

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

A Homeschool Guide to the Wilderland

One story · four levels · many paths

Read together · learn together · go deeper when curiosity is alive

BOOK ONE · TIMBIT'S EMPRISE

BOB MASSIE

A Gentle Rule

Protect delight. Read first. Follow the trail only when the story opens a door.

How This Guide Works

This guide is built for families who may have several ages around the same story. Everyone can begin with the same chapter, conversation, question, or shared activity, then work at the level that fits.

Choose by readiness rather than age alone. Younger learners may draw, build, point, speak, move, or dictate instead of being pushed into unnecessary writing. Older learners are asked to analyze evidence, compare alternatives, identify uncertainty, and defend conclusions.

The guide is modular. A family may use the complete guide or print individual sections. Every worksheet, card set, reflection page, or printable stays with the lesson it supports.

Four Learning Bands

- Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3
- Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5
- Middle School · Grades 6–8
- High School · Grades 9–12

Contents

1 · Welcome to the Wilderland

2 · Reading the Story — readability, pacing, independent reading, family read-aloud, audiobook-supported reading

3 · Words of the Wilderland — vocabulary, context, roots, invented language, four-level language work

4 · Academic Learning Trails — Map the Wilderland; The Creeping Desert; Timbit's Workshop; The Storykeepers Archive

5 · Themes & Values — Purpose & Vocation; Friendship; Perspective; Being Your Own Person; Belonging; Quiet Leadership; Courage

6 · Scripture & Story — optional faith companion

7 · Discussion by Story Part

8 · Reading Aloud in Wilderland

9 · Resources & Printables Index

1 • Welcome to the Wilderland

One Story, Four Levels

The goal is not to make four children do four unrelated curricula while one book sits in the middle. The goal is to let one story open the same door at several depths.

A Typical Multi-Age Lesson

1. Start together with a short family launch.
2. Recall the same story moment or question.
3. Move each learner to the level that fits.
4. Keep the activity concrete and age-appropriate.
5. Return together for one finding from each learner.
6. Stop when the conversation is alive; completion is not the goal.

Lower Elementary • Grades 1–3

Primary modes: oral language, drawing, movement, sorting, building, matching, observation, simple cause-and-effect. Avoid long written responses, unsupported calculation, and abstract moral terminology when a concrete idea will do.

Upper Elementary • Grades 4–5

Primary modes: explanation, classification, simple evidence, map and model reading, short writing, criteria and constraints, comparison.

Middle School • Grades 6–8

Primary modes: multiple variables, evidence-based reasoning, systems, research, revision after new evidence, competing solutions, short argument.

High School • Grades 9–12

Primary modes: synthesis, source evaluation, uncertainty, tradeoffs, ethical complexity, formal argument, independent research, design review.

Home Educator Principles

- Protect delight before productivity.
- Use the story as the anchor, not as decoration pasted onto unrelated schoolwork.
- Do not require a learner to disclose private fears, trauma, beliefs, or family situations.
- Accept different defensible answers when evidence supports more than one conclusion.
- Separate fictional Wilderland mechanisms from real-world science and history.
- Never ask for information the supplied material does not provide.
- If research is required, say so explicitly and identify the kind of source the learner should use.
- Keep worksheets beside their lessons.
- Use the optional faith material only when it fits the family.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

READING THE STORY

Readability & Pacing —

WHAT THE MEASUREMENTS SAY

The existing readability study was run July 11, 2026 on the then-final ebook text of approximately 121,000 words. The measured results were:

- Flesch Reading Ease: 82.0 — conversational/easy sentence flow.
- Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 4.5 — sentence structure accessible to strong upper-elementary readers.
- Gunning Fog: 6.4 — relatively uncluttered syntax.
- SMOG: 7.9 — vocabulary increases the reading demand.
- Dale-Chall: 8.4 — many words will be unfamiliar to younger readers.
- Average sentence length: 10.9 words.

The useful interpretation is simple: the syntax is substantially easier than the vocabulary. That makes the book particularly suitable for shared reading, because an adult voice can carry unfamiliar words inside understandable sentences.

IMPORTANT QUALIFIER

These numbers describe the July 11 text. Before publication of this revised guide, the measurements should be re-run if the final ebook/manuscript text changed materially after that date. Do not present the July measurements as newly recalculated data unless that verification occurs.

READ-ALOUD USE

The book has 85 short chapters. The source guide estimated roughly 29 sessions at 30 minutes or 43 sessions at 20 minutes when using the July word-count basis. Families do not need to follow that schedule. One chapter per evening is also a natural rhythm and turns the book into a longer shared-reading season.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3

Best use: listening with an adult or audiobook support.

- Do not expect independent mastery of the vocabulary.
- Let pictures, gestures, brief explanations, and context carry difficult words.
- Stop while attention is still good.
- A younger child may participate by drawing, acting, retelling one moment, or simply listening.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5

Best use: family read-aloud, supported independent reading for strong readers, or alternating print and audio.

- Sentence structure should usually be manageable.
- Preview vocabulary only when useful.

- Encourage short retellings and predictions rather than constant comprehension checks.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8

Best use: independent reading or family reading with deeper discussion.

- Readers can increasingly manage the vocabulary through context and the companion word guide.
- Ask for evidence when discussing motive, cause, or interpretation.
- The audiobook can support fluency without replacing engagement with the text.

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9–12

Best use: independent reading, family discussion, or literary/thematic analysis.

- The primary challenge is no longer decoding; it is interpretation, rhetoric, moral complexity, and source comparison.
- Older students should be allowed to disagree with guide interpretations when they can defend the disagreement from the text.

THREE WAYS TO READ

1. Family read-aloud — one reader, several ages, common story experience.
2. Print + audiobook — follow in print while listening, or alternate formats by chapter.
3. Independent + family return — older learners read alone and rejoin the family at agreed stopping points for conversation.

NATURAL PAUSES

The Read-Aloud Performer's Guide identifies especially useful rests after Chapters 7, 16, 21, 34, 45, 59, and 67. These are optional, not a mandated calendar.

PROTECT DELIGHT

Do not turn every chapter into schoolwork. Read first. Use a vocabulary word, discussion question, learning trail, Values lesson, or Scripture lesson only when it opens something worth exploring.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

WORDS OF THE WILDERLAND

Four-Level

PURPOSE

The novel deliberately combines easy sentence structure with unusually rich vocabulary. This section keeps the existing chapter-by-chapter vocabulary guide as the reference bank, while adding one four-level family learning experience so vocabulary is not a detached list of definitions.

HOW TO USE THE WORD BANK

Before reading, preview only the unfamiliar words likely to appear in that session. During reading, do not stop for every word. Afterward, return to the words that stirred curiosity or blocked understanding. Pronunciation and meaning come from the existing Vocabulary Development source guide.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH · 8–10 MINUTES

Choose three Wilderland words nobody in the family uses every day. Before looking them up, make a guess from sound, visible word parts, and story context. Then verify the meaning. Celebrate a wrong guess when the reasoning was sensible.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3 · Hear It, Match It, Use It

Goal: connect a new word with sound, meaning, picture, and simple use.

Activity:

1. Adult reads three selected words aloud.
2. Learner repeats each word without pressure for perfect pronunciation on the first try.
3. Match each word to a picture, gesture, or simple meaning card.
4. Choose one word and act it, draw it, or use it in a spoken sentence.
5. Sort two words into REAL-WORLD WORD / WILDERLAND WORD when appropriate.

Printable — My New Word

WORD: _____

It sounds like: _____

Draw or show what it means.

I can say: “_____.”

Adult note: invented vocabulary does not need to be treated as dictionary English; label it as story-world language.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5 · Word Detective

Goal: infer meaning from context and word parts, then verify.

Activity:

1. Select 4–6 words from the current chapters.
2. Copy a short story-context clue or describe what is happening when the word appears.
3. Circle any recognizable prefix, root, suffix, or familiar word inside it.

4. Write a predicted meaning.
5. Verify with the Vocabulary Development guide or a reliable dictionary for real-world words.
6. Mark the prediction: CLOSE / PARTLY RIGHT / SURPRISE.

Printable — Word Detective Table

WORD | CONTEXT CLUE | WORD PARTS | MY GUESS | VERIFIED MEANING

Extension: create one plausible invented Wilderland word and explain the parts used to build it.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8 · Where Did This Word Come From?

Goal: distinguish borrowed language, scientific/technical vocabulary, historical terms, and invented morphology.

Activity:

1. Choose six words from at least three categories: nautical, scientific, historical/borrowed, archaic, invented.
2. For real words, verify origin or language history in a reliable dictionary or etymology source.
3. For invented terms, analyze how familiar roots or patterns make the word sound believable.
4. Compare two words that create different emotional effects even when their definitions are related.
5. Write a 200–300 word explanation: “How does the language of Wilderland make the world feel older, larger, stranger, or more precise?”

Printable — Morphology & Origin Table

WORD | CATEGORY | PARTS / ORIGIN | MEANING | EFFECT IN THE SCENE

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9–12 · Lexicographer’s File

Goal: analyze diction, borrowing, semantic effect, and worldbuilding through language.

Activity:

1. Select 8–10 words across the novel.
2. Build entries including pronunciation, part of speech where applicable, definition, source/origin, story context, connotation, and whether the use is standard, extended, or invented.
3. Identify one case where a real word is repurposed for Wilderland and explain how meaning changes.
4. Compare two passages whose diction creates different social or emotional worlds.
5. Produce either a 500–700 word diction analysis or a two-page mini lexicon with an editorial note explaining the novel’s language strategy.

Printable — Lexicographer Entry

HEADWORD

PRONUNCIATION

STANDARD / BORROWED / INVENTED

DEFINITION

ORIGIN OR WORD PARTS

STORY CONTEXT

CONNOTATION / EFFECT

EDITORIAL NOTE

FAMILY ROUNDTABLE

Each learner brings one word. Answer three questions together:

- What helped you understand it before you looked it up?
- What did the verified meaning add or change?
- Why might the author have chosen this word instead of an easier one?

REFERENCE BANK

Use the existing Vocabulary Development guide for the chapter-by-chapter preview list and full definitions. Representative examples include scientific and technical terms, nautical language, historical borrowings, ordinary “stretch” words, and invented Wilderland terms such as Aridite, geoglyph, Hydro-Harvester, and Stinkfish.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL
The Mingles in Wilderland
ACADEMIC LEARNING TRAILS — FOUR-LEVEL LEARNING TRAILS

DESIGN STANDARD

Each trail contains one shared family launch, four developmental levels, the printable/activity immediately after the level it supports, and one family roundtable. No question may require information the supplied map, book, diagram, or source does not actually provide.

TRAIL 1 · MAP THE WILDERLAND

Geography · Cartography · Spatial Reasoning · Route Planning

CORE CORRECTION

The published Wilderland map does not provide a reliable mileage scale. This trail therefore does not ask learners to calculate fictional miles. Scale mathematics appears only when the learner creates a map with a defined scale.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Spread out the map. Ask: Where would travel be easiest? Where would water matter most? Where would a traveler want shelter? Point to visible evidence before reading labels, then compare with labeled features.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3 · Map Explorer

Goal: identify land, water, settlement, direction, and simple route relationships.

Activity:

1. Point to one body of water, one settlement, one landform, and one route or boundary.
2. Use north, south, east, and west to describe where one place is compared with another.
3. Choose two places and decide which appears nearer on the printed map. Use “nearer/farther,” not miles.
4. Trace a route with a finger or crayon and name one thing a traveler might need along the way.

Printable: Draw a simple map of a bedroom, yard, park, or neighborhood. Add a title, four symbols, a legend, and a path from START to FINISH.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5 · Route Detective

Goal: compare two routes using visible evidence.

Activity:

1. Choose one destination.
2. Draw two plausible routes.
3. Compare terrain, water access, settlements/refuge, and apparent route length.
4. Circle the route you recommend and explain two map-based reasons.

Printable: Evidence table with columns ROUTE A / ROUTE B / WHAT THE MAP SHOWS / MY CHOICE.

Scale extension: On the learner-created map only, define a scale such as 1 inch = 100 feet and calculate two distances.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8 · Expedition Planner

Goal: compare route constraints without inventing mileage.

Activity:

1. Sketch three plausible routes.
2. Score each route 1–5 on water access, terrain difficulty, safety, and access to settlements/refuge.
3. Identify one uncertainty the map cannot answer.
4. Write a 200–300 word recommendation using at least three pieces of visible map evidence.

Printable: Four-criteria route matrix plus uncertainty box.

Optional math: use normalized scores or weights, not fictional miles.

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9–12 · The Cartographer's Dilemma

Goal: treat geography as a system connecting water, terrain, settlement, movement, and uncertainty.

Activity:

1. Create a thematic overlay showing at least four visible/inferred variables, clearly labeling inference.
2. Identify three possible refuge locations.
3. Build a weighted decision matrix totaling 100%.
4. Write a 500–700 word recommendation.
5. Include a limitations paragraph separating mapped fact, book evidence, inference, and missing information.

Printable: weighted decision matrix + evidence classification key.

FAMILY ROUNDTABLE

What makes a place safe enough to live in? Compare the youngest learner's concrete answer with the older learner's systems answer.

TRAIL 2 · THE CREEPING DESERT

Earth Science · Ecology · Water Cycle · Systems · Restoration

SCIENCE BOUNDARY

In the novel, Aridite geoglyphs are a fictional mechanism affecting the Wilderland. Real drought, desertification, hydrology, vegetation loss, soil degradation, and restoration are taught from real science. Learners may compare them, but the story mechanism is never presented as scientific fact.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Draw the water cycle from memory. Compare drawings. Identify where evaporation, condensation, precipitation, runoff, infiltration, soil, plants, and bodies of water fit.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3 · Where Does the Water Go?

Goal: recognize basic water movement and simple cause/effect.

Activity:

1. Arrange picture cards: SUN → WATER VAPOR → CLOUD → RAIN → GROUND/WATER.
2. Add a plant and soil.
3. Compare planted soil with hard/bare ground after rain using observation or photographs.
4. Say two “because” sentences: “Plants help because...” and “Dry soil can be a problem because...”

Printable: color and arrow a simple water-cycle diagram; draw one way to help soil hold water.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5 · Repair the Water Cycle

Goal: identify evaporation, condensation, precipitation, runoff, infiltration, and one practical conservation idea.

Activity: build a labeled cycle, weaken one real process such as infiltration or plant cover, predict two consequences, then propose a realistic repair such as plant cover, runoff capture, mulch/soil improvement, or wetland protection.

Printable: CAUSE → EFFECT → REPAIR organizer.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8 · Break the Loop

Goal: model a self-reinforcing feedback loop and evaluate one intervention.

Activity:

1. Begin with less vegetation or less infiltration.
2. Build at least six linked steps.
3. Mark two interruption points.
4. Research one real soil/water conservation strategy from an authoritative source.
5. Produce a one-page intervention plan: mechanism, benefit, cost/constraint, unintended consequence.

