

R.J. Palacio

WE'RE ALL WONDERERS

Educators' Guide and Storytime Activities

Includes Ideas
for Reading Buddies
and School- and
Community-Wide
Reading Programs



The world is big enough for all kinds of people.



#choosekind

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ABOUT THE BOOK



The unforgettable bestseller Wonder, has inspired a nationwide movement to Choose Kind. Now educators can introduce the importance of choosing kind to younger readers with this gorgeous picture book, featuring Auggie and Daisy on an original adventure, written and illustrated by R. J. Palacio.

A boy whose face doesn't look ordinary likes to do the same things that other kids do. But the other kids don't see past his facial difference. They don't invite him to play, and they point at him and call him names. When he is feeling especially lonely, he and his dog put on space helmets and fly through the atmosphere. They land on Pluto, where they play with old friends. As they float back to Earth, the boy sees a world big enough for all kinds of people. The boy's mother calls him unique and a wonder, and he begins to think about the other kids and how they might change their view of him. Kindness is the underlying theme in this nod to a younger Auggie Pullman, the main character in *Wonder*.



IN THE CLASSROOM

All children are exposed to schoolyard or neighborhood bullies. They may even know what it feels like to be excluded from a game or activity. But they may not realize how someone with physical differences feels when others point and call them names. It's natural for children to be curious about those who have differences, like Auggie in *We're All Wonders*. This guide offers ideas that focus on the need to belong, individual differences, dealing with personal challenges, and kindness.

It's important that students learn how to read the pictures and connect what they see to the literary elements of the story. The text of this book is simple, but the message is ageless. For this reason, some of the activities are designed for older students. Teachers are encouraged to choose the activities appropriate for their class. *We're All Wonders* allows younger children to be included in school- and community-wide groups that are reading *Wonder* and sets the stage for reading more about Auggie Pullman when they are older.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the cover of the book. What is different about the boy? Have the class brainstorm words that best describe him. Then have students use the descriptive words to write a paragraph that portrays the boy. Make a concluding sentence that expresses an opinion about why he is wearing a space helmet.

Correlates to Common Core Standard ELA-SL.1-2.1; W. 1-2.1.

Read aloud the title of the book. Have students write a paragraph that states what they think the book is about. Allow time in class for students to share their writing.

Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-W.1-2.1.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What does the first line in the book reveal about the boy?
- Define *ordinary*. In what way is the boy an ordinary kid? How is he extraordinary?
- How does the author-illustrator reveal the boy's name?
- Study the illustrations at the beginning of the book, and point out Auggie's best friend. Follow Auggie and Daisy through the entire story. Explain why Daisy isn't in the pictures at the end of the book.
- Take a look at the pictures of Auggie's classmates. Describe each student. How are they all different? What might they have in common?
- Discuss the meaning of *unique*. Why does Auggie's mother think that he's unique? Look at the illustration where Auggie is standing on top of the world. Explain the crown on his head. Why does he have a star on his shirt?
- Discuss the meaning of *wonder*. Explain why Auggie's mother calls him a wonder. What is the first hint that other people don't see Auggie the way his mother sees him?
- Study the illustration that shows how the other kids see Auggie. Which kid really doesn't want to see him? Which kids are astonished? Which kid is about to laugh? Which kids are frowning? How are their facial expressions rude?
- Which illustration reveals how sad Auggie feels when people treat him rudely?
- Explain how the space helmet and the water tower reveal what happens next in the story.
- Describe the friends he encounters on Pluto. What does this say about Auggie's need to belong? How does Auggie show kindness to them?
- Follow the bird throughout the story. Explain why the bird is in flight at the end of the book when Auggie says, "We're all wonders."
- Explain what Auggie means when he says, "People just need to change the way they see." At the end of the story, Tadeo offers Auggie a ball. How is this a gesture of friendship? Discuss how Tadeo changes the way he sees.
- Look at the last illustration. Why is Auggie's eye a globe? How does this explain the way he sees? Explain how the book ends with hope.

Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-RL.1-2.1, 1-2.3, 1-2.4, 1-2.6, 1-2.7; L. 1-2.1, 1-2.4; SL. 1-2.1, -2.2, 1-2.4.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Invite a teacher who works with students with physical or learning differences to speak to the class. In what ways are these kids ordinary? How are they different? Ask the teacher to help students understand what they can do to make those with differences feel that they belong. [Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-SL.1-2.1.](#)
- Display photographs and books that show all kinds of people. Engage students in a discussion about the people they see in the pictures. How are the people unique? Have students cut out a full-body silhouette the size of a paper doll. Then have them write on the doll five things that make them unique. Display the dolls (holding hands) on the wall or bulletin board to celebrate unity. [Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-SL.1-2.1.](#)
- Read aloud *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni. Allow students to work with a partner and ask them to compare Swimmy to Auggie. How is Swimmy different from the other fish? Explain how he becomes part of the group. Then have them create a dialogue between Swimmy and Auggie about being different and wanting to belong. [Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-RL.1-2.9; SL. 1-2.1.](#)
- The pictures of Auggie's classmates reveal their reaction to his facial difference. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to create five questions that are appropriate to ask Auggie. Instruct the groups to choose words that are kind and gentle. Allow time in class for the groups to share their questions.

[Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS-ELA-SL. 1-2.1.](#)

What might Auggie's and Daisy's hearts desire? Have students cut out stars and write what Auggie and Daisy might wish upon a star. Create a display of stars. How many different wishes did the students create?

[Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS-ELA-L.1-2.1, 1-2.2.](#)

Take a careful look at the boy who offers Auggie the ball at the end of the story. Then refer back to the pictures of Auggie's classmates to identify him as Tadeo. Have students share what they think Tadeo says to Auggie when he hands him the ball.

[Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS-ELA-SL. 1-2.1.](#)



USING *WE'RE ALL WONDERS* AND *WONDER* TOGETHER



Wonder is truly a portrait of and tribute to a community, which has led to its being selected for countless common reading programs. The publication of *We're All Wonders* will give even younger readers a chance to be involved.



For Reading Buddies Programs

- The word *buddy* implies friendship and belonging, which are underlying themes in *We're All Wonders* and *Wonder*. Sharing a favorite book is the best possible introduction for newly formed buddies. Pair an older and younger student, and encourage them to share a favorite book. Advise older buddies to select books they read when they were younger to simplify the conversation and create a truly shared experience.
- Illustrations tell much of the story in picture books. Have reading buddies read the illustrations in *We're All Wonders*. How is Auggie different? Which illustration reveals how lonely and sad he feels?
- Suggest to older readers that they do a two-minute book talk about *Wonder* after reading *We're All Wonders* with their younger reading buddy. Then the two should engage in a conversation about ways to help someone like Auggie feel as though he belongs.
- Instruct reading buddies to locate five other picture books about belonging and kindness after reading *We're All Wonders*. Talk about the books and what they communicate about kindness to others. How is helping someone belong about being kind?
- Ask reading buddies to plan ways they can demonstrate kindness to others. Then have them log their acts of kindness for a week.

School- and Community-Wide Reading Programs

- Define *inspiration*. How is Auggie an inspiration to readers of all ages? How might his story inspire a school- or community-wide conversation about the way we treat those who are different?
- Throughout the year, there are awareness days, weeks, and months to highlight issues related to public health or social causes. National Bullying Prevention Month is commemorated in October. Sponsor a school- or community-wide event where a panel of speakers with physical and cultural differences talk about the way they have been treated by others. How might the school and community improve issues related to bullying?
- Talk about ways that murals tell stories and communicate themes. Suggest to administrators that schools and communities provide spaces for students and citizens to contribute to murals that depict the following themes: diversity, kindness, caring, friendship, and belonging. Then prepare a brief speech that dedicates the murals to Auggie Pullman.
- Sponsor a school- or community-wide kindness day. Plan activities for all ages that are inclusive and encourage kindness. This might include a "Run for Kindness" race, or team activities like sack races. It might also include a sing-in where songs like "We Are the World," "The More We Get Together," and "It's a Small World" are sung.
- Encourage older students to use Auggie as inspiration and create a rap titled "Changing the Way I See." Ask them to teach the rap to younger and adult readers. Then tape a school- or community-wide rap performance.



Host a

WE'RE ALL WONDERS

STORYTIME EVENT



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

To get everyone ready for storytime, sit in a circle and ask each person to share their favorite thing about them.

Introduce the story by telling your group that the book is about a little boy who looks different from those around him. Say, "Even though Auggie looks different from the rest of the people he sees around him, he realizes his differences are what make him special!"

AS YOU READ

Mention that everyone feels a little different sometimes, but that's what makes the world so interesting and beautiful. Just like Auggie, we're *all* wonders. Remind everyone how important it is to tell others that you love them. With just a simple act of kindness, one person can start a kindness chain!

