



## Discussion Guide - Book 7

WONDER

By R. J. Palacio



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A NOTE FROM



Christy Lynn Allen

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Dear Serious Reader,

Ever feel like you don't fit in? Maybe you get teased, laughed at, or even bullied?

In some way, I think we can all relate to Auggie in the book, *Wonder*.

(And though it's hard to admit, I bet we can all relate to the kids who made fun of Auggie, too.)

*Wonder* teaches us to explore the most important thing of all: "who we are."

*Wonder*  
By R. J. Palacio



As always, here are some **unique activities**, probing **discussion questions**, and expressive journal ideas!

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# FACES



Notes from Mr. Tushman's  
Middle School Address

**“Be a little kinder than necessary.”**

Excerpt from *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio, quoting J. M. Barrie



## Instructions

On each face below, draw a smile ☺ when the character acts with kindness. Draw a frown ☹ if the character gives in to fear, hate, or peer pressure.



When Jack walks to classes with Auggie, he pretends not to notice the kids who stare at Auggie.



Via doesn't tell her parents about her school play because she doesn't want to be seen with Auggie.



When Summer sees Auggie by himself at lunch, she leaves her friends and sits with him.



Justin warns Julian, Henry, and Miles not to mess with Jack.



Auggie invites everyone in homeroom to his birthday party so no one feels left out.



Jack tells Julian he'd kill himself if he looked like Auggie.



Miranda pretends to be sick so that Via has to take the lead in the school play.

**TRICK QUESTION!**

Summer breaks her promise to Auggie and gives Jack a hint about why Auggie is upset with him.



Hint! Sometimes it's worth the risk to break a promise if it ultimately helps the friend more.

# Precepts

“rules about really important things”



Auggie’s English teacher, Mr. Browne, preaches “Know Thyself.”  
Every month, he assigns “PRECEPTS” so students can learn who they are.



## Part 1 - Instructions

Write down the precepts that Mr. Browne gives to Auggie’s class.  
Then write a sentence about what the precept means to you.  
On the next page, you can try writing your own precepts!

|  |  |
|--|--|
| MR. BROWNE’S SEPTEMBER PRECEPT<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....<br>..... | What this means to me:<br><br><br><br> |
| MR. BROWNE’S OCTOBER PRECEPT<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....   | What this means to me:<br><br><br><br> |
| MR. BROWNE’S DECEMBER PRECEPT<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  | What this means to me:<br><br><br><br> |
| MR. BROWNE’S JUNE PRECEPT<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....      | What this means to me:<br><br><br><br> |

# Precepts

"rules about really important things"

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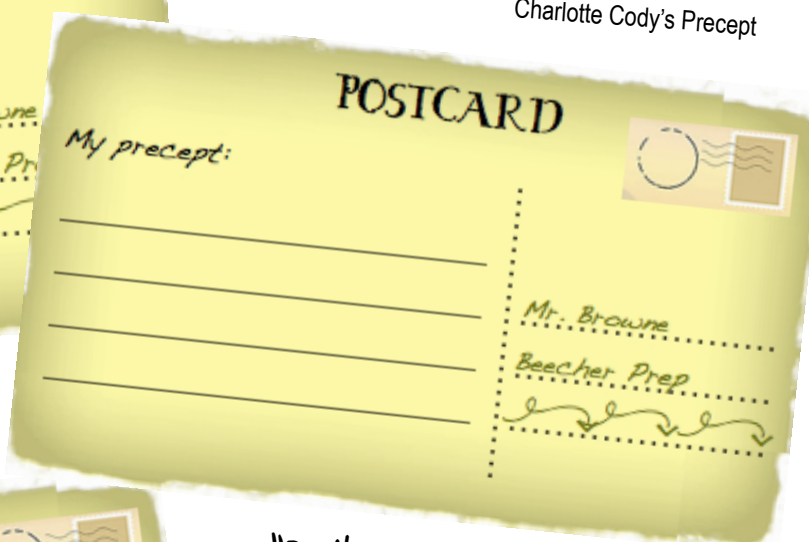
## Part 2 - Instructions

Mr. Browne asks his students to come up with their very own precept and send it to him on postcard over summer break. Now it's your turn! Try writing your own precepts on the postcards below.



"It's not enough to be friendly. You have to be a friend."

Charlotte Cody's Precept



"Everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their life..."

August Pullman's Precept



"Don't be friends with jerks."

Henry Joplin's Precept

"To thine own self be true."  
—Hamlet, Shakespeare"

Ximena Chin's Precept

"Flowers are great, but love is better."  
—Justin Bieber"  
Savanna Wittenberg's Precept

"Don't try too hard to be cool. It always shows, and that's uncool."