Printable: feedback-loop diagram + source note.

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9–12 · Restore the Evenplain

Goal: synthesize scientific sources and compare environmental interventions.

Activity: compare three real restoration approaches using mechanism, likely benefit, cost, timescale, uncertainty, and tradeoffs. Use at least three authoritative sources, including one government, university, or international scientific source.

Printable: intervention comparison matrix + recommendation memo.

FAMILY ROUNDTABLE

What is the difference between the story’s fictional cause and a real-world environmental process?

TRAIL 3 · TIMBIT’S WORKSHOP

Engineering Design · Constraints · Testing · Failure · Redesign

SOURCE RULE

All claims about Timbit's inventions must be checked against the final novel before publication. Engineering principles may be real; story-device descriptions must remain source-faithful.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Choose an everyday object that failed or could work better. Ask: What problem was it meant to solve? What mattered most—strength, size, safety, cost, speed, comfort, reliability?

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3 · Build, Test, Try Again

Goal: understand that designs are made to solve problems and can improve after testing.

Activity: build a paper bridge, container, ramp, or simple shelter from limited household materials. Test it with one clear challenge. Change one thing and test again.

Printable: MY PROBLEM / MY FIRST IDEA / WHAT HAPPENED / WHAT I CHANGED.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5 · Design Under Constraints

Goal: define a problem, identify criteria and constraints, sketch, test, and revise.

Activity: choose a safe design challenge. List what the design must do and what materials/time are limited. Make two sketches, choose one, test it, record one failure, and revise.

Printable: criteria-and-constraints design sheet.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8 · Engineering Decision Matrix

Goal: compare competing designs using evidence.

Activity: create three possible solutions, choose 4–5 criteria, score them, prototype or model the top option, record test results, then revise the matrix if evidence changes the decision.

Printable: design matrix + failure analysis.

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9–12 · Design Review

Goal: analyze requirements, failure modes, tradeoffs, uncertainty, and redesign.

Activity: write a brief with functional requirements and constraints, identify likely failure modes, propose tests, conduct or simulate a test, and defend a redesign in a formal review memo.

Printable: requirements table + FMEA-style failure review adapted for student use.

FAMILY ROUNDTABLE

When is failure useful information rather than proof that an idea was bad?

TRAIL 4 · THE STORYKEEPERS ARCHIVE

Observation · Evidence · Sources · Writing · Worldbuilding

CANON BOUNDARY

A student may invent new Wilderland material, but imaginative additions must be clearly labeled as creative work. Observation, book evidence, inference, and invention are not interchangeable.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Place an unfamiliar household object on the table. Make four columns: WHAT I OBSERVE / WHAT I INFER / WHAT I COULD RESEARCH / WHAT I COULD INVENT.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3 · Storykeeper Detective

Goal: distinguish “I see” from “I think.”

Activity: examine an object, illustration, or map detail. Say three “I see...” statements and two “I think...” statements. Put each on the correct card.

Printable: SEE / THINK drawing page.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5 · Archive Entry

Goal: record observation, source, inference, and one question.

Activity: choose a Wilderland place, object, or character detail. Complete a one-page archive card with WHAT THE BOOK/MAP SHOWS, WHAT I THINK IT MEANS, and WHAT I STILL WANT TO KNOW.

Printable: structured archive card.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8 · Disputed Archive

Goal: compare sources and revise a claim when evidence changes.

Activity: gather two or more story/guide sources about one question, classify credibility and relevance, write a provisional claim, then add new evidence and record any revision.

Printable: source comparison + revision record.

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9–12 · Archival Dossier

Goal: formulate a research question, synthesize sources, identify limitations, and distinguish canon from reconstruction.

Activity: create a dossier with research question, source list, evidence notes, conflicting or incomplete points, conclusion, limitations, and an optional clearly labeled CREATIVE RECONSTRUCTION.

Printable: dossier template.

FAMILY ROUNDTABLE

What makes a Storykeeper trustworthy when the evidence is incomplete?

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 1

Gifts and Calling The Value of Purpose

Vocation, Contribution, and Common Purpose



Learning Modules for Four Age Levels:

Lower Elementary • Upper Elementary • Middle School • High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.



Lesson 1 at a Glance

Everything needed for all four age levels is contained in this packet.

The Big Idea

BIG IDEA

You were made for something. The question is not whether you have gifts — everyone does — but whether you will use them for what they were intended. Vocation is the word for this: the work that matches the life. Your gifts matched to your purpose.

STORY ANCHORS

Chapters 12, 23, 54, and 63

THE THREAD THROUGH THE STORY

Timbit says, “I want my life to mean something.” At his father’s workbench comes the challenge, “If not you, who?” Horatio later tells the Mingles they are in the right place, at the right time, with the right resources. By Chapter 63, the group’s different abilities become part of the answer: no one creature can do everything.

WHERE IT APPEARS IN THE BOOK

Chapter 12	Timbit: “I want my life to mean something.” The refusal to let reaction - anger, loss, circumstance - become identity.
Chapter 23	The still-small-voice call scene at his father’s workbench: “If not you, who?”
Chapter 54	Horatio commissions the small: “You are in the right place at the right time, with the right resources.” This answers Timbit’s “We’re all just plain people.”
Chapter 63	Different creatures bring different gifts; one can do what another cannot. The Mingles conclude, “We will succeed or fail together.”

Learning Objectives by Level

LOWER ELEMENTARY Grades 1–3 · Approx. ages 6–9 • Name one thing Timbit, Pippin, Quill, and Snicker are good at. • Match a simple need with a character who could help. • Say why that character’s strength fits the need. • Notice that a team needs different kinds of helpers.	UPPER ELEMENTARY Grades 4–5 • Name a strength shown by each Mingle. • Match a strength to a need. • Explain why no single gift fits every problem.
MIDDLE SCHOOL Grades 6–8 • Use story evidence to identify a strength and a limitation. • Assign roles so contributions complement one another. • Revise roles when circumstances change and defend the revision.	HIGH SCHOOL Grades 9–12 • Distinguish talent, preference, role, and vocation. • Analyze how ability, need, limits, and choice interact. • Defend a claim about whether having a gift creates responsibility, including a counterargument.

How to Use This Lesson

A simple multi-age rhythm

1. Begin together with the Shared Family Launch. It takes about 10 minutes.
2. Then each learner moves to the level that fits best. Use the level that matches the learner, not merely the learner's age.
3. Run the levels simultaneously or on different days. They share one Big Idea but use different kinds of work.
4. End together with the Family Roundtable. Each learner brings one finding from their own level.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Character Helper Cards, Need Cards, optional buttons/coins/blocks as markers, crayons or pencil, Draw & Tell page
Upper Elementary	Character Gift Cards, Need Cards, pencil, Student Reflection
Middle School	4 small household objects as markers, scrap paper or sticky notes, Team Planning Sheet, Student Reflection
High School	Book or chapter notes, Case Matrix, Position Memo page, pencil

Start Together

10 minutes · All ages

Before Anyone Splits Into Levels

Read or briefly recall the four story moments below. Do not turn this into a lecture; the purpose is simply to put the same idea in everyone's mind before the age-level activities begin.

Chapter 12: Timbit says, "I want my life to mean something."

Chapter 23: At his father's workbench comes the question: "If not you, who?"

Chapter 54: Horatio tells the Mingles they are in the right place, at the right time, with the right resources.

Chapter 63: Different creatures bring different abilities. The group will succeed or fail together.

Ask Everyone the Same Two Questions

- Is a gift mostly something you HAVE, or something you USE?
- When does being good at something become important to somebody besides you?

For Lower Elementary: ask simply, "What is each Mingle good at? When could that help?"

KEEP THE QUESTION OPEN

Do not force a single family answer yet. The four age levels will approach the same Big Idea differently and return to it at the end.

Who Can Help?

Concrete, visual, oral learning for younger siblings

LEVEL OUTCOME

Name at least one strength shown by each Mingle, match simple needs with reasonable helpers, and explain at least two matches using “___ can help because ___.”

Home Educator Guide

WHY THIS LEVEL LOOKS DIFFERENT

- Directions are read aloud by the adult.
- Children point, place, draw, and talk more than they write.
- The activity uses simple cause-and-effect: “Who can help? Why?”
- Do not require the child to learn the word “vocation.” The concept is enough: people are good at different things, and those strengths can help.

SET UP

- Print the Character Helper Cards and Need Cards.
- Cut the Need Cards apart. Character Helper Cards may stay on one sheet or be cut apart.
- Optional: use four buttons, coins, blocks, or toy figures as movable character markers.
- Keep the Draw & Tell page aside until the activity is finished.

TEACH THIS FIRST — 3 TO 5 MINUTES

Remind the child: Timbit invents. Pippin protects and makes brave choices. Quill notices things others miss. Snicker quietly finds out useful information. Say: “Nobody has to be good at everything. A good team needs different kinds of helpers.”

RUN THE ACTIVITY — 20 TO 30 MINUTES

1. Meet the helpers. Read the four Character Helper Cards aloud and name one thing each Mingle is good at.
2. Read one Need Card aloud and place it in the middle.
3. The child points to or moves the Mingle who could help best.
4. Use the sentence frame: “___ can help because ___.”
5. For some cards ask, “Could somebody else help too?” More than one answer may work.
6. After several cards, use a Challenge Need and build a team of two or more helpers.

CLOSE THE LEVEL

When the activity is complete, give the Draw & Tell page. A younger child may dictate while the adult writes. Save it for the Family Roundtable.

Character Helper Cards

Read aloud. Keep as one sheet or cut apart.

TIMBIT

INVENTOR

Good at making things and finding ways to fix problems.

PIPPIN

PROTECTOR

Good at being brave, noticing danger, and helping others feel safe.

QUILL

OBSERVER

Good at looking closely, noticing clues, and asking questions.

SNICKER

SCOUT

Good at moving quietly, listening, and finding out useful information.

Who Can Help? — Need Cards

Cut apart. Read aloud one at a time.

Something broke. We need a new idea for how to fix it.	A younger friend is scared and needs someone calm and brave nearby.
There are tracks on the ground. We need someone to look closely and tell us what they notice.	We need to know what is happening nearby without making a lot of noise.
The group has a problem nobody has solved before.	Someone may be walking toward danger and needs help making a safe choice.
Everyone looked at the same place, but somebody missed one small clue.	The Mingles need someone to listen carefully and bring back useful information.
CHALLENGE A friend is lost. Which TWO helpers could work together?	CHALLENGE The group must make a plan, notice clues, and keep everyone safe. Build a team.
CHALLENGE Something strange is happening and nobody knows why. Which helpers should start?	CHALLENGE Pick any two Mingles. Make up one simple need they could solve together.

LOWER ELEMENTARY

Draw & Tell

Use after Who Can Help? For younger children, the adult may write the child's words.

Draw one Mingle helping with something.



Tell me about your picture:

_____ is good at _____.

That helps when _____.

A team needs different helpers because _____.

Optional family connection

Ask: "What is one thing you like helping with at home?" A drawing or spoken answer is enough.

FAMILY CLOSE

Say together: "We do not all have to be good at the same things. We can help in different ways."

Match the Gift to the Need

Concrete matching, explanation, and team contribution

LEVEL OUTCOME

Match at least eight needs to reasonable character strengths, explain three matches using strength + need, and explain why no single gift fits every problem.

Home Educator Guide

SET UP

Place the four Character Gift Cards face up. Shuffle the Need Cards. Keep the Student Reflection aside until the activity is finished.

TEACH THIS FIRST — 3 MINUTES

Say: “Today we are not deciding which character is best. We are asking a different question: what does this situation need, and whose strength fits that need?”

RUN THE ACTIVITY — 25 TO 35 MINUTES

1. Read the four Character Gift Cards together. Have the learner name the key strength on each card.
2. Turn over one Need Card and read it aloud.
3. Match the need to the character whose strength fits best. Challenge cards may reasonably use two characters.
4. Before moving on, require the sentence: “This need calls for ___ because ___.”
5. Continue through at least eight cards. Use all twelve if attention is strong.
6. For a challenge card, ask whether a different match could also work and what would change.

DEBRIEF

Ask: Which character helped with the most different needs? Was anyone useful for every need? What would the group lose if one character were missing?

CLOSE THE LEVEL

When the activity is complete, give the Upper Elementary Student Reflection. Allow 8–10 minutes. Save it for the Family Roundtable.

Character Gift Cards

Print one set. Cut on the center lines.

TIMBIT

INVENTOR / PROBLEM SOLVER

STRENGTH: Builds, tests, fixes, and tries again.

HELPS WHEN: The group needs a new idea, a tool, or a way to repair something that is not working.

PIPPIN

PROTECTOR / DECISION MAKER

STRENGTH: Notices danger, thinks about safety, and acts when others hesitate.

HELPS WHEN: Someone needs protection, a careful choice, or a plan that puts people before convenience.

QUILL

OBSERVER / EXPLORER

STRENGTH: Looks closely, asks questions, and notices details others miss.

HELPS WHEN: The group needs clues, careful observation, or help comparing what they know.

SNICKER

SCOUT / INFORMATION GATHERER

STRENGTH: Moves quietly, listens, watches, and brings back information.

HELPS WHEN: The group does not know enough yet and needs someone to find out what is happening.

Need Cards

Shuffle before use. Challenge cards may have more than one good answer.

NEED 1 Something important is broken, and the group needs a new way to make it work again.	NEED 2 A younger traveler is frightened, and the group needs someone to put safety first.
NEED 3 Everyone sees the obvious clue, but the group may be missing a small detail.	NEED 4 The group does not know what is happening nearby and needs reliable information before deciding.
NEED 5 The first plan failed. The group needs someone willing to rethink it, adjust it, and try again.	NEED 6 Two choices both seem possible. The group needs someone to slow down and compare the risks.
NEED 7 A clue does not make sense yet. The group needs someone to look carefully and ask a better question.	NEED 8 The group needs to learn what another group is doing without drawing attention.
CHALLENGE 1 TWO GIFTS MAY HELP A storm damaged a crossing. The group needs both a safe plan AND a practical way to solve the problem.	CHALLENGE 2 TWO GIFTS MAY HELP A traveler is missing. The group needs someone to notice clues AND someone to think about safety.
CHALLENGE 3 TWO GIFTS MAY HELP A strange device has been found. The group needs to observe it before anyone tries to understand or fix it.	CHALLENGE 4 TWO GIFTS MAY HELP The group faces a problem nobody understands yet. They need to learn more and then decide what kind of help is needed.

Student Reflection

Use after Match the Gift to the Need

1. Choose one Need Card. Which Mingle did you match to it?

2. What is that character good at, and why did that strength fit the need?

3. Choose one Challenge Card. Which two Mingles could help, and what would each contribute?

4. Finish: A group is stronger when...

Mission Design Challenge

Strengths, limits, roles, and revision

LEVEL OUTCOME

Build a team plan that matches strengths to mission needs, then revise roles when the conditions change and explain why the revision improves the plan.