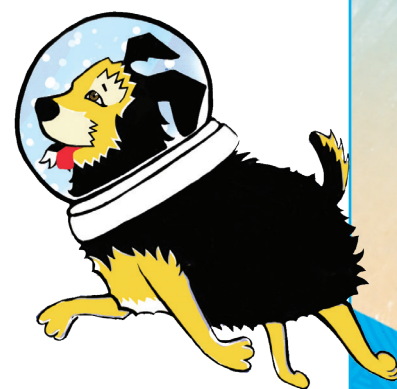
END THE STORY

When you finish reading, ask your audience if anyone would like to share what makes them or one of their friends or family members a wonder. Maybe it's related to that favorite thing they mentioned before you started reading. Remind them that everyone is different, but that's what makes us so beautiful. Then pass out colored pencils and copies of the activity pages in this kit and ask everyone in your group to do the activities.

SET THE SCENE FOR YOUR STORYTIME EVENT

In *We're All Wonders*, Auggie and Daisy travel up, up, up through the clouds, above the oceans and the mountains. They float into outer space and fly across the solar system. Turn your event space into a solar system to show your guests how big the world can look from afar!

- Decorate large, colorful spherical paper lanterns to look like Earth and other planets. Hang them with fishing wire from the ceiling. Intersperse stars cut from cardstock to complete the look.
- Use black paper as tablecloths around your setting, and decorate by drawing planets and stars with white chalk.



SNACKS



We're All Wonders teaches us that everyone is a little bit different in his or her own way—but everyone gets hungry! Treat your guests to some out-of-this world snacks that even Plutonians would enjoy.

- Ever heard a rumor that the moon is made of cheese? Cut cheese into fun space shapes like the moon and the stars. Serve with crackers or crescent moon-shaped apple wedges.
- Create rocket ship fruit skewers. Cut the green tops off strawberries and skewer the fruit on for the point of your rocket ship. Layer thin slices of banana and kiwi for the body and then cut cantaloupe into triangle shapes and add them to the bottom of your skewer to prepare your rocket for blastoff!
- Bake planet Earth sugar cookies. Split premade sugar cookie dough in half and mix half with a few drops of green food coloring and half with a few drops of blue. For each cookie, roll a small piece of each color together into a ball and place on a cookie sheet to bake. Bake according to the directions on the mix for a delicious treat that represents our big, beautiful planet.

Remember—everyone has their own tastes, so be sure to serve a variety of healthy snacks that everyone can enjoy!



CRAFTS AND GAMES

MAKE YOUR OWN TELESCOPE

With a telescope, you can more easily see how big the universe around us is. For this craft, you'll need:

- Cardboard tubes (left over from paper towel or toilet paper rolls)
- Construction paper
- Rubber bands
- Markers

How to create your telescope:

1. Roll a piece of construction paper over your cardboard tube and attach with rubber bands.
2. Make your telescope one-of-a-kind by drawing upon or decorating it with your own unique design.
3. When you're finished, just pull the construction paper tube to make your telescope even longer.

To amp up the fun, encourage your guests to try creating an extra-long telescope with a wrapping paper roll or by connecting several smaller cardboard rolls.

GO ON A HUNT FOR MOON ROCKS!

Paint large stones or plastic Easter eggs silver and hide them around your event space. Encourage your guests to explore the moon and search for the hidden treasure. If you're using plastic eggs, consider filling with candy or other favors for your guests to win when they've found each moon rock.

FIND OUT WHAT MAKES YOUR GROUP WONDERFUL!

Encourage all of your guests to sit in a circle. Start the game by gently tossing a beanbag or soft ball to someone in the circle and asking a question at the same time—"What's your favorite color?" or "What's your favorite holiday?" The person who catches the beanbag/ball must answer the question and then throw it on and ask the next person a new question. Encourage everyone to share something unique about themselves to demonstrate how many WONDERful qualities we all have that make us special!