Amos Conti's Precept

# Discussion Questions



Get even more out of your reading experience. Answer a few discussion questions, then dazzle your friends with your deep thoughts!



1. *“Here’s what I think: the only reason I’m not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way . . . I think the only person in the world who realizes how ordinary I am is me.”*

Excerpt from *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

Why does August (“Auggie”) feel like he’s ordinary, even though no one else seems to think so?

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2. No one would blame Auggie if he were to decide not to go to school, but he actually wants to go. In fact, by the end of his first day at Beecher, he realizes how much he is going to like it. What things help convince him?

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3. Auggie always notices when people notice him. Try to think of a time when someone noticed something embarrassing about you. How did it feel? How would it feel if this happened all the time, like it does to Auggie?

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# Discussion Questions



4. Auggie's gotten pretty used to people making fun of him, but how are Julian's actions much crueler than the rest?

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5. The school lunchroom can be a stressful place, whether you're sitting by the cool kids, the smart kids, the jocks, or the outcasts. How do you think Auggie feels on his first day when he sits down to eat his lunch alone?

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What does it tell you about Summer, as a person, when she leaves her comfort zone of friends to sit with Auggie, the boy no one wants to be seen with?

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6. Why is Halloween Auggie's favorite day of the year?  
What are some differences in how Auggie acts when he's in costume?  
(Hint: think about how he walks down the hallway at school.)

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# Discussion Questions

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7. Were you surprised when Jack makes fun of Auggie to Julian?  
Why do you think hearing these mean words from Jack hurt Auggie so much more?

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8. This story is told from several points of view. Auggie, Summer, Jack, Justin, Via, and Miranda are all narrators. Do you like this style? Why or why not?  
How does the use of many narrators change the way you understand the story?

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9. *“August is the Sun. Me and Mom and Dad are planets orbiting the Sun.”*  
Excerpt from *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

Why does Gran let Via know that she is her “number one,” that she loves Via more than anyone else?

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10. Why doesn't Via tell her parents about the school play?

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11. The need to be popular is a central theme throughout this book. How do Via's friendships change because of pressure to be popular? Does Via change?

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At her party, Savanna offers Summer a chance to join the "in crowd." Why does Summer decide to leave Savanna's party instead?

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Both Summer and Jack choose their friendships with Auggie over being popular. How do they describe friendship with Auggie? Why is he so fun to be around?

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12. Julian starts "The War" after Jack punches him for calling Auggie a freak. At first Julian gets lots of kids on his side, but after a while, they get tired of the war. Why do you think this begins to happen?

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13. How does having to tell Daisy goodbye put things into perspective for Auggie?

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14. How does the confrontation with the seventh graders change what Auggie is "known for"?

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15. Mr. Tushman presents Auggie with the Henry Ward Beecher medal for his courage, strength, friendship, and character. "*He is the greatest who carries up the most hearts,*" he reads. How have "hearts been carried up" because of Auggie?

Hint: Think about Amos, Miles, and Henry at the beginning. Then think about what they risk for Auggie by the end.

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# Journal Ideas



Now it's your turn to write! Pick an idea, or think of your own, and grab your journal!

*"the universe was not kind to Auggie Pullman. what did that little kid ever do to deserve his sentence? . . . the odds of someone getting Auggie's face were like one in four million. so doesn't that make the universe one giant lottery, then? you purchase a ticket when you're born. and it's all just random whether you get a good ticket or a bad ticket. it's all just luck."* [Justin]


Excerpt from *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

 Have you ever wondered, "why do bad things happen to good people"? If so, you aren't alone. Many of us wrestle with unfairness we see in the world. Write about how you feel about this. Maybe you think everything happens according to some master plan? Or maybe you feel that the point isn't the bad stuff that happens, but how we handle it? Perhaps you aren't sure what you believe yet. Either way, writing can help you process your thoughts.


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*" . . . there was a big shift in the way things were . . . Everyone had heard about what had happened to us with the seventh graders, so suddenly I wasn't known for what I was always known for, but for this other thing that had happened."* [Auggie]

Excerpt from *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

 Auggie hates being known for his unusual appearance. When he later becomes known for the person he really is inside—his courage, his strength, his character, and his friendships—life at school gets completely better. Write about this. What are you known for? What would you like to be known for?

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 According to Mr. Browne, knowing "who we are" is the most important thing. He urges his students to understand what kind of people they are, and how they feel about important issues and why. Take a few minutes to write about this. Who are you? What kind of person do you want to be? What are your life "precepts" (rules)?