Home Educator Guide

SET UP

Choose Mission A or Mission B. Gather four small household objects—coins, buttons, beans, paper clips—to stand for Timbit, Pippin, Quill, and Snicker. Give the learner the Team Planning Sheet and a few scraps of paper or sticky notes.

TEACH THIS FIRST — 5 MINUTES

Write NEED → STRENGTH → CONTRIBUTION. Ask why “I like this character” is not enough reason to assign a role. A useful role must answer a real need.

MISSION ROUND — 12 MINUTES

Place the four markers on the planning sheet. For each character used, write a specific job and a reason that links the job to the character’s strength. One character may be left unused if the learner can explain the tradeoff.

CHANGE OF CONDITIONS — 8 MINUTES

Read the mission’s new condition. Move the markers and revise only the roles that should change. Keep the original plan visible so the learner can explain the revision.

DEBRIEF — 8 MINUTES

Ask: Which strength mattered most at first? Which became more important after the change? What is the difference between having a strength and knowing when to use it?

CLOSE THE LEVEL

Give the Middle School Student Reflection. Ask for one story connection and one explanation of a revision. Save it for the Family Roundtable.

Mission Challenge — Team Planning Sheet

Use Mission A or Mission B

MISSION A — FIND THE CAUSE

A settlement’s water supply is dropping quickly. The obvious water source is still flowing, so the cause is not clear. The team needs careful observation, information from people nearby, a practical plan, and someone to notice risk.

CHANGE OF CONDITIONS: A resident reports seeing someone near the water channel after dark. The team must now investigate without creating panic.

MISSION B — MOVE SAFELY

A mixed group of travelers must reach the Refuge before nightfall. One route is shorter but poorly known; the other is longer but familiar. The team needs risk judgment, observation, coordination, and a way to solve an unexpected obstacle.

CHANGE OF CONDITIONS: A fallen tree blocks the familiar route. The team has less daylight than expected.

Team Plan

MINGLE	SPECIFIC JOB	WHY THIS STRENGTH FITS THE NEED
Timbit		
Pippin		
Quill		
Snicker		

Student Reflection

Use after the Mission Design Challenge

1. Which character's strength was most useful in your first plan? Explain with one story detail or lesson idea.

2. What changed in the mission? Which role did you revise, and why did that make the plan stronger?

3. Name one limitation that mattered. How did another person's strength help cover it?

4. Finish: A strength becomes a contribution when...

Vocation Case Conference

Ability, need, responsibility, limits, and choice

LEVEL OUTCOME

Distinguish talent from vocation, analyze two characters, and defend a nuanced claim about responsibility that includes limits and a counterargument.

Home Educator Guide

BIG QUESTION

If you are especially able to meet a real need, does that create a greater responsibility to act?

SET UP

Use the Case Matrix on the next page. This is not a career-planning exercise; it asks where ability, need, responsibility, limits, and choice meet.

PART 1 — CASE ANALYSIS — 20 TO 30 MINUTES

1. Choose two characters from Timbit, Pippin, Quill, Snicker, or Horatio.
2. For each, identify an ability, a desire or preference, a need the character encounters, a limitation or cost, and the response the character chooses.
3. Decide whether the character's contribution is best described as talent, role, vocation, or some combination. Support the judgment with story evidence.

PART 2 — TAKE A POSITION — 20 TO 30 MINUTES

Agree, disagree, or answer "It depends." State a principle, use two story examples, and address one counterargument.

PROPOSITION

When a person has an unusual ability to meet an important need, that person has a greater responsibility to act.

PART 3 — ADVISORY MEMO — 20 MINUTES

Write a 350–500 word memo to one character: what are you equipped to contribute, what need calls for it, what limits matter, and what responsibility is yours?

CLOSE THE LEVEL

Complete the High School Position Memo page. Bring one sentence from the memo to the Family Roundtable.

Vocation Case Matrix

Use at least two characters

QUESTION	CASE 1	CASE 2
Character		
Ability / strength		
Need encountered		
Limitation / cost		
Chosen response		

Interpret the Cases

For each case, is the contribution best understood as a talent, a role, a vocation, or some combination? Explain what makes the distinction.

Position Memo

Use after the case conference

Your Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Evidence

Story example 1:

Story example 2:

Counterargument

A reasonable objection to my position is:

My response is:

Advisory Memo

In 350–500 words, advise one character about what contribution is theirs to make—and what limits they should respect. Use the back of this page or additional paper.

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10–15 minutes · All ages

One Question, Four Levels of Answer

Each learner brings one finding from their own activity. Do not require everyone to have reached the same conclusion.

Lower Elementary Share one Mingle and one way that character can help.	Upper Elementary Share one character gift and one need it fits.
Middle School Share one role you changed after the mission changed, and why.	High School Read one sentence from your position memo about responsibility and limits.

Discuss

- Does being good at something mean you must always be the one who does it?
- What changes when another person truly needs a strength you have?
- Why might a family, team, or community be healthier when different people contribute different things?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD

A gift is not valuable because it makes one person impressive. It becomes a contribution when it is used wisely in response to a real need—and when it works alongside the gifts of others.

Protect Delight

If the discussion is alive, stop there. The purpose of the packet is not to complete every blank. It is to let one story open the same important idea at several levels of depth.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 2

Choosing Friendship

The Value of Friendship

Attention, Honesty, Repair, and Presence

Learning Modules for Four Age Levels

Lower Elementary · Upper Elementary · Middle School · High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.

FAMILY GUIDE

Lesson 2 at a Glance

Everything needed for all four age levels is contained in this packet.

BIG IDEA Friendship is more than liking someone or sharing good times. A friend pays attention, tells the truth with care, repairs hurt, and stays present when another person is afraid or ashamed.

The Thread Through the Story

Pippin begins this section worried about Timbit and Snicker. Her relief comes out first as anger, but she allows the friendship to reopen. When the group wrongly suspects Whisk, Pippin joins the apology. Later, beside the fire at Crescent Lake, Pippin entrusts her deepest fear and guilt to Timbit and Quill. They do not lecture or rush her. They move close and hold her. Across these scenes, friendship becomes attention, repair, shared work, honest vulnerability, and faithful presence.

WHERE IT APPEARS	FRIENDSHIP MOMENT
Chapter 24 - A New Day	Pippin worries about absent friends; relief becomes anger, then honest reconnection.
Chapter 25 - Bandit and Boo	Pippin admits her part in wrongly suspecting Whisk and joins the apology.
Chapters 29-30	The Mingles work through danger together; friendship becomes practical cooperation.
Chapter 34 - Firnax	Pippin shares trauma, guilt, and fear. Timbit and Quill listen and hold her without trying to fix her.
Chapter 36 - Nettle's Adieu	The friends face another separation and recognize how much trusted companions matter.

Learning Objectives by Level

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Lower Elementary · Grades 1-3	Recognize friendly actions: notice, listen, help, apologize, include, and stay close.
Upper Elementary · Grades 4-5	Match a friendship need to a fitting response and explain why some responses help while others deepen hurt.

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Middle School · Grades 6-8	Analyze a friendship rupture, select a repair, and revise the response when new information appears.
High School · Grades 9-12	Distinguish affection, loyalty, honesty, repair, and presence; defend a nuanced claim about obligations between friends.

FAMILY GUIDE

How to Use This Lesson

A simple multi-age rhythm

1. Begin together with the Shared Family Launch. Allow about 10 minutes.
2. Move each learner to the level that fits best. Choose by readiness, not merely age.
3. Run levels simultaneously or on different days. Every level explores the same Big Idea through different work.
4. Return for the Family Roundtable. Each learner brings one finding, not a completed packet.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Friendship Action Cards, Situation Cards, crayons or pencil, Draw & Tell page
Upper Elementary	Friendship Response Cards, Decision Cards, pencil, Student Reflection
Middle School	Repair Map, three Case Cards, pencil, Student Reflection; optional family member for role-play
High School	Friendship Ethics Matrix, Position Brief, manuscript or book for evidence

HOME EDUCATOR NOTE Friendship is not agreement at all costs. Older learners should be allowed to distinguish faithful friendship from secrecy, manipulation, approval-seeking, or loyalty to wrongdoing.

Timing

- Shared Family Launch: 10 minutes
- Age-level work: 30-60 minutes

- Family Roundtable: 10-15 minutes
- Optional extension: revisit Chapter 34 as a family read-aloud.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Start Together

10 minutes · All ages

Before Anyone Splits Into Levels

Read or briefly recall these moments. Keep the launch short; its purpose is to place the same question in every learner's mind.

- Chapter 24: Pippin has been frightened for Timbit and Snicker. When they return, her relief first sounds like anger. She eventually turns back toward them and says she is glad they are safe.
- Chapter 25: After helping suspect Whisk unfairly, Pippin adds her own apology instead of letting Timbit apologize for everyone.
- Chapter 34: Pippin tells Timbit and Quill what happened to her family and confesses the guilt and fear she still carries. They sit beside her and hold her.

Ask Everyone the Same Two Questions

- How can you tell when someone needs a friend?
- What can a friend do when words are not enough?

KEEP THE QUESTION OPEN Do not settle on one definition yet. Each age level will test what friendship requires and bring an answer back to the family.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1-3

What Can a Friend Do?

Concrete, visual, oral learning for younger siblings

LEVEL OUTCOME Name at least four friendship actions and match a reasonable friendly response to at least four situations.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Cut apart the Friendship Action Cards and Situation Cards. Place the Action Cards face up. Keep the Draw & Tell page for the end.

Teach This First - 3 Minutes

Say: “A friend cannot make every hard feeling disappear. A friend can notice, listen, help, apologize, include, or stay close.” Read each Action Card aloud.

Run the Activity - 20 to 30 Minutes

5. Turn over one Situation Card and read it aloud.
6. Let the learner choose one Action Card that could help.
7. Require the sentence: “A friend could ___ because ___.”
8. Accept more than one answer when the explanation fits. Ask what might make one response better than another.
9. Continue through at least six situations.

Debrief

- Which friendly action was useful most often?
- When might helping without listening make things worse?
- Why is apologizing something a friend sometimes needs to do?

LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Friendship Action Cards

Read aloud. Keep as one sheet or cut apart.

NOTICE	LISTEN
Pay attention when someone seems worried, left out, or hurt.	Let the other person speak. Do not rush to give an answer.
HELP	APOLOGIZE
Use your hands, time, or courage when a friend needs practical help.	Say what you did, recognize the hurt, and try to make it right.
INCLUDE	STAY CLOSE
Make room. Invite someone into the work, play, or conversation.	Sometimes the best gift is not leaving someone alone.

Situation Cards

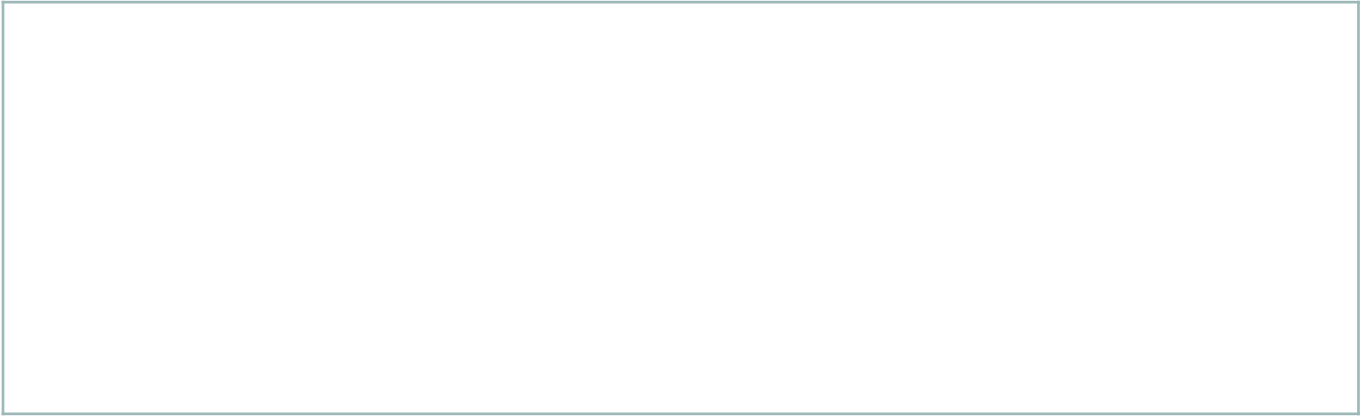
A friend is quiet and keeps looking at the ground.	You blamed a friend before you knew the whole story.
A new traveler stands outside the circle.	A friend tells you about something frightening that happened long ago.
Two friends are angry and talking over each other.	A friend is struggling with a heavy job and time is running out.
A friend returns safely after you were worried and frightened.	A friend made a mistake and is afraid everyone will leave.

LOWER ELEMENTARY

Draw & Tell

A grown-up may write the learner's words.

Draw Pippin sitting with Timbit and Quill beside the fire. Show one thing the friends do that helps Pippin feel less alone.



Tell about your picture: A friend can...

FAMILY CLOSE Say together: "A friend notices. A friend listens. A friend stays."

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4-5

Choose the Helpful Response

Decision game with reveal cards

LEVEL OUTCOME Choose and defend helpful responses to friendship needs, revise one choice after a consequence is revealed, and use one story moment as evidence.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Cut apart the Response Cards and Decision Cards. Keep the Consequence Reveals hidden. Place the Student Reflection aside.

Teach This First - 5 Minutes

Write NEED → RESPONSE → RESULT. Explain that a response can be well-meant and still miss what a friend needs.

Run the Decision Game - 25 to 35 Minutes

10. Read a Decision Card. Name what the friend may need before choosing a response.
11. Select one Response Card and explain the choice.
12. Read the matching Consequence Reveal.
13. Keep the choice or revise it. Explain what the reveal changed.
14. Connect at least one decision to Pippin in Chapter 24, 25, or 34.

Debrief

- Which responses sounded helpful but were not?
- When is truth part of friendship?
- What makes an apology a repair instead of merely a word?

CLOSE THE LEVEL Complete the Upper Elementary Student Reflection and bring one answer to the Family Roundtable.

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Response and Decision Cards

Cut apart. Keep reveals hidden until a response is chosen.

Response Cards

LISTEN FIRST	FIX IT FAST
APOLOGIZE CLEARLY	CHANGE THE SUBJECT
STAY BESIDE THEM	TELL THEM WHAT THEY SHOULD FEEL
ASK WHAT WOULD HELP	DEFEND YOURSELF

Decision Cards and Consequence Reveals

DECISION	HIDDEN CONSEQUENCE REVEAL
1. Your friend returns after frightening you. You feel relieved and angry.	If you attack first, your friend may hear only blame. Naming both fear and relief opens the conversation.
2. You suspected a friend because of a stereotype, then learned you were wrong.	A group apology does not replace your own. Repair begins when you name your part.
3. A friend shares a painful memory and says, "I feel like a monster."	Quick reassurance can silence the story. Listening and staying close may be the first need.
4. A friend wants you to keep a secret that could place someone in danger.	Loyalty is not helping a friend hide serious harm. A trustworthy adult may need to be involved.