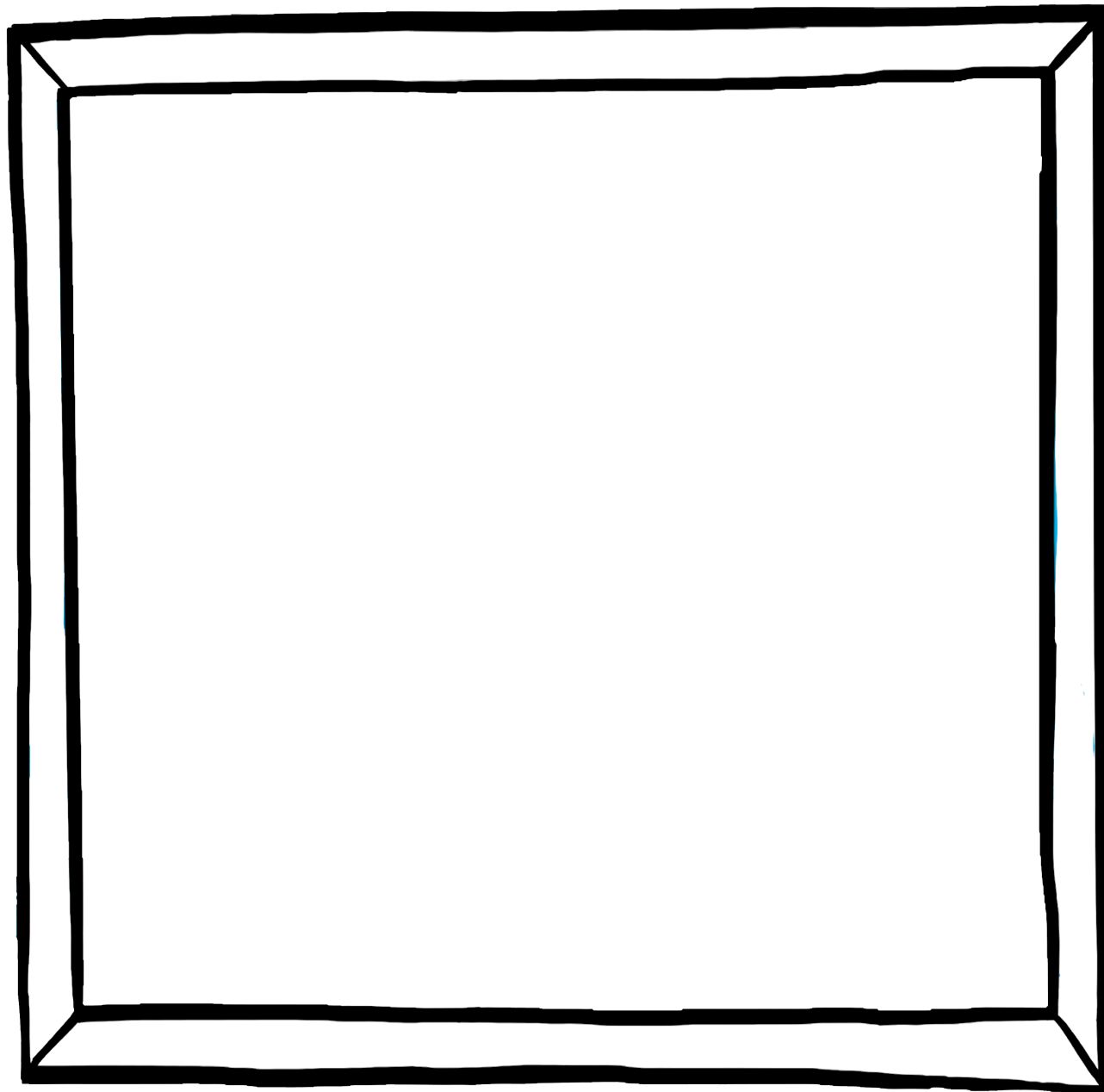


What Makes You WONDERful?



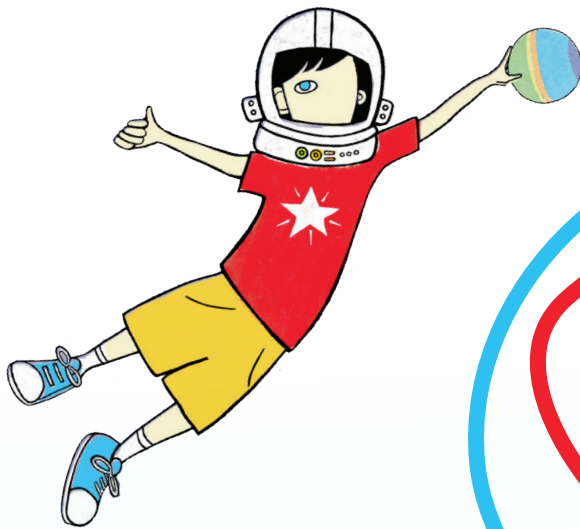
We're All Wonders reminds us that everyone is a wonder in their own way. In the box below, draw some of the things that make you special! Maybe you have a special talent for drawing, or you're a great singer, or you help at home.

What makes **YOU** a **WONDER**?



