shown in the illustrations?
3. How do the equations help explain what's happening to the kittens' money?
4. What is the difference between borrowing money and earning money in this story?
5. How does returning items change the total compared to earning new money?
6. Why do you think the author chose not to explain the math directly in the text?
7. Can you think of a real-life situation where numbers might go below zero?

Goal: Connect story events to integers, financial choices, and abstract math ideas.