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Student Reflection

Use after Choose the Helpful Response

1. Which Decision Card was hardest? What did you think the friend needed?

2. Which response did you revise after reading the consequence? Why?

3. Choose Pippin in Chapter 24, 25, or 34. What did friendship require in that moment?

4. Finish: Friendship is more than liking someone because...

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6-8

Repair the Circle

Rupture, need, response, consequence, and revision

LEVEL OUTCOME Analyze three friendship ruptures, design a specific repair, revise one repair after new information appears, and support one judgment with story evidence.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Give the learner the Repair Map and Case Cards. Optional: use two family members to read the roles aloud.

Teach This First - 5 Minutes

A friendship rupture is a break in trust or connection. Repair is not pretending nothing happened. It involves recognizing what happened, understanding the need, taking responsibility, and choosing a next action.

Case Work - 30 to 40 Minutes

15. Choose two cases and complete a Repair Map for each.
16. For each repair, write the exact first sentence the character should say.
17. Read the New Information line. Revise the repair if necessary.
18. Connect one case to Pippin's choices in Chapter 24, 25, or 34.
19. Optional role-play: perform the first sixty seconds of the repair, then switch roles.

Debrief

- Can trust be repaired without consequences?
- When does loyalty require disagreement?
- Why might presence be more respectful than advice?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Repair Map and Case Cards

Use two cases; complete one map for each.

Repair Map

STEP	YOUR ANALYSIS
Rupture: What damaged connection or trust?	
Need: What does each person need now?	
Responsibility: What must be admitted or changed?	
First sentence: What should be said first?	
Next action: What would make the repair concrete?	
Evidence: What Mingles scene supports your judgment?	

Case Cards

CASE	NEW INFORMATION
A. You accused a friend of taking something. The missing object is found elsewhere.	Your friend says this is not the first time the group has suspected them.
B. A friend disappears while trying to solve a problem alone. They return safely and expect celebration.	They did not understand how frightened everyone would be.
C. A friend shares a painful story, then asks you never to mention it again.	The story includes a present danger the friend cannot manage alone.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student Reflection

Use after Repair the Circle

1. Which rupture would be hardest to repair? Explain why.

2. Write the strongest first sentence you designed. Why is it a good beginning?

3. What new information caused you to revise a repair? What changed?

4. Use one story detail to explain the difference between comfort and genuine friendship.

HIGH SCHOOL · GRADES 9-12

Friendship Ethics Case Conference

Affection, loyalty, honesty, repair, presence, and limits

LEVEL OUTCOME Analyze friendship as a moral relationship, compare two Mingles cases, and defend a nuanced proposition using evidence and a counterargument.

Home Educator Guide

Big Question

What does one friend owe another - and where do the obligations of friendship end?

Part 1 - Case Analysis - 20 to 30 Minutes

20. Analyze Pippin's Chapter 24 reconnection and Chapter 34 disclosure.
21. For each case, distinguish affection, loyalty, honesty, repair, presence, and protection.
22. Identify a possible excess or distortion: possessiveness, enabling, forced disclosure, secrecy, or approval-seeking.

Part 2 - Take a Position - 20 to 30 Minutes

PROPOSITION A true friend has a duty to tell the truth and remain present, even when either choice creates discomfort.

Agree, disagree, or answer "It depends." State a principle, use two story examples, and address one counterargument.

Part 3 - Friendship Covenant - 15 to 20 Minutes

Draft five commitments for a trustworthy friendship. Each commitment must include a boundary or qualifier.

CLOSE THE LEVEL Complete the Position Brief. Bring one sentence to the Family Roundtable.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Friendship Ethics Matrix

Use Pippin's Chapter 24 and Chapter 34 scenes.

DIMENSION	CHAPTER 24	CHAPTER 34
What threatens connection?		
What does Pippin need?		
What does the friend owe?		
What response helps?		
What response could cause harm?		
What boundary or limit matters?		
What changes after the response?		

Interpret the Cases

Which scene presents the more demanding form of friendship, and why?

Friendship Covenant

1. We will _____, unless/while _____.

2. We will _____, unless/while _____.

3. We will _____, unless/while _____.

4. We will _____, unless/while _____.

5. We will _____, unless/while _____.

HIGH SCHOOL

Position Brief

Use after the case conference

Your Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Evidence

Story example 1:

Story example 2:

Counterargument

A reasonable objection to my position is:

My response is:

Concluding Principle

A friendship becomes trustworthy when...

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10-15 minutes · All ages

One Question, Four Levels of Answer

Each learner brings one finding. Do not require everyone to reach the same conclusion.

LEVEL	SHARE
Lower Elementary	One friendship action and a situation where it would help.
Upper Elementary	One response you revised after seeing its consequence.
Middle School	One first sentence that could begin repairing trust.
High School	One sentence about what friends owe one another - and one limit.

Discuss

- Is listening an action? Why or why not?
- Can a good friend disagree with you?
- When should a friend seek help from a trustworthy adult?
- Which matters more: saying the perfect thing or refusing to leave someone alone?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD Friendship is chosen repeatedly. It grows when people notice, listen, tell the truth with care, repair what they damage, and remain present when another person cannot carry the moment alone.

Protect Delight

If the discussion is alive, stop there. The purpose is not to complete every blank. It is to let one story open the same important idea at several levels of depth.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 3

Changing the View

The Value of Perspective

Observation, Assumption, Experience, and Understanding

Learning Modules for Four Age Levels

Lower Elementary · Upper Elementary · Middle School · High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.

FAMILY GUIDE

Lesson 3 at a Glance

Everything needed for all four age levels is contained in this packet.

BIG IDEA Perspective is the view available from where we stand. It is shaped by what we notice, what we know, and what we have experienced. Changing position—or listening to another person—can reveal what our first view concealed.

The Thread Through the Story

Quill repeatedly discovers that seeing is not the same as understanding. A map represents a place but is not the place itself. Snicker sees the white sails only from a distant ridge. Whisk hears the fox encounter without seeing it and imagines Pippin has been killed. Quill first sees a threatening fox, then looks into Marlowe's eyes and sees a person. By Chapter 44, he helps Pippin separate this fox from the fox who destroyed her family. The facts do not change; the available view does.

WHERE IT APPEARS	PERSPECTIVE MOMENT
Chapter 37 · On the Road Again	A map, painting, and place represent reality differently; Quill recognizes the fox as a person.
Chapter 38 · A Surprising Discovery	Distance and position determine whether the Mingles can see the trace, sails, and ship.
Chapter 40 · A Surprise Awaits	The Mingles interpret Horatio's face and intentions through fear, stories, and prior beliefs.
Chapter 43 · Marlowe	New information forces the group to reconsider what happened during the fox encounter.
Chapter 44 · Pippin	Quill distinguishes Marlowe from the fox in Pippin's past without dismissing her fear.

Learning Objectives by Level

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3	Physically change viewing position, describe visible and hidden details, and compare two honest views.
Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5	Retell one event in distinct voices and identify how knowledge, fear, and location shape each account.

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Middle School · Grades 6–8	Sort observations, inferences, and assumptions; revise a conclusion when new evidence appears.
High School · Grades 9–12	Analyze perspective as both a limitation and a moral responsibility; defend a nuanced interpretive claim.

FAMILY GUIDE

How to Use This Lesson

A multi-sensory, multi-age rhythm

1. Begin with the tactile Shared Family Launch. Allow about 10 minutes.
2. Move each learner to the level that fits best. Choose by readiness, not merely age.
3. Use spoken performance wherever useful. A learner may record an audio response instead of writing it.
4. Return for the Family Roundtable. Each learner contributes one changed view.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Small box or book, 3–5 household objects or figures, Viewpoint Frames, crayons
Upper Elementary	Voice Cards, event script, optional phone/recorder, Response Sheet
Middle School	Evidence Cards, three labeled sorting areas, pencil, Revision Record
High School	Perspective Ethics Dossier, Position Brief, manuscript or book for evidence

HOME EDUCATOR NOTE The goal is not to treat every interpretation as equally accurate. Learners should distinguish an honest limited view from a claim that ignores available evidence, and empathy from agreement.

Timing

- Shared Family Launch: 10 minutes
- Age-level work: 30–60 minutes
- Family Roundtable: 10–15 minutes

- Optional auditory extension: record and replay the same event in three voices.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Move, Look, Listen

10 minutes · All ages

A Viewpoint Demonstration

Place a box or upright book in the center of a table. Put one small object in front, one behind, and one to each side. Family members stand or sit at different positions without moving the objects.

5. Each person says only what is directly visible from that position.
6. Move to another side and name what appears or disappears.
7. One person closes their eyes while another makes a short sound with an object. The listener describes what the sound suggests, then opens their eyes to check.
8. Read or recall Whisk's experience in Chapter 37: she hears Pippin's cry and the fox's howl but cannot see what happened.

Ask Everyone the Same Two Questions

- Can two people give different honest accounts of the same scene?
- What should we do before turning a partial view into a final judgment?

KEEP THE DISTINCTION CLEAR A perspective may explain a conclusion without proving that conclusion correct. New evidence should be allowed to change the answer.

LOWER ELEMENTARY • GRADES 1–3

Walk Around the Story

Tactile construction and physical viewpoint-taking

LEVEL OUTCOME Describe at least three different views of one constructed scene and name something each viewer cannot see.

Home Educator Guide

Build the Scene • 5 Minutes

Use a box for a tree or ridge and small figures for Quill, Pippin, Whisk, and Marlowe. Exact figures are unnecessary; blocks, clothespins, or folded paper will work.

Run the Activity • 20 to 30 Minutes

9. Place Quill where he can see Marlowe's face. Place Whisk behind the "thicket," where she can hear but not see. Place Pippin on the opposite side.
10. The learner carries a Viewpoint Frame to each figure and looks through it from that figure's height and direction.
11. At each position, complete: "I can see _____. I cannot see _____. I might think _____."
12. Move one object or reveal one hidden detail. Ask the learner to revise the final sentence.
13. Build a second scene from Chapter 38 using the ridge, trace, and white sail.

Debrief

- Which position showed the most?
- Did any position show everything?
- What can you do when your view is incomplete?

LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Viewpoint Frames and Scene Pieces

Cut out the frames; use the labels with blocks or figures.

QUILL'S VIEW	PIPPIN'S VIEW
I see: _____ I cannot see: _____ I might think: _____	I see: _____ I cannot see: _____ I might think: _____
WHISK'S VIEW	MARLOWE'S VIEW
I hear: _____ I cannot see: _____ I might think: _____	I see: _____ I cannot know: _____ I might think: _____

Moveable Scene Labels

TREE / RIDGE	THICKET
WHITE SAIL	BENT-GRASS TRACE
QUILL	PIPPIN
WHISK	MARLOWE

SAY IT ALOUD "My view is real, but it is not the whole scene."

LOWER ELEMENTARY

Draw the Hidden Side

Show two honest views of the same place

Draw what one character sees from the front.

Now draw what another character sees from behind.

Tell about the difference:

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5

Same Event, Different Voice

Auditory learning through performed point of view

LEVEL OUTCOME Perform or record three accounts of one event, then identify how position, experience, and missing information alter each account.

Home Educator Guide

Teach This First • 5 Minutes

Explain: an account contains observation, interpretation, and emotion. A strong listener asks which is which.

Run the Voice Studio • 25 to 35 Minutes

14. Assign Quill, Pippin, and Whisk Voice Cards. A parent or sibling may read additional parts.
15. Read the Fox Encounter Cue once. Each learner listens without taking notes.
16. Perform a 30–60 second spoken report in character. Record it if practical.
17. Replay or repeat the reports. List one fact all voices share and one detail available to only one voice.
18. Switch roles and perform again. Change tone, pacing, and emphasis without inventing new facts.
19. Complete the Response Sheet.

Debrief

- Which voice sounded most certain? Was certainty the same as accuracy?
- How did fear change what a character noticed?
- What did you understand only after hearing another voice?

CHOICE FOR QUIET LEARNERS A learner may make an audio recording alone, use a puppet, or have another person read the words they compose.

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Voice Cards and Event Cue

Read with expression; remain faithful to the text.

QUILL	PIPPIN	WHISK
You see Marlowe's eyes and hesitate because he is a living person. Then Pippin rushes out and you release the arrow.	You believe a fox threatens Quill. You charge out with a stick before you know what the fox intends.	You cannot see the encounter. You hear Pippin cry, hear a howl, and fear that Pippin has been killed.

Fox Encounter Cue

Smudge orders everyone to hide. Marlowe approaches Quill's cover. Pippin breaks from hiding. Quill's arrow strikes a branch and wounds Marlowe. Marlowe runs past Whisk, who has heard the conflict but could not see it.

Second-Round Voice Starters

WHAT I DIRECTLY NOTICED	WHAT I THOUGHT IT MEANT
WHAT I FELT	WHAT I LEARNED LATER

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Listener's Response Sheet

Compare what was heard

1. One fact all three voices included:

2. One detail only Quill could know:

3. One detail only Whisk could know:

4. The voice I understood differently after the second performance:

5. A good listener should ask:

MIDDLE SCHOOL • GRADES 6–8

Evidence Lens Lab

Tactile sorting, inference testing, and revision

LEVEL OUTCOME Classify claims as observation, inference, or assumption; form a provisional conclusion and revise it when new evidence appears.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Label three places on a table OBSERVATION, INFERENCE, and ASSUMPTION. Cut apart the Evidence Cards. Keep Round Two hidden.

Run the Investigation • 30 to 45 Minutes

20. Sort the Round One cards by physically placing each under a label.
21. Choose one disputed card and explain what additional evidence would test it.
22. Write a provisional account of the fox encounter using only supported claims.
23. Reveal Round Two. Re-sort any cards whose status changes.
24. Write a Revision Record explaining what changed and why.
25. Repeat briefly with the white sails in Chapter 38 or Horatio in Chapter 40.

Debrief

- Can an inference be reasonable and still wrong?
- Which assumptions came from fear or prior experience?
- What is the difference between revising and “losing” an argument?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Evidence Cards

Cut apart; reveal Round Two only after the first account.

Round One

CARD	CLAIM
A	Smudge orders the group to hide before Marlowe appears.
B	Marlowe moves toward Quill's hiding place.
C	Marlowe intends to attack the Mingles.
D	Whisk hears Pippin cry and then hears a howl.
E	Whisk believes Pippin has been killed.
F	Quill sees a person when he looks into Marlowe's eyes.

