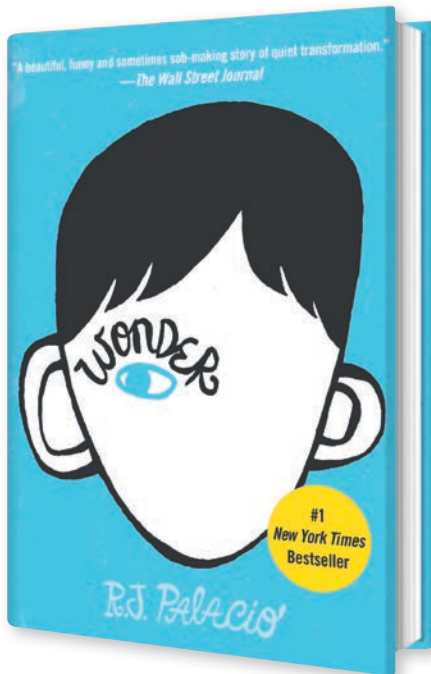


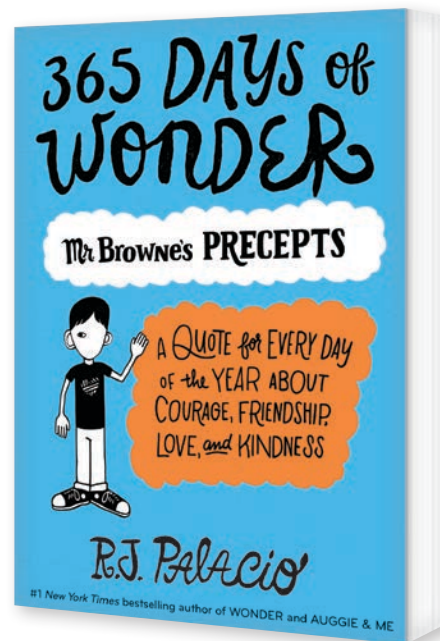


Wonder

Exploring Precepts in the Classroom



Wonder
Grades 3–7
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In R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*, readers were introduced to memorable English teacher Mr. Browne and his love of precepts. Simply put, **precepts are principles to live by**, and Mr. Browne's selections celebrate kindness, hopefulness, the goodness of human beings, the strength of people's hearts, and the power of people's wills.

Here are suggestions for using precepts in your classroom. Our hope is that these ideas will not only touch the lives of the students, but people throughout their school, community, and beyond.

Exploring Precepts Daily, Weekly, Monthly, and Seasonally



- Share the precept of the day in the school announcements. Consider having a student read it and have classrooms discuss and respond.
- Have a whiteboard near the entrance to the school—or the entrance to your classroom—with the precept of the day. Have a student be responsible for writing the precept of the day each day, or rotate this responsibility among students/classrooms.
- If it is a student's birthday, have him or her read the precept of the day before celebrating.
- Post the precept for each day of the week in your classroom. On Friday, have students brainstorm specific ways they can enact each precept, and encourage them to write a blog post.
- Once a week, interview a student at your school. Ask him or her to identify a precept and a time where they saw that precept at work in their life.
- Record a weekly podcast where students share stories or examples of what a precept means to them.
- Read all precepts for a given month at the beginning of the month. Have students vote on which precept the class will work on together during that month. Have students reflect at the end of each week on how well they are progressing toward that goal.
- Create a calendar with twelve precepts as a gift for someone (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas, Hanukkah, birthday).

Exploring Precepts in Your Classroom, School, Community, and Beyond

- At the end of the year, have students select a favorite precept and create a page based on that precept. Put all of the pages together in a "Book of Precepts" for each student to keep.
- Host a *Wonder Night*, where each classroom is responsible for one precept. Give presentations in each room based on the precept.
- To connect students in your school, have upper elementary students create a lesson for lower elementary students about what a precept means to them.
- Have students choose their favorite precept and design a poster that contains the written precept as well as a student's illustration of it. Frame each student's artwork and post it around the school.
- Have students share a precept at home, then report back to their classmates about what their family members had to say about that precept.
- Have students write a thank-you letter to the author of a precept, explaining the impact that precept had on their life.
- Choose a class precept and design a community-service project based on it. Students should plan and execute this project as a group, documenting their progress through a video, podcast, or blog. Share the project and persuade other classrooms to do the same.
- Have students pick a precept and interview five adults about what that precept means to them.
- Pick a precept and choose a children's book that goes along with it. Have students read their book to another class and explain why they chose it for that precept.
- Search online or in newspapers for real-life stories that embody a precept of your choice. Have students share their findings with a classroom discussion or through a blog post.

Exploring Precepts Through Art, Writing, and Media Projects

CHALLENGE STUDENTS WITH THESE PROJECTS, WHICH COULD BE PRESENTED AS OPTIONS ON A CHOICE BOARD.

- Work with a partner to record videos in which you act out what specific precepts mean to you.
- Create a fable where the moral of the story is one of the precepts.
- Research the author of a precept or the context of its origin and share your findings with the class through a blog post, presentation, or video.
- Come up with five interview questions to ask the author of a precept. Consider what the author was going through when they thought of it, how old they were, etc. Trade questions with a friend and see how many answers you can find through research.
- Work with a group to write a play that embodies the message of a precept. Perform your play for the class.
- Think of a hero in your life, then select a precept that helps show why you think they are a hero.
- Find a precept that goes along with something a historical figure did in their lives. Dress up as that historical figure and introduce yourself to your fellow students. While portraying the historical figure, explain the importance of the precept in their life.
- Choose a career that you are interested in, then select a precept that you will need to keep in mind in order to be successful in that line of work.

Prepared by Colby Sharp, third-grade teacher in Michigan and cofounder of the Nerdy Book Club.