

# choosing Kind

**Dear Educator,**

**"YOU CAN'T BLEND IN WHEN  
YOU WERE BORN TO STAND OUT."**

With this powerful message, R.J. Palacio's award-winning book, *Wonder*, has captured the hearts of kids and adults in schools and communities across the country, inspiring them to "choose kind."

The book's main character, 10-year-old August Pullman, who was born with a facial difference, wants his classmates to see him as an ordinary kid with an extraordinary face when he enrolls in fifth grade after being homeschooled for years. His story encourages young readers to be kind, to celebrate our differences, and to reflect on the power of our words and actions.

Inspired by *Wonder*, Random House Children's Books and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired have created *Choosing Kind*, a free language arts program with thought-provoking activities that support social-emotional learning. The activities can be used with or without reading the book.

Feel free to share this program with other teachers and families in your school. And please let us know your thoughts on the program by visiting [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-wonder](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/feedback-wonder). We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley

Editor in Chief

Young Minds Inspired

For questions, contact us toll-free  
at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at  
[feedback@ymiclassroom.com](mailto:feedback@ymiclassroom.com).



## About *Wonder*

August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a facial difference that prevented him from going to mainstream school—until now. He's about to enter fifth grade at Beecher Prep, and if you have ever been the new kid, then you know how hard that can be. The thing is, Auggie's just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates he's just like them, despite appearances?

## Target Audience

Students in grades 4 to 6

## Program Components

Visit [ymiclassroom.com/wonder](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/wonder) for the following:

- This teacher's guide
- Two reproducible activity sheets
- A standards alignment chart

## Program Objectives

- Support language arts and literacy
- Reinforce critical-thinking and SEL skills
- Inspire students to choose kindness, be empathetic, and consider other people's perspectives

## How to Use the Program

Make copies of the two activity sheets to use at school or send them home for families to complete together. The activities can be done with or without reading the book.

## Activity 1:

### Choose Kindness Wonder Week

Introduce the lesson by explaining that Auggie, the main character in *Wonder*, was born with a facial difference. He has been homeschooled and is about to start fifth grade at a local school. Ask students: *How do you think Auggie feels about starting school?* Explain that Auggie is nervous and just wants to fit in.

Next, explain that Auggie's classmate, Summer, sits with him at lunch because she wants to be friends with him. Ask: *How does it make you feel when someone is kind to you? How does being kind help someone who may be struggling?*

Help students make connections with Auggie's story by having them think about ways we are similar and different from our friends. Ask: *How do your different qualities make you your own person? Why should we get to know people instead of judging them based on appearances?*

Distribute the activity sheet and have students read aloud some ways we can be kind. Have them complete another week of kindness ideas with their families at home. As a follow-up, have students answer the "Think About It" questions and share their responses.

## Activity 2:

### WONDERful Words to Live By

To start this activity, tell students that each month, Auggie's English teacher, Mr. Browne, shares precepts with his class. *Precepts* are general rules that help guide us when we are making decisions about important things.

Distribute the activity sheet. Review two of Mr. Browne's precepts and have students respond to them. (Students can also choose additional ones from the book.)

Before students begin writing their own precepts, emphasize that they

should focus on kindness, being a good friend, being a good listener, overcoming obstacles, or seeing things from other people's perspectives. Students might work with partners to complete the activity. Afterwards, have students share their precepts with the class.

As a follow-up, have a class discussion. Ask: *Why is it important to celebrate each other's differences? As a class, how can we do that?*



## Extension Activities

- Create a "Month of Wonder" wall calendar to celebrate the book's messages. As a class, brainstorm kindness ideas and add them to a large bulletin board display made of 31 large boxes—one idea per day.
- Invite students to spread kindness at school by painting kindness rocks to place around the school, making kindness bookmarks to leave in the library, or creating a "WONDER-full Wall of Kindness" in which students create a display of kind words and sayings to inspire the school community.
- Celebrate your students' precepts by having them design posters, flyers, cards, or bulletin boards with their messages.

## Discussion and Writing Prompts

Below are more prompts to engage students:

- As the story in *Wonder* unfolds, we hear the viewpoints from different characters like Auggie's sister, Via. Ask: *What can we learn by seeing things from someone else's perspective?*
- Auggie's good friend Jack Will makes fun of him with a group of kids. They don't realize Auggie overhears them because he is wearing a Halloween costume. Ask: *Have you ever said something you wish you didn't? How did that make you feel? How could you have handled the situation differently?* Emphasize to students that it's never too late to learn from our mistakes, apologize, and change our behavior.
- Look at the cover of *Wonder*. Ask: *What about the design stands out to you? If you were to make a book cover of yourself, how would you do it? What would you include and why?*

## Online Resources

- [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com)
- [ymiclassroom.com/wonder](http://ymiclassroom.com/wonder)



# CHOOSE KINDNESS WONDER WEEK

Reproducible Master

In the book *Wonder*, we learn that small acts of kindness can make a big difference to others, like Summer sitting with Auggie at lunch. What are some ways you can spread kindness? Below is a week filled with examples of kind acts you can try. Write your own ideas for another week in the blank chart.



<b>Sunday</b>	Choose some toys or clothes to donate.
<b>Monday</b>	Give a family member a standing ovation.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Tell a family member what makes them wonderful.
<b>Wednesday</b>	Invite a new friend to play.
<b>Thursday</b>	Hold the door open for someone.
<b>Friday</b>	Eat lunch with someone new at school.
<b>Saturday</b>	Draw a picture for someone.

<b>Sunday</b>	
<b>Monday</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>	

## Think About It!

During his graduation address, Beecher Prep's principal, Mr. Tushman, says: "Shall we make a new rule of life ... always to try to be a little kinder than is necessary." What do you think he means? Why do you think his advice is important? Write your answers on the back of this sheet.

## For Families:

Brainstorm additional acts of kindness that your family can do together. You might make a card for a neighbor, smile at someone, read to a family member, or do chores without being asked.





# Wonderful WORDS TO LIVE BY



**M**r. Browne is Auggie's English teacher at Beecher Prep. Each month, Mr. Browne writes a precept for the class. *Precepts* are rules or words to live by. Below are two precepts about kindness that Mr. Browne shared with Auggie's class. Read the precepts and write what each means to you. Use the back of the sheet if you need more space.

**1.** When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind. —Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

**2.** Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much. —Blaise Pascal

**Now,** it's your turn to write your own precepts on some topics below. You can also use quotes you like from books like *Wonder* as precepts—just be sure to credit the quotes. As you write your precepts, think about messages you want to share about kindness, character, courage, accepting differences, and helping others. In the last row, choose your own topic to write a precept about, such as the environment or making the world a better place.

Topic	Your Precept
Friends and Family	
School	
Sports and Hobbies	
Your choice:	



**For Families:** Auggie's mom tells him that he is a wonder. Have a family discussion about the qualities that make each member of your family unique and special. What makes each of you a wonder? Why is it important to celebrate our differences and individuality? Talk about how your family shows respect and kindness to others.