Round Two • New Evidence

CARD	NEW INFORMATION
G	Marlowe later says he followed Quill and was frightened when the Mingles attacked.
H	Horatio identifies Marlowe as his first mate.
I	Quill admits the group assumed that all foxes attack.
J	Pippin's earlier warren was destroyed by a different fox.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Revision Record

Show how evidence changed the account

1. My first conclusion was:

2. The strongest evidence supporting it was:

3. I had treated this claim as a fact, but it was actually:

4. The new evidence that mattered most was:

5. My revised conclusion is:

6. Revising made the account stronger because:

HIGH SCHOOL • GRADES 9–12

Perspective Ethics Hearing

Test interpretation, empathy, and responsibility

LEVEL OUTCOME Analyze how embodied position, history, identity, and evidence shape interpretation; defend a claim about the duties created by limited perspective.

Home Educator Guide

Central Question

When does a limited perspective become a moral failure rather than an unavoidable human limitation?

Part 1 • Prepare Testimony • 20 Minutes

26. Analyze Quill, Pippin, Whisk, and Marlowe using the Dossier.
27. For each, separate physical access to evidence from emotional history and social assumption.
28. Draft one question that challenges the character without dismissing the character's experience.

Part 2 • Conduct the Hearing • 20 to 30 Minutes

One learner may rotate through roles. Read each testimony aloud, question the witness, and identify what the witness could reasonably know at that moment.

PROPOSITION We are responsible not for having a complete perspective, which is impossible, but for testing our perspective before using it to judge or harm another person.

Part 3 • Position Brief • 15 to 20 Minutes

Qualify the proposition, use two scenes as evidence, address one counterargument, and name a practical discipline of responsible perspective-taking.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Perspective Ethics Dossier

Use Chapters 37, 38, 40, 43, and 44.

WITNESS	CAN DIRECTLY KNOW	HISTORY / ASSUMPTION	DUTY BEFORE ACTING
Quill			
Pippin			
Whisk			
Marlowe			

Cross-Examination Questions

What evidence was unavailable to you?

What did fear cause you to assume?

What could you have checked safely?

What changed your interpretation?

Responsible Perspective Practices

Before judging or acting, I will:

HIGH SCHOOL

Position Brief

Use after the Perspective Ethics Hearing

Your Qualified Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Evidence

Story example 1:

Story example 2:

Counterargument

A reasonable objection is:

My response is:

Practical Discipline

One habit that helps people test a limited perspective is:

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10–15 minutes · All ages

One Changed View

Each learner brings one example of an initial view that became more complete. Do not require identical conclusions.

LEVEL	SHARE
Lower Elementary	One object that appeared or disappeared after changing position.
Upper Elementary	One fact understood differently after hearing another voice.
Middle School	One claim moved from fact to inference or assumption.
High School	One responsibility created by the limits of human perspective.

Discuss

- Is every perspective equally accurate? Why not?
- Can fear explain a mistaken judgment without excusing harmful action?
- What is the difference between empathy and agreement?
- When did Quill's view change—and what allowed it to change?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD A responsible person treats a first view as a beginning, not a verdict. Move, listen, test the evidence, and remain willing to revise.

Protect Delight

The physical scene, performed voices, and evidence cards are not extras. They let learners experience the limits of perspective before asking them to define it.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 4

Choosing Your Own Course

The Value of Being Your Own Person

Moral Independence, Responsibility, and Integrity

Learning Modules for Four Age Levels

Lower Elementary · Upper Elementary · Middle School · High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.

FAMILY GUIDE

Lesson 4 at a Glance

Everything needed for all four age levels is contained in this packet.

BIG IDEA Being your own person means using your own moral judgment and accepting responsibility for your choices. It is not doing whatever you want. It is refusing to surrender your conscience to fear, pressure, habit, or a powerful leader.

The Thread Through the Story

Horatio was kidnapped and forced into a pirate crew. As he grew, coercion became participation: he helped inventory plunder taken from traders and people sold into slavery. He finally chose escape, built a new life, and now tells the truth about both what was done to him and what he did. His care for Cawkin shows another choice: he rescues without possessing. Caelum, meanwhile, knows the Archon is wrong but remains afraid to act. Snicker quietly accepts dangerous work because she has chosen the purpose for herself. Together, the scenes separate independence from impulse, rebellion, and self-excuse.

WHERE IT APPEARS	MORAL-INDEPENDENCE MOMENT
Chapter 47 · Horatio's Odyssey	Horatio distinguishes coercion from complicity, chooses escape, and owns his past without hiding behind it.
Chapter 50 · Before Dawn	Horatio's rescue of Cawkin becomes friendship, not ownership: "devoted friends, not master and pet."
Chapter 53 · A Private Conversation	Caelum recognizes the Archon as a dictator but fears the cost of leaving or resisting.
Chapter 54 · Proudfoot	Snicker's chosen mission is revealed; Quill must reconsider the identity he imposed on her.
Chapter 55 · Sandworms	The group receives assigned responsibilities, raising the question of when following direction serves a chosen purpose.

Learning Objectives by Level

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3	Distinguish a chosen action from pressure or impulse and rehearse a simple pause–think–choose routine.

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5	Test decisions against values and likely consequences using a tactile course-setting game.
Middle School · Grades 6–8	Create an identity-layer model distinguishing labels, influences, choices, and owned responsibilities.
High School · Grades 9–12	Compare coercion, complicity, obedience, resistance, and responsibility in three character cases.

FAMILY GUIDE

How to Use This Lesson

A varied multi-age learning rhythm

1. Begin together with the movement-based Shared Family Launch.
2. Assign the level that fits each learner's readiness.
3. Allow spoken, constructed, performed, or written evidence as directed.
4. Return for the Family Roundtable with one principle, not every completed page.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Three floor signs, Choice Cards, one small object as a pause token
Upper Elementary	Course Map, Decision and Current Cards, coin or button markers, pencil
Middle School	Identity Layers sheet, tracing paper or four paper shapes, scissors, colored pencils
High School	Moral Independence Case File, spectrum signs, Position Brief, story text

HOME EDUCATOR NOTE Do not teach “be your own person” as automatic distrust of parents, teachers, laws, or expertise. Mature independence can include freely chosen obedience, cooperation, and accountability.

Timing

- Shared Family Launch: 10 minutes

- Age-level work: 30–60 minutes
- Family Roundtable: 10–15 minutes
- Optional extension: perform Horatio and Caelum as contrasting monologues.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Who Is Steering?

10 minutes · All ages

Movement Setup

Place three signs several steps apart: **SOMEONE PUSHED ME, I REACTED WITHOUT THINKING,** and **I PAUSED AND CHOSE.** Read one action at a time. Learners move to the sign that best describes it, then explain.

- A character obeys because refusal would bring immediate violence.
- A character joins wrongdoing because everyone nearby accepts it.
- A character follows a leader after deciding the mission is worthwhile.
- A character refuses a cruel order and accepts the cost.
- A character says, “I had no choice,” although safer choices were available.

Connect to Horatio

Recall Chapter 47. As a kidnapped boy, Horatio had little power. As a trusted adult crew member, he had more knowledge and some ability to choose. His responsibility changes as his freedom and understanding change.

Ask Everyone

- What makes a choice truly yours?
- Does pressure remove all responsibility—or can it reduce responsibility without erasing it?

PHRASE TO CARRY INTO EVERY LEVEL Pause. Name the pressure. Test the choice. Own the action.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3

Pause, Think, Choose

Movement, role-play, and a concrete decision routine

LEVEL OUTCOME Use the four-step routine in at least five situations and explain one reason for a chosen action.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Place the PAUSE, THINK, and CHOOSE signs around the room. Give the learner a button, smooth stone, or other “pause token.”

Run the Activity · 20 to 30 Minutes

5. Read a Choice Card. The learner holds the token and freezes instead of answering immediately.
6. Walk to PAUSE and name the pressure: fear, hurry, anger, wanting approval, or a direct command.
7. Walk to THINK and name one value plus two possible actions.
8. Walk to CHOOSE, select an action, and complete: “This is my choice because ____.”
9. Act out what happens next. Repeat with at least five cards.

Debrief

- Is the fastest choice always your own choice?
- Can you choose to obey?
- What makes an apology an owned action rather than forced words?

LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Choice Cards and Floor Signs

Cut apart the cards and place the signs around the room.

CHOICE CARD	CHOICE CARD
Friends laugh at someone and expect you to laugh too.	A trusted adult asks you to help with a difficult job.
You break something and no one sees it happen.	Someone dares you to do something dangerous.
You are angry and want to shout the first words in your mind.	A group has a good plan, but you would rather keep playing.
A powerful person tells you to blame someone innocent.	You discover that a person you disliked has been helping everyone.

Floor Signs

PAUSE	THINK	CHOOSE
What pressure do I feel?	What matters? What could I do?	What will I do—and why?

OWN IT After acting, say: “I chose _____. The result was _____. Next time I would _____.”

LOWER ELEMENTARY

My Choice Wheel

Draw or dictate one complete choice

1 · WHAT HAPPENED?	2 · WHAT PRESSURE DID I FEEL?
3 · WHAT MATTERED?	4 · WHAT DID I CHOOSE?

Draw what happened after your choice:

Say aloud: "I am responsible for _____."

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5

Set Your Course

A tactile navigation game with currents and consequences

LEVEL OUTCOME Choose a course through four decisions, explain which “currents” influenced each choice, and revise one course after a consequence reveal.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Lay the Course Map flat. Place a coin or button at START. Cut apart the Decision, Current, and Consequence Cards. Keep consequences hidden.

Teach This First • 5 Minutes

A ship may be pushed by wind and current, but the sailor still sets a course when choice is possible. Influence is not always control.

Run the Game • 25 to 35 Minutes

10. Draw one Decision Card and one Current Card.
11. Move the marker toward the response you choose. Explain how the current affected—but did not automatically decide—the course.
12. Reveal the consequence and record whether the choice expressed a value or merely escaped discomfort.
13. Continue through four decisions.
14. Return to one fork, change the course, and compare consequences.

Debrief

- Which current was strongest: fear, approval, habit, anger, or authority?
- When was cooperation an independent choice?
- Why does owning a choice include owning foreseeable results?

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Course Map and Decision Cards

Use coins or buttons as ship markers.

Course Map

START	FORK 1	FORK 2	FORK 3	HARBOR
Name the pressure	Choose a value	Compare actions	Accept the result	State your principle

Decision Cards

DECISION	CURRENT
Horatio can continue serving the pirate crew or risk escape.	Fear of punishment
Caelum can protect himself or share knowledge that might stop harm.	Fear plus loyalty to colleagues
Snickers accepts a dangerous assignment that others misunderstand.	Chosen purpose
Quill can defend his old judgment or admit he misjudged Snicker.	Pride and embarrassment

Current Cards

FEAR	APPROVAL	HABIT
ANGER	AUTHORITY	CONSCIENCE

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Consequence Reveals and Captain's Log

Reveal only after the learner commits to a course.

CASE	CONSEQUENCE REVEAL
Horatio	Remaining protects him temporarily but deepens his participation. Escape is dangerous but ends his service to the crew.
Caelum	Silence protects him now while the geoglyphs continue. Sharing knowledge may endanger him and help the Wilderland.
Snicker	Her chosen work costs safety and reputation, but produces information the group needs.
Quill	Defending pride preserves his image briefly. Admitting error makes room for truth and cooperation.

Captain's Log

The strongest current was:

The value I used to set my course was:

The result I must own is:

I changed one course because:

MIDDLE SCHOOL · GRADES 6–8

Identity in Layers

Tactile model-making and interpretive analysis

LEVEL OUTCOME Build a four-layer identity model for Horatio, distinguish imposed and chosen elements, and support the interpretation with story evidence.

Home Educator Guide

Make the Model • 30 to 45 Minutes

15. Cut four paper shapes of decreasing size, or use tracing-paper overlays. Label them LABELS, INFLUENCES, CHOICES, and RESPONSIBILITIES.
16. On LABELS, record names others might apply: captive, pirate, purser, escapee, captain, rescuer, friend.
17. On INFLUENCES, record forces acting on him: kidnapping, fear, crew culture, survival, guilt, memory.
18. On CHOICES, record actions he can own, including participation, escape, confession, building the Refuge, and refusing to possess Cawkin.
19. On RESPONSIBILITIES, identify what he acknowledges and what repair remains possible.
20. Stack the layers, then remove them one at a time. Discuss why no single layer is the whole person.

Required Comparison

Build a miniature two-layer model for Caelum: what the Archon imposes and what he still chooses. Compare it with Horatio's model.

Debrief

- Which parts of identity are received rather than chosen?
- Can a past action become part of your story without becoming your permanent identity?
- Why is honest responsibility necessary for moral independence?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Identity Layers

Cut, stack, or trace the four layers.

LAYER	GUIDING QUESTION	HORATIO EVIDENCE
LABELS	What names do self and others apply?	
INFLUENCES	What pressures, history, and relationships shape him?	
CHOICES	Which actions express his own judgment?	
RESPONSIBILITIES	What consequences and obligations must he own?	

Caelum Comparison

IMPOSED BY THE ARCHON	STILL WITHIN CAELUM'S CHOICE

Interpretation

Horatio becomes his own person when—not because—but when:

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student Reflection

Use after Identity in Layers

1. Which label most distorts Horatio if used alone? Why?

2. Which influence reduces his responsibility without erasing it?

3. Which choice most clearly establishes a new course?

4. What is the difference between self-definition and self-excuse?

5. One part of identity a person can revise is:

HIGH SCHOOL • GRADES 9–12

Moral Independence Forum

Spectrum movement, case comparison, and ethical argument

LEVEL OUTCOME Distinguish degrees of agency and responsibility under pressure; defend a position that accounts for coercion without eliminating moral judgment.

Home Educator Guide

Part 1 • Responsibility Spectrum • 15 Minutes

Mark a physical line from NO MEANINGFUL CHOICE to FULL RESPONSIBILITY. Read each case statement. The learner stands at a position, cites evidence, then may move after hearing a counterpoint.

- Horatio immediately after being kidnapped
- Horatio as the trusted adult purser
- Horatio when he diverts his share and escapes
- Caelum while privately condemning the Archon
- Snicker while accepting Horatio's dangerous assignment

Part 2 • Case Forum • 20 to 30 Minutes

Analyze coercive power, available alternatives, foreseeable harm, motive, action, and later truth-telling. Do not collapse explanation into excuse.

PROPOSITION Moral independence begins when a person stops letting circumstances write the final sentence of the person's identity.

Part 3 • Position Brief • 15 to 20 Minutes

Qualify the proposition. Compare Horatio with Caelum or Snicker, address one counterargument, and explain why chosen obedience can sometimes express independence.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Moral Independence Case File

Use Chapters 47, 50, 53, and 54.

DIMENSION	HORATIO	CAELUM	SNICKER
Power acting on the character			
Knowledge of harm			
Available alternatives			
Risk of resistance			
Action actually chosen			
Responsibility owned or avoided			
Evidence of independent judgment			

Distinctions to Preserve

- Coercion is not the same as persuasion.
- Obedience is not always surrender of judgment.
- Rebellion is not automatically moral independence.
- Confession does not erase consequences, but it rejects self-deception.