Help Auggie Find Daisy

Follow the lines. Which one will lead Auggie to his best friend, Daisy?



"I know I can't change the way I look.
BUT maybe, just maybe,
people can change the way they see."

Color in the picture below.



Discover the WONDER of Reading Together

Sharing a favorite book is a great way to bring families and friends together! And with so many different books in the world of *Wonder*, you may find yourself with a group of children of all ages. If you have a mix of older and younger readers, consider putting them into groups to discuss one or two of the following:

- Illustration tells much of the story in picture books. Have the groups look over the illustrations in *We're All Wonders*. How is the boy different? Which illustration reveals how lonely and sad he feels?
- Suggest to older readers that they do a two-minute book talk about *Wonder* after reading *We're All Wonders* with their younger friends and siblings. Then have them come up with ways to help someone like Auggie feel as though he belongs. When everyone is done, have them present their ideas.

If your group is full of readers of different ages, here are some suggestions for reading with children of all ages together.

Thoughts and Questions for Younger Readers:

- **What makes Auggie different? Why does it hurt Auggie's feelings when people talk about him behind his back?** Not all children are exposed to people with physical differences, but all children have experienced feeling different in some way. Let people share why they may feel different and suggest that Auggie may feel this way all the time because we can see his differences. It's natural to be curious, and opening a discussion this way can easily transition into a conversation about inclusiveness and the importance of kindness.
- **What kinds of things does Auggie do that you do, too?** Auggie may be different in some ways, but he is "ordinary" when it comes to the activities he loves to do. In many ways, Auggie is just like you and me!
- **What makes you a wonder?** What is not ordinary about you, and how can we celebrate that? We're all unique in our own ways and we should love ourselves for it.
- **What should you do if you hear someone say something mean to someone else?** It's always good to end the conversation with a reminder to be kind and thoughtful. Sometimes being a wonder means standing up against bullying when you see it.

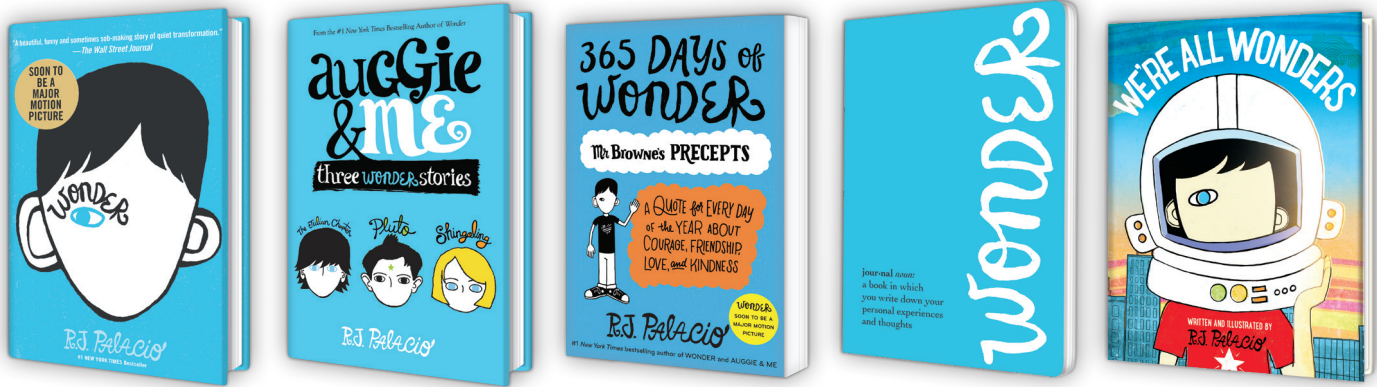


Discussion Topics for Older Readers:

- **Define *ordinary*.** In what way is Auggie an ordinary kid? How is he extraordinary? Auggie may have visible physical differences from "ordinary" kids, but what does "ordinary" really mean? Is anyone truly ordinary? What makes all of us extraordinary?
- **Take a look at the pictures of Auggie's classmates. Describe each student. How are they all different? What might they have in common?** *We're All Wonders* is a celebration of individuality and acceptance. We're all unique, but we're all connected by our love for each other.
- **Follow the bird throughout the story. Explain why the bird is in flight at the end of the book when Auggie says, "We're all wonders."** What do you think the bird represents in this story?
- **Explain what Auggie means by "People just need to change the way they see."** Older readers know that we can't literally change the way we see, but we can change the way we judge what we see.



SPEND MORE TIME IN THE WORLD OF
Wonder



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