



## WONDER CLASSROOM DISCUSSION GUIDE

In *Wonder*, R.J. Palacio tells the story of Auggie, a tough, sweet, 10-year-old boy, who was born with distorted facial features — a "craniofacial difference" caused by an anomaly in his DNA. *Wonder* shares the experiences Auggie encounters during his transition from home school to public school, as well as the experiences of his classmates, teachers and administrators.

*Wonder* can be an excellent addition to a classroom curriculum as a tool to facilitate kindness and inclusion. Offering opportunities for group reflection is a meaningful way to help children come to terms with some of the events and behaviors in the book.

### POTENTIAL CLASSROOM DISCUSSION POINTS

#### CHOOSING KIND

One of Auggie's teacher's challenges the kids: "When given the choice between being right, or being kind, choose kind." Choose kind becomes a central theme of the book. What does that mean to you?

#### AUGGIE'S APPEARANCE

Throughout *Wonder*, Auggie describes the way that many people react to seeing his face for the first time: by covertly staring, or by immediately looking away. Have you ever been in a situation where you have responded like this to seeing someone who looks different? Having read *Wonder*, how do you feel about this now?

Auggie's face is not fully described until quite far on in the story. When Auggie's appearance is described in Via's chapter "August: Through the Peephole," how did the description of Auggie compare to your own ideas of how Auggie might have looked? Did this description alter that mental picture?

#### AUGGIE'S PERSONALITY

How would you describe Auggie as a person in the first few chapters of the book? What about the final few chapters? Has he changed significantly? Are there any experiences or episodes during the story that you think had a particular effect on him? If so, how?

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## AUGGIE'S LOVE FOR STAR WARS

Star Wars is one of Auggie's passions. Why do you think this is? Do you see any reasons for Auggie to identify with these characters, or to aspire to be like them?

## MRS. ALBANS

Look at the emails between Mr. Tushman, Julian's parents, and Jack's parents in the chapter "Letters, Emails, Facebook, Texts." Up to this point in the story, we have seen how the children at Auggie's school have reacted to him. How is Mrs. Albans' attitude towards Auggie different? What are your thoughts about Mrs. Albans' statement that Auggie is handicapped? Do you think she is correct in saying that asking "ordinary" children, such as Julian, to befriend Auggie places a burden on them?

## STORYTELLING FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Did you like the way R.J. Palacio told the story from alternating viewpoints? Why or why not?

## ACTIVE KINDNESS VS. FRIENDLINESS

Summer very actively behaves in ways that demonstrate the "choose kind" philosophy. Charlotte, on the other hand, is a character who is asked to befriend Auggie, and she does, but in a more passive way. If you were in a situation like this, would you be like Summer or Charlotte? In what ways?

## WONDER PRECEPTS

All year the students learn "Mr. Browne's Precepts" and then write their own over the summer. What was your favorite of the precepts? Why?

## WHAT PARTS OF THE STORY MADE YOU PARTICULARLY SAD?

## WHAT PARTS OF THE STORY WERE FUNNY OR MADE YOU LAUGH?

## WHAT CHARACTERS WERE YOU ABLE TO RELATE TO THE MOST?

## SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Resources for teachers from R.J. Palacio's website](#)

[Wonder "Kind Classroom" guide](#)

[Learn more about craniofacial anomalies](#)

[Learn more about C.S. Mott Children's Hospital's Wonder outreach initiative](#)

## CLASSROOM VISITS

Your classroom can request a visit with a member of the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital Craniofacial Anomalies Program! Learn about some of the challenges kids with craniofacial anomalies face and support a deeper understanding of what Auggie's experiences may have been like. Visit [www.mottchildren.org/wonder](http://www.mottchildren.org/wonder) to request a classroom visit.

*C.S. Mott Children's Hospital would like to thank the Coghlan family for funding our **Wonder** outreach initiative, allowing us to share the magic of this touching story with our communities.*