HIGH SCHOOL

Position Brief

Use after the Moral Independence Forum

Your Qualified Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Comparative Evidence

Horatio:

Caelum or Snicker:

Counterargument

A reasonable objection is:

My response is:

Final Principle

Being your own person requires:

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10–15 minutes · All ages

One Choice You Can Own

Each learner brings one principle discovered through movement, play, construction, or analysis.

LEVEL	SHARE
Lower Elementary	One situation and the pause–think–choose response.
Upper Elementary	One “current” that influenced—but did not decide—a course.
Middle School	One identity layer that is important but incomplete by itself.
High School	One distinction between coercion, obedience, rebellion, and independence.

Discuss

- Can following someone else’s good direction be your own choice?
- When does pressure reduce responsibility?
- Why does Horatio tell the truth about the harm he helped cause?
- What separates Snicker’s service from Caelum’s fearful compliance?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD Your history and circumstances influence you, but they need not have the final word. Pause, judge, choose, and accept responsibility for the course you set.

Protect Complexity

Younger learners practice a usable decision habit. Older learners should be allowed to wrestle with degrees of freedom and guilt; the story does not offer a simple innocence-or-guilt answer.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 5

Making Room in the Circle

The Value of Belonging

Welcome, Trust, Contribution, and Repair

Learning Modules for Four Age Levels

Lower Elementary · Upper Elementary · Middle School · High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.

FAMILY GUIDE

Lesson 5 at a Glance

Everything needed for all four age levels is contained in this packet.

BIG IDEA Belonging is more than being given a group name. People begin to belong when they are welcomed, heard, trusted, allowed to contribute, and expected to repair harm. Belonging changes both the newcomer and the group.

The Thread Through the Story

Whisk has traveled with the Mingles, but she still expects rejection. She trails behind, protects food, hides her inability to read, takes Timbit's sketchbook, and tries to imitate the group's teasing because she thinks acceptance must be earned through performance. In Chapter 61, conflict finally exposes the deeper problem: the others rarely listen to her. Timbit interrupts the pattern, apologizes, refuses to assume guilt, and receives her confession without expelling her. Whisk's first hug becomes a physical sign that the name "Mingle" is becoming a lived relationship.

WHERE IT APPEARS	BELONGING MOMENT
Chapters 37–39 · Lookback	Whisk walks behind the group, fears scarcity, and conceals that she cannot read.
Chapter 58 · Research	Whisk participates in the shared investigation but still challenges and protects herself.
Chapter 61 · The Sketchbook	Whisk says she feels like an outsider and copied the group's pranks to gain acceptance.
Chapter 61 · Listening	Timbit recognizes the group's disrespect, listens, apologizes, and does not presume guilt.
Chapter 61 · The Embrace	Whisk returns the book, accepts responsibility, and experiences her first hug.

Learning Objectives by Level

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3	Construct a model showing five supports that help a person feel securely included.
Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5	Complete a cooperative puzzle in which every participant holds a necessary contribution.

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Middle School · Grades 6–8	Create and compare two soundscapes showing dismissal and attentive belonging.
High School · Grades 9–12	Distinguish belonging from conformity, permissiveness, possession, and mere membership.

FAMILY GUIDE

How to Use This Lesson

A multi-sensory, multi-age rhythm

1. Begin with the Shared Family Launch using yarn or string.
2. Move learners to the appropriate level by readiness.
3. Let auditory learners record rather than perform live.
4. Return for one finding from each level at the Family Roundtable.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Blocks, craft sticks, cups, or cardboard; labels; small Whisk figure
Upper Elementary	Mingle Puzzle pieces, envelopes, scissors, pencil
Middle School	Sound Cue Cards, phone/recorder optional, two-column listening sheet
High School	Belonging Case File, boundary cards, Position Brief, story text

HOME EDUCATOR NOTE Belonging does not require tolerating theft, cruelty, manipulation, or unsafe behavior. Healthy groups combine welcome with truth, repair, boundaries, and meaningful contribution.

Timing

- Shared Family Launch: 10 minutes
- Age-level work: 30–60 minutes
- Family Roundtable: 10–15 minutes
- Optional extension: reread the Chapter 61 exchange aloud with different pacing.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

The Connection Web

10 minutes · All ages

Tactile Setup

Sit or stand in a circle with a ball of yarn. One person holds the end, names something a group member contributes, and rolls the ball to that person. Continue until everyone holds part of the web.

5. Notice that every person supports part of the web.
6. One person releases the yarn while others continue. Observe what changes.
7. Reconnect the strand using a sentence of welcome, listening, help, trust, apology, or invitation.
8. Recall Whisk's words: the group called her a Mingle, but she still felt outside the circle.

Ask Everyone

- Can someone be physically present and still not belong?
- What must a group do—not merely say—to make room for a person?

KEEP BOTH SIDES Belonging is received from others and practiced by the person joining. Whisk needs welcome; she also needs to return the sketchbook and tell the truth.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3

Build a Place to Belong

Tactile construction and story-based explanation

LEVEL OUTCOME Build a structure using five labeled supports and explain how removing or repairing one support changes the whole.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Use blocks, cups, craft sticks, folded cardboard, or recyclables. Make five labels: WELCOME, LISTEN, TRUST, CONTRIBUTE, and REPAIR. Use a button or paper figure for Whisk.

Build and Test • 25 to 35 Minutes

9. Build a shelter, bridge, or circle with all five labeled parts helping hold it together.
10. Place Whisk inside. Tell how each support helps her belong.
11. Remove LISTEN. Gently test the structure and describe what changes in the story, even if the model still stands.
12. Return LISTEN and remove REPAIR. Discuss what happens after the sketchbook is taken.
13. Repair the model and add one new support chosen by the learner.

Debrief

- Which support was most important?
- Can a person contribute before feeling completely comfortable?
- Why do welcome and responsibility belong together?

LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Belonging Supports and Story Cards

Cut apart and attach to building materials.

WELCOME	LISTEN
Make room and greet the person.	Stop and pay attention to the person's words.
TRUST	CONTRIBUTE
Do not assume the worst without evidence.	Give the person a real way to help.
REPAIR	MY NEW SUPPORT
Tell the truth, apologize, and make things right.	_____

Story Test Cards

Whisk walks behind everyone.	No one lets Whisk finish speaking.
Whisk helps research the Aridites.	The group assumes Whisk took something.
Whisk admits taking the sketchbook.	Timbit apologizes and hugs Whisk.

LOWER ELEMENTARY

My Belonging Structure

Draw the model and explain one repair

Draw and label your structure:

One part I removed was:

The group repaired the connection by:

FAMILY CLOSE Say together: “We make room. We listen. We tell the truth. We repair.”

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5

Every Piece Is Needed

A cooperative puzzle with unequal information

LEVEL OUTCOME Complete a shared challenge, identify behaviors that included or sidelined participants, and redesign one group rule.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Cut apart the Mingle Puzzle and place pieces or clues in separate envelopes. If only one learner is present, place envelopes at role stations and require the learner to speak from each role before combining information.

Run the Challenge • 25 to 35 Minutes

14. Assign Timbit, Pippin, Quill, Smudge, and Whisk envelopes. Each contains information the others need.
15. Round One: participants may share only when asked by name. Observe who is overlooked.
16. Pause after five minutes. Ask whether the group has treated presence as participation.
17. Round Two: use the rule, “No decision until every role has contributed.”
18. Complete the message, then compare the two rounds.
19. Write one better group rule on the Reflection Card.

Debrief

- Who had useful information but was not invited?
- Did speaking often mean contributing most?
- How can a group invite participation without forcing performance?

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Mingle Puzzle Envelopes

Cut apart. Give one role card and its clue to each participant.

ROLE	PRIVATE CLUE
TIMBIT	The first word is BELONGING.
PIPPIN	The second word means something deeper than a name: GROWS.
QUILL	The third word describes repeated action: WHEN.
SMUDGE	The next three words are PEOPLE MAKE ROOM.
WHISK	The final words are AND LISTEN.

Assemble the Message

Round Comparison

ROUND ONE	ROUND TWO
Who was invited?	Who was invited?
Whose clue was delayed?	What rule changed participation?
How did it feel?	How did it feel?

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Cooperative Reflection

Use after Every Piece Is Needed

1. A useful contribution that was easy to overlook:

2. One behavior that made a participant feel outside:

3. One behavior that changed the second round:

4. Our improved group rule:

5. In Chapter 61, Timbit makes room for Whisk by:

MIDDLE SCHOOL • GRADES 6–8

The Sound of Belonging

Auditory composition, performance, and listening analysis

LEVEL OUTCOME Compose two contrasting 60-second soundscapes and explain how timing, interruption, silence, tone, and response communicate belonging.

Home Educator Guide

Create Two Audio Scenes • 30 to 45 Minutes

20. Use the Sound Cue Cards to build Scene A: Whisk speaks while the group dismisses, interrupts, or talks over her.
21. Perform or record the scene. Words may be paraphrased, but events must remain faithful to Chapter 61.
22. Rebuild the same event as Scene B: Timbit waits, listens, apologizes, and leaves space for Whisk's answer.
23. Perform or record Scene B. Include at least three seconds of intentional silence.
24. Replay both without watching the performers. Mark what the ear reveals about power and attention.
25. Complete the Listening Analysis.

Debrief

- Can silence communicate welcome?
- How do pace and interruption distribute power?
- What auditory behavior changed before Whisk told the truth?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Sound Cue Cards and Listening Analysis

Cut apart or use as a performance score.

DISMISSIVE SOUND CUES	ATTENTIVE SOUND CUES
Overlapping voices	One voice at a time
Abrupt interruption	A complete pause before reply
Sarcastic or impatient tone	Calm, direct tone
Whisk speeds up defensively	Whisk is allowed to slow down
Accusation before evidence	Question without presumption
No acknowledgment	Specific apology and response

Listening Analysis

FEATURE	SCENE A	SCENE B
Silence		
Interruptions		
Tone		
Who controls the pace?		
Effect on truth-telling		

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student Reflection

Use after The Sound of Belonging

1. Which sound choice most strongly communicated exclusion?

2. Why did Timbit's apology make confession more—not less—likely?

3. How can listening create accountability rather than avoid it?

4. Write one sentence distinguishing belonging from approval:

5. Name one listening habit you would adopt in a real group:

HIGH SCHOOL • GRADES 9–12

Belonging and Boundaries Council

Case analysis, policy design, and ethical argument

LEVEL OUTCOME Develop a definition of belonging that preserves welcome, difference, accountability, and appropriate boundaries.

Home Educator Guide

Central Question

What does a community owe a person it calls one of its own—and what may it rightly expect in return?

Part 1 • Case Analysis • 20 Minutes

26. Analyze Whisk, Timbit, Pippin, and the group using the Council File.
27. Identify failures of welcome, failures of responsibility, and moments of repair.
28. Distinguish membership language from actual practices of belonging.

Part 2 • Draft a Group Covenant • 20 Minutes

Write five clauses. Each must include both a promise and a boundary: “We will ___, while/except/unless ___.”

PROPOSITION A person belongs most securely where the group can tell the truth about harm without threatening the person with abandonment.

Part 3 • Position Brief • 15 Minutes

Qualify the proposition, cite Chapter 61 twice, address conformity or permissiveness as a counterargument, and propose one safeguard for quieter members.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Belonging Council File

Use Chapter 61 and the earlier Whisk lookbacks.

DIMENSION	WHISK	THE GROUP
Need or fear		
Contribution offered		
Harm caused		
Responsibility avoided		
Repair attempted		
Boundary still needed		

Five-Clause Covenant

1. We will _____ while/except/unless
_____.

2. We will _____ while/except/unless
_____.

3. We will _____ while/except/unless
_____.

4. We will _____ while/except/unless
_____.

5. We will _____ while/except/unless
_____.

Safeguard for a Quieter Member

HIGH SCHOOL

Position Brief

Use after the Belonging and Boundaries Council

Your Qualified Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Evidence

Group responsibility:

Whisk's responsibility:

Counterargument

Belonging could become conformity or permissiveness when:

Concluding Principle

A trustworthy belonging practice is:

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10–15 minutes · All ages

One Way to Make Room

Each learner brings one concrete practice—not merely a feeling or slogan.

LEVEL	SHARE
Lower Elementary	One structural support and what happened when it was removed.
Upper Elementary	One rule that changed participation.
Middle School	One sound that communicated listening or dismissal.
High School	One covenant clause balancing welcome and responsibility.

Discuss

- Why did calling Whisk a Mingle fail to make her feel included?
- How did Timbit combine apology with accountability?
- What is the difference between belonging and fitting in?
- When does a boundary protect belonging?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD Belonging becomes real when people make room, listen, trust carefully, invite contribution, and repair what they damage.

Protect Complexity

Whisk is both overlooked and responsible for taking the book. The lesson should preserve both truths.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 6

Leading Without the Spotlight

The Value of Quiet Leadership

Attention, Competence, Care, and Steady Action

Learning Modules for Four Age Levels

Lower Elementary · Upper Elementary · Middle School · High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.

FAMILY GUIDE

Lesson 6 at a Glance

Anchored in Chapter 72 with purposeful lookbacks.

BIG IDEA Quiet leadership is influence exercised through attention, competence, care, timely action, and moral steadiness. It may use few words and hold no title, but it helps people see danger, recover strength, organize work, and move toward what matters.

The Thread Through the Story

Smudge rarely announces herself as a leader. She notices danger before the others, orders them into cover, recognizes when fear has exhausted the group, teaches Pippin, prepares restorative tea, investigates Horatio's illness, comforts the twins, and assigns practical care. In Chapter 72 she returns to Havenbrook under deadline, states the mission clearly, gathers help, retrieves the needed remedies, sends word to Nettle, and resumes the journey. Her anger is imperfect and visible, but even in conflict she keeps returning to the work that protects others.

WHERE IT APPEARS	QUIET-LEADERSHIP MOMENT
Chapter 37 · Lookback	Smudge detects danger, gives a concise instruction, calls for rest, teaches, and restores the group.
Chapter 38 · Lookback	She settles a conflict and validates evidence without needing to dominate the conversation.
Chapters 54–55 · Lookback	She pursues Horatio's diagnosis and calms and treats the distressed twins.
Chapter 72 · Return	She names the deadline, resists distraction, retrieves remedies, and asks friends for specific help.
Chapter 72 · Departure	She delegates a message to Nettle, thanks helpers, and returns to the larger mission.

Learning Objectives by Level

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3	Complete care-and-notice stations and identify quiet actions that help a group.
Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5	Observe unnoticed leadership, record evidence, and carry out one small service improvement.

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Middle School · Grades 6–8	Lead a low-verbal team simulation through attention, delegation, and calm coordination.
High School · Grades 9–12	Evaluate leadership by outcomes, methods, restraint, and service rather than visibility or title.

FAMILY GUIDE

How to Use This Lesson

A service-and-simulation learning rhythm

1. Begin with the silent Shared Family Launch.
2. Run age-level activities with minimal adult takeover.
3. Observe process, not personality or volume.
4. Return for evidence of leadership at the Family Roundtable.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Care Trail station cards, cup, cloth, blocks, bandage or ribbon
Upper Elementary	Field Notebook, pencil, simple household service materials
Middle School	Mission Cards, role cards, 20 small objects, timer
High School	Leadership Evidence Audit, service-design page, Position Brief

HOME EDUCATOR NOTE Quiet leadership is not silence, passivity, or avoiding conflict. Smudge gives direct orders when danger requires them and confronts misuse of power. The defining issue is service to the task and people, not low volume.

Timing

- Shared Family Launch: 10 minutes
- Age-level work: 30–60 minutes
- Family Roundtable: 10–15 minutes
- Optional extension: complete one anonymous family service.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Lead Without Speaking

10 minutes · All ages

Silent Sequence

Give the family a simple task: arrange five objects from smallest to largest, prepare a place for a snack, or move supplies across the room. For the first three minutes, no one may speak.

5. Complete the task silently.
6. Name actions that helped: noticing, pointing, making space, passing an object, steadying something, waiting, or inviting another person forward.
7. Repeat for one minute with a designated “leader” who may observe and assist but may not touch the objects.
8. Recall Smudge’s repeated pattern: notice, name what matters, equip others, and return to the mission.

Ask Everyone

- How could you tell leadership was happening without a speech?
- When does a leader need to become direct and audible?

EVIDENCE STANDARD Do not call an action leadership merely because it is kind. Ask whether it helped people understand, coordinate, recover, or accomplish a worthy task.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3

Follow the Care Trail

Hands-on stations for noticing and helping

LEVEL OUTCOME Complete five care stations and explain how each action helps another person or the whole group.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Place the five Care Trail Cards around the room with simple props. Let the learner travel in any order.

Run the Trail • 20 to 30 Minutes

9. At NOTICE, find what has been misplaced or left unsafe.
10. At RESTORE, carry a cup of pretend tea or water carefully to a tired traveler.
11. At TEACH, demonstrate one simple skill without doing the whole task for the learner.
12. At CALM, wrap a toy's "injury" and use a steady voice.
13. At ORGANIZE, sort mixed supplies and invite someone to take one part of the job.
14. After each station say: "This helped because ____."

Debrief

- Which action used the fewest words?
- Which action helped another person do something?
- When did the helper need to be firm?

LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Care Trail Station Cards

Place around the room with simple household props.

NOTICE	RESTORE
Find a danger, missing item, or person who needs attention.	Bring rest, water, food, or comfort to someone who is tired.
TEACH	CALM
Show one step, then let the other person try.	Use gentle hands, a steady voice, and the next helpful action.
ORGANIZE	SPEAK UP
Put supplies and people where they can work well.	When danger or unfairness requires it, use clear words.

Smudge Story Matches

Hides the group from danger	Makes aether tea
Teaches Pippin about plants	Treats the twins
Sorts medicines with friends	Confronts Mossleaf

LOWER ELEMENTARY

My Quiet Leadership Trail

Draw one station and one person it helped

The station I completed:

Draw the action:

It helped because:

FAMILY CLOSE Say together: “Notice what matters. Do the next helpful thing.”

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5

Leadership Field Notebook

Observation and a real-world service experiment

LEVEL OUTCOME Gather evidence of three low-visibility leadership actions, then plan, carry out, and evaluate one service improvement.

Home Educator Guide

Part 1 • Observation Walk • 15 Minutes

Walk through the home, yard, gathering place, or recent family routine. Look for evidence that someone noticed, prepared, maintained, calmed, taught, or organized without seeking attention.

Part 2 • Service Experiment • 20 to 30 Minutes

15. Choose one friction point: mixed supplies, forgotten water, cluttered work area, confusing directions, or someone repeatedly interrupted.
16. Plan a small improvement requiring no announcement or reward.
17. Carry it out safely. Do not conceal actions that adults need to know about.
18. Observe whether the change helped anyone act, recover, or cooperate.
19. Record evidence rather than writing “It worked” or “It was nice.”

Debrief

- Did anyone have to know who did it?
- Did service become leadership by improving coordination or capacity?
- What would you revise next time?

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Field Notebook and Service Plan

Record observable evidence.

I NOTICED...	THE UNSEEN LEADERSHIP ACTION...	WHO OR WHAT IT HELPED...

Service Plan

The friction point:

The small change I will make:

Materials or permission needed:

Evidence I will watch for:

Afterward

The change helped / did not help because:

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Student Reflection

Use after the Leadership Field Notebook

1. One action I once overlooked as leadership:

2. One way Smudge builds another person's ability rather than taking over:

3. One time quiet leadership should become direct speech:

4. Evidence that my service experiment affected the group:

5. My revision for next time:

MIDDLE SCHOOL • GRADES 6–8

The Low-Voice Mission

Team simulation with constrained communication

LEVEL OUTCOME Coordinate a timed mission using observation, short communication, delegation, and recovery—then identify leadership moves with evidence.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Scatter 20 small objects. Mark HOME, SUPPLY, and TREATMENT areas. Assign roles. One learner may rotate through roles in a solo household.

Run Two Rounds • 30 to 45 Minutes

20. Round One: complete the Mission Card in six minutes. The Coordinator may use only five spoken sentences.
21. Observers tally noticing, clarifying, delegating, calming, teaching, and adapting.
22. Reveal the Complication Card at minute three.
23. Debrief briefly without assigning praise by personality.
24. Round Two: switch roles and permit unlimited speech. Compare whether more talking produced better leadership.
25. Complete the Evidence Record.

Debrief

- Which move increased another person's capacity?
- Who influenced the outcome without holding the coordinator role?
- When did restraint help, and when did it become a problem?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Mission, Roles, and Complications

Cut apart; reveal one complication halfway through.

MISSION	Move remedies from SUPPLY to TREATMENT, organize them by type, prepare two care kits, and send one message to HOME before time expires.
---------	---

Role Cards

COORDINATOR	May speak only five complete sentences.
OBSERVER	May not touch supplies; records leadership evidence.
SPECIALIST	Knows the correct sorting rule but must be asked.
RUNNER	May carry only two objects at a time.
CAREGIVER	Must stop work to respond when someone signals distress.

Complication Cards

Two labels are wrong.	The runner becomes “tired” and must rest one minute.
Three objects are unsafe to touch without the specialist.	The message destination changes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Leadership Evidence Record

Use after both rounds

LEADERSHIP MOVE	ROUND ONE EVIDENCE	ROUND TWO EVIDENCE
Noticed		
Clarified		
Delegated		
Calmed		
Taught		
Adapted		

Interpretation

More speech helped when:

Less speech helped when:

The strongest leader without the title was:

One Smudge-like move in the simulation was:

HIGH SCHOOL • GRADES 9–12

Leadership Evidence Audit

Evaluate influence, restraint, service, and use of power

LEVEL OUTCOME Construct and apply a defensible standard for identifying quiet leadership without romanticizing invisibility or passivity.

Home Educator Guide

Part 1 • Evidence Audit • 20 Minutes

26. Examine Smudge in Chapters 37, 38, 54–55, and 72.
27. Record action, intended beneficiary, method, immediate result, long-term capacity built, and cost.
28. Identify one action that is service but not clearly leadership and defend the distinction.

Part 2 • Design a Quiet Intervention • 20 Minutes

Choose a realistic family or community friction point. Design an intervention that improves information, readiness, care, or coordination while using the least authority necessary.

PROPOSITION Leadership should be measured primarily by the worthy capacity it creates in others, not by visibility, title, charisma, or control.

Part 3 • Position Brief • 15 Minutes

Qualify the proposition using Smudge's strengths and one limitation from Chapter 72, where anger and force complicate the model.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Leadership Evidence Audit

Use precise story evidence.

ACTION	BENEFICIARY	METHOD	RESULT	CAPACITY BUILT
Danger warning				
Rest and aetherteas				
Horatio's care				
Twins' treatment				
Chapter 72 mission				

Intervention Design

Friction point:

Least authority necessary:

Action sequence:

Evidence of increased capacity:

Risk or unintended consequence:

HIGH SCHOOL

Position Brief

Use after the Leadership Evidence Audit

Your Qualified Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Evidence

Quiet leadership at its strongest:

A limitation or complication:

Counterargument

A critic might say quiet leadership becomes invisible labor or avoidance when:

Concluding Standard

I would identify an action as leadership when:

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10–15 minutes · All ages

Bring Evidence, Not a Compliment

Each learner names an action, what it changed, and whom it equipped.

LEVEL	SHARE
Lower Elementary	One care station and how it helped.
Upper Elementary	One observed action and measurable effect.
Middle School	One low-verbal move that improved the mission.
High School	One criterion separating service, leadership, and control.

Discuss

- When does kindness become leadership?
- Why does Smudge sometimes give orders?
- Can quiet leadership be unfairly taken for granted?
- What does Chapter 72 reveal about both her strength and imperfection?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD Quiet leaders notice what matters, prepare others, restore strength, coordinate help, and speak firmly when the mission or a person requires it.

Protect Complexity

Smudge is not quiet in every moment. “Quiet leadership” describes the source and pattern of her influence, not her volume or temperament.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL

The Mingles in Wilderland

MULTI-AGE LESSON 7

Stepping Into the Circle

The Value of Courage

Fear, Responsibility, Action, and Shared Strength

Learning Modules for Four Age Levels

Lower Elementary · Upper Elementary · Middle School · High School

One story. Four levels of challenge. One complete family packet.

FAMILY GUIDE

Lesson 7 at a Glance

Everything needed for all four age levels is contained in this packet.

BIG IDEA Courage is not the absence of fear or the certainty of success. It is choosing a worthy action while afraid, accepting one's share of the danger, and taking the next step without knowing who will stand beside you.

The Thread Through the Story

Timbit's purpose has grown throughout the journey, but Chapter 83 exposes a failure of courage: he has assigned danger to others while remaining behind with his invention. Pippin tells him the truth. He accepts it, reorients, and walks alone toward the Aridite assembly. In Chapter 84 he enters the circle trembling, speaks against Gaia, and asks others to choose. His solitary act becomes shared courage as Horatio, friends, Aridites, and finally Shadowrend step beside him. Chapter 85 does not glorify fearlessness; it celebrates a community changed because one frightened person accepted responsibility and moved first.

WHERE IT APPEARS	COURAGE MOMENT
Chapter 83 · The Reckoning	Pippin names Timbit's avoidance; he accepts the truth and changes course.
Chapter 83 · The Walk	Timbit understands that he must face the danger he asked others to face.
Chapter 84 · The Circle	He enters alone, trembles, breathes, remembers his father, and speaks.
Chapter 84 · The Stand	He invites others to act; courage spreads through example and choice.
Chapter 85 · The Feast	The community honors shared action, and Timbit returns to friendship and ordinary life.

Learning Objectives by Level

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3	Use a physical courage path to identify fear, worthy purpose, support, and the next safe step.
Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5	Design, build, test, and revise a bridge model

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
	representing supports that carry action across fear.
Middle School · Grades 6–8	Perform contrasting inner and outer voices to analyze courage as action under fear.
High School · Grades 9–12	Distinguish moral courage from recklessness, performance, obedience, and risk transferred to others.

FAMILY GUIDE

How to Use This Lesson

A movement, design, auditory, and analysis rhythm

1. Begin with the embodied Shared Family Launch.
2. Never require disclosure of private fears; fictional or ordinary examples are acceptable.
3. Use safe, proportionate challenges only.
4. Return for one principle and one next step at the Family Roundtable.

What Each Level Needs

LEVEL	MATERIALS
Lower Elementary	Four floor signs, Courage Cards, small marker or figure
Upper Elementary	Paper, index cards, tape, two books, coins or washers, Bridge Record
Middle School	Inner/Outer Voice Script, recorder optional, performance notes
High School	Courage Threshold Matrix, case cards, Position Brief, story text

SAFETY NOTE Courage education must not pressure children into unsafe physical risks, unwanted disclosure, secrecy from caregivers, or confronting dangerous people alone. Seeking help can be the courageous action.

Timing

- Shared Family Launch: 10 minutes

- Age-level work: 30–60 minutes
- Family Roundtable: 10–15 minutes
- Optional extension: record Timbit's inner and public voices as an audio scene.

SHARED FAMILY LAUNCH

Feel Fear, Choose a Step

10 minutes · All ages

Embodied Demonstration

Stand at one side of the room. Place four signs leading forward: FEAR, WORTHY PURPOSE, SUPPORT, and NEXT STEP. Read an ordinary or story-based Courage Card.

5. At FEAR, name what the character's body or mind might experience.
6. At WORTHY PURPOSE, name what matters enough to act for.
7. At SUPPORT, name a person, skill, truth, plan, breath, or request for help.
8. At NEXT STEP, take one physical step and state a safe, specific action.
9. Recall Timbit: he shook with fear, breathed, remembered his father, and spoke.

Ask Everyone

- Can courage include trembling, tears, or asking for help?
- What turns a dangerous action into recklessness rather than courage?

KEEP THE DEFINITION Fear + worthy purpose + responsible action = courage. Danger by itself does not make an action brave.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 1–3

Walk the Courage Path

Movement, emotion naming, and safe action planning

LEVEL OUTCOME Complete at least five Courage Cards using the four-part path and identify one safe request for help.

Home Educator Guide

Run the Path • 20 to 30 Minutes

10. Place the four signs in a path. Give the learner a small Timbit marker or invite the learner to walk.
11. Read one Courage Card. Stop at each sign and complete its sentence.
12. At SUPPORT, require at least one example of asking for appropriate help during the activity.
13. At NEXT STEP, act out only safe actions such as speaking, telling the truth, trying again, apologizing, or calling an adult.
14. Repeat with five cards, including Timbit entering the circle.

Debrief

- Which step changed fear the most?
- Did fear have to disappear before action?
- When is leaving and getting help courageous?

LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Courage Path and Story Cards

Place the signs on the floor; cut apart the cards.

FEAR	WORTHY PURPOSE
I feel or notice _____.	What matters is _____.
SUPPORT	NEXT STEP
I can remember, plan, breathe, or ask _____.	I will safely _____.

Courage Cards

You made a mistake and need to tell the truth.	Someone is being treated unfairly and a trusted adult is nearby.
A new task is difficult and you may fail.	A friend needs help, but you cannot solve the problem alone.
Timbit must enter Gaia's circle and speak.	You need to apologize without knowing whether forgiveness will come.

LOWER ELEMENTARY

My Next Courageous Step

Draw a safe action taken while fear is present

My fear or worry:

What matters:

My support:

Draw the next safe step:

FAMILY CLOSE Say together: "I can be afraid and still take the next right step."

UPPER ELEMENTARY · GRADES 4–5

Build a Courage Bridge

Design–build–test–revise with symbolic load

LEVEL OUTCOME Build a paper bridge that carries a “fear load,” explain the meaning of its supports, and revise after testing.

Home Educator Guide

Set Up

Place two books 6–8 inches apart. Provide paper or index cards and limited tape. Coins or washers become the fear load. No premade bridge example is needed.

Design–Build–Test–Revise • 35 to 50 Minutes

15. Sketch a bridge from AVOIDANCE to RESPONSIBLE ACTION. Label at least three planned supports: purpose, truth, preparation, breathing, mentor, friend, skill, or help.
16. Build the bridge with the limited materials.
17. Place one coin at a time on the center. Before each coin, name a fear or cost Timbit faces.
18. Record the failure point or maximum load.
19. Revise one structural feature and one symbolic explanation.
20. Test again and compare evidence.

Debrief

- Which support strengthened the model most?
- Why is support not the opposite of courage?
- What would make crossing reckless?

UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINTABLE

Bridge Design and Test Record

Use before and after building.

First Design

SUPPORT IN THE BRIDGE	WHAT IT REPRESENTS

Test Record

TEST	FEAR LOAD HELD	WHAT HAPPENED	REVISION
1			
2			

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Bridge Reflection

Use after the second test

1. My strongest physical support was:

2. It represented this source of courage:

3. The first design failed or bent because:

4. Revising a plan is courageous when:

5. Timbit's most important "bridge support" in Chapter 84 was:

MIDDLE SCHOOL • GRADES 6–8

Two Voices at the Threshold

Auditory performance of inner fear and outward action

LEVEL OUTCOME Create and perform paired inner and outer monologues showing that courage can coexist with fear, doubt, bodily reaction, and need for support.

Home Educator Guide

Prepare the Performance • 30 to 45 Minutes

21. Read Timbit's walk in Chapter 83 and entrance in Chapter 84.
22. Write INNER VOICE lines: guilt, fear, imagined failure, bodily sensation, memory, and wish for friends.
23. Write OUTER VOICE lines: the words and actions others can observe.
24. Perform with two readers alternating or overlapping carefully. A solo learner may record the voices separately.
25. Add three sound cues: footsteps, breath/heartbeat, and the silence before speech.
26. Perform a second time after Horatio enters. Change the inner voice without making fear vanish.

Debrief

- Which voice carried more fear?
- Which outward action counted as the threshold crossing?
- How did another person's arrival strengthen courage without creating it for Timbit?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Inner and Outer Voice Script

Use Chapters 83–84; remain faithful to events.

MOMENT	INNER VOICE · UNHEARD	OUTER VOICE · SEEN/HEARD
After Pippin's accusation		
Walking toward the assembly		
Entering the circle		
Gaia addresses him		
Horatio stands beside him		
Timbit asks others to stand		

Sound Score

FOOTSTEPS	BREATH / HEARTBEAT	SILENCE
Where used:	Where used:	Where used:

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Performance Reflection

Use after both versions

1. The strongest evidence that Timbit remained afraid:

2. The exact action that transformed fear into courage:

3. How the sound design changed the interpretation:

4. Why Horatio's support did not erase Timbit's courage:

5. A sentence distinguishing courage from confidence:

HIGH SCHOOL • GRADES 9–12

The Courage Threshold

Decision analysis, moral risk, and responsibility

LEVEL OUTCOME Evaluate courageous action using fear, worthiness, proportionality, personal responsibility, transferred risk, preparation, and alternatives.

Home Educator Guide

Part 1 • Threshold Analysis • 20 Minutes

27. Analyze Timbit before and after Pippin's challenge.
28. Compare entering the circle with his earlier decision to send others into danger.
29. Apply the Courage Threshold Matrix to Timbit, Pippin, Shadowrend, and Caelum.

Part 2 • Case Decisions • 20 Minutes

For each case, decide whether the action is courage, recklessness, compliance, avoidance, or mixed. Change one fact and test whether the classification changes.

PROPOSITION Courage requires accepting a fair share of the risk one asks others to bear.

Part 3 • Position Brief • 15 to 20 Minutes

Qualify the proposition, use Timbit's change in Chapter 83 and stand in Chapter 84, address leadership delegation as a counterargument, and name limits on solitary action.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINTABLE

Courage Threshold Matrix

Use precise evidence and proportional judgment.

TEST	TIMBIT	PIPPIN	SHADOWREND	CAELUM
Fear present?				
Worthy purpose?				
Risk proportionate?				
Own share accepted?				
Safer alternative?				
Preparation/ support?				
Classification				

Case Variations

- The person acts mainly to impress witnesses.
- The person has a safe way to summon qualified help.
- The person orders others into danger while remaining protected.
- The person acts alone because delay would cause immediate harm.

HIGH SCHOOL

Position Brief

Use after The Courage Threshold

Your Qualified Claim

I AGREE / DISAGREE / THINK IT DEPENDS with the proposition because:

Evidence

Timbit before the threshold:

Timbit after the threshold:

Counterargument

Delegation does not always avoid courage because:

Concluding Standard

I would distinguish courage from recklessness by asking:

COME BACK TOGETHER

Family Roundtable

10–15 minutes · All ages

One Next Step

Each learner shares a fictional, story-based, or ordinary example. No one must disclose a private fear.

LEVEL	SHARE
Lower Elementary	Fear, worthy purpose, support, and next safe step.
Upper Elementary	One bridge support and what strengthened it.
Middle School	One difference between Timbit's inner and outer voices.
High School	One test distinguishing courage from recklessness or avoidance.

Discuss

- Why was Pippin's accusation itself courageous?
- Did Timbit become courageous before or after entering the circle?
- How did courage spread without becoming a crowd impulse?
- When is asking for help the brave action?

THE IDEA TO CARRY FORWARD Courage does not wait for fear to vanish. It identifies what matters, accepts responsibility, uses available support, and takes the next proportionate step.

Protect Safety

Never turn this lesson into a dare. Courage serves worthy purposes through responsible action; unnecessary danger proves nothing.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL
The Mingles in Wilderland
SCRIPTURE & STORY — OPTIONAL FAITH COMPANION
Four-Level Homeschool Edition

PURPOSE

These lessons remain optional and invitational. Each lesson keeps story, Scripture, age-level activity, and printable together. No detached worksheet section.

FOUR LEVELS

Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3

Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5

Middle School · Grades 6–8

High School · Grades 9–12

LESSON 1 · THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25–37

Story anchors: Chapter 14 — Nettle finds Quill half-dead in a creek, wraps him in his coat, carries him, and gets him to caregivers. Chapter 31 later names the Good Samaritan connection.

Big idea: Mercy becomes visible in what a person does for someone in need.

Shared family launch: Read Luke 10:25–37. Make a family list of action verbs from the parable and Quill's rescue: notice, approach, help, carry, provide, continue care.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · Notice and Help

Goal: Name a person who needs help and choose one safe helpful action.

Activity: Put four picture/action cards on the table: NOTICE, GO NEAR SAFELY, HELP, GET MORE HELP. Read simple situations such as a traveler who falls, a friend who is hurt, someone carrying too much, or Quill in the creek. The learner places the cards in a reasonable order and explains one choice aloud.

Printable — Mercy in Action

1. Draw Nettle noticing Quill.
2. Circle one: Nettle WALKED BY / STOPPED TO HELP.
3. Finish aloud or in writing: "Mercy means I can _____ when someone needs help."

Safety note: Children should get a trusted adult when someone is badly hurt or danger is present.

UPPER ELEMENTARY · Mercy Is a Verb

Goal: Compare the sequence of actions in Luke 10 and Nettle's rescue.

Activity: Build a two-column chart: GOOD SAMARITAN / NETTLE. List what each person notices, risks, gives, and does next. Identify at least three similarities and one difference.

Printable: Write 5–7 sentences answering: "Why is mercy more than feeling sorry for someone?" Use one detail from Scripture and one from the novel.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · The Cost of Neighbor-Love

Goal: Analyze why helping can require time, inconvenience, resources, or risk.

Activity: Identify the needs in the Samaritan story and Quill's rescue. Separate emotional response from concrete action. Then evaluate three possible responses: minimal aid, responsible aid, reckless aid.

Printable: Claim–Evidence–Reasoning response: "A neighbor is defined more by action than by category." Support with Luke 10 and Chapter 14.

HIGH SCHOOL · Intertextual Mercy

Goal: Analyze how the novel gains meaning by echoing the Good Samaritan.

Activity: Compare the biblical narrative structure with Nettle's rescue and the later explicit naming of the allusion. Distinguish allusion from allegory. Discuss whether recognition of another person creates moral obligation.

Printable: 500–700 word interpretive brief using both texts and one counterargument.

Family roundtable: "Who is easy to notice, and who is easy to pass by?" No one must disclose a private situation.

LESSON 2 · THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

Isaiah 11:6

Story anchors: the Wilderland's predator-and-prey world premise; Chapter 27 shared Mingle identity; Chapter 43 Marlowe as a fox who does not prey.

Big idea: The peaceable kingdom is an image of reordered relationship, not a statement about real animal ecology.

Shared family launch: Read Isaiah 11:6. Name the surprising animal pairings in the verse and in the Wilderland.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · Who Can Live Together?

Goal: Notice that creatures expected to be enemies can choose peaceful behavior in the story world.

Activity: Sort animal cards into "usually predator/prey in nature" and "living together in Wilderland." Emphasize that real animals and story animals follow different rules.

Printable — A Peaceful Place

Draw two different Wilderland creatures sharing a safe place. Finish: "Peace needs ____."

UPPER ELEMENTARY · Peace Needs Practices

Goal: Identify behaviors that make shared life possible.

Activity: Create a four-part Peaceable Community wheel: LISTEN, SHARE SPACE, KEEP PROMISES, REPAIR HARM. Connect each practice to one story example.

Printable: Explain why "everyone is nice" is not enough to describe a peaceful community.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · Allusion, Not Ecology

Goal: Distinguish biblical/literary symbolism from scientific description.

Activity: Make three columns: ISIAH IMAGE / WILDERLAND STORY WORLD / REAL ECOLOGY. Identify what belongs in each and what must not be confused.

Printable: Short argument: "The Peaceable Kingdom works as a moral image because..."

Include one limitation of the comparison.

HIGH SCHOOL · Peace as Moral Worldbuilding

Goal: Analyze Isaiah 11:6 as a worldbuilding and ethical lens.

Activity: Examine how predator/prey peace changes the moral meaning of violence, prejudice, and community in the novel. Distinguish allusion, symbolism, and allegory.

Printable: 500–700 word analysis with evidence from Isaiah and at least two Wilderland scenes.

Family roundtable: "A peaceful community would still need _____."

LESSON 3 · "HE MUST INCREASE"

John 3:30

Story anchor: Chapter 59 — Horatio tells Timbit, "My role in this struggle must decrease, but yours must increase."

Big idea: Good mentorship prepares another person to carry responsibility rather than keeping them dependent.

Shared family launch: Read John 3:30 and Horatio's line. Place two chairs labeled HOLDING ON and HANDING OVER.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · Teach, Then Let Me Try

Goal: Experience the difference between helping and taking over.

Activity: Adult demonstrates a simple task once, helps once, then lets the learner try. Talk about what kind of help made independence possible.

Printable — I Can Learn to Do It

Draw something you are learning to do. Finish: "A good helper can _____, then let me _____."

UPPER ELEMENTARY · Mentor Moves

Goal: Identify specific actions that build another person's capacity.

Activity: Sort mentor cards: SHOW, ASK, ENCOURAGE, CORRECT, DO IT FOR THEM, LET THEM TRY, STEP BACK. Decide which help builds independence and when.

Printable: Compare Horatio's role with a coach, parent, teacher, or older sibling without requiring personal disclosure.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · Dependency or Development?

Goal: Evaluate whether help increases another person's competence.

Activity: Analyze four mentoring scenarios. For each, identify short-term benefit, long-term effect, and the right point to step back.

Printable: Write a 250–350 word recommendation to Horatio explaining how to hand responsibility to Timbit without abandoning him.

HIGH SCHOOL · Succession and Self-Limitation

Goal: Distinguish healthy self-limitation from self-erasure.

Activity: Analyze Horatio's handoff as an ethical leadership decision. Consider authority, readiness, dependency, ego, and succession.

Printable: Position brief: "A leader's success should sometimes be measured by how unnecessary the leader becomes." Qualify the claim and address one counterargument.

Family roundtable: "What kind of help makes someone more capable?"

LESSON 4 · CHOOSE LIFE

Deuteronomy 30:19

Story anchor: Chapter 84 — Timbit frames the crowd's decision as "Freedom and life, or misery and death." Optional extension: Dune's protective action and John 15:13.

Big idea: Moral choice matters where meaningful agency exists, but hard outcomes are not always under a person's control.

Shared family launch: Put CHOICE and CONSEQUENCE signs on opposite sides of the room.

Use simple story decisions and ask whether choice or consequence is easier to see first.

LOWER ELEMENTARY · Choice and What Happens Next

Goal: Connect a simple choice to a likely consequence without implying total control over outcomes.

Activity: Use paired cards: TELL THE TRUTH / HIDE THE TRUTH; ASK FOR HELP / STAY ALONE; INCLUDE SOMEONE / LEAVE THEM OUT. Match each choice with possible consequences. Discuss that unexpected things can still happen.

Printable — My Next Right Choice

Draw one safe, kind, truthful choice a character could make. Finish: "A choice can lead to _____, but I cannot control _____."

UPPER ELEMENTARY · Life-Giving Is Not Always Easy

Goal: Identify costly choices that protect life, freedom, truth, or relationship.

Activity: Sort story choices into EASY/HARD and LIFE-GIVING/HARMFUL. Notice that the categories do not always line up.

Printable: Explain one choice in the novel that was difficult but life-giving.

MIDDLE SCHOOL · Agency and Consequence

Goal: Distinguish meaningful choice, limited choice, and outcomes outside a character's control.

Activity: Analyze Timbit, Dune, Caelum, and one other character using three columns: CHOICE AVAILABLE / PRESSURE OR LIMIT / CONSEQUENCE.

Printable: 300-word response: "Responsibility depends partly on what choices were genuinely available." Use story evidence.

HIGH SCHOOL · Rhetoric, Agency, and Moral Choice

Goal: Analyze Timbit's binary public rhetoric without treating every moral situation as binary.

Activity: Examine the force and limitation of “life or death” framing. Compare private conscience, public persuasion, group pressure, and real agency.

Printable: 500–700 word argument evaluating whether Timbit’s rhetoric is ethically justified in Chapter 84. Include one counterargument.

Family roundtable: “What is one life-giving choice in the story that was not easy?”

Discussion by Story Part

The Mingles in Wilderland · Family Conversation Guide

Choose two or three questions after finishing each Part. Do not work through the list as an assignment. Younger learners may answer orally, draw, point to a scene, or simply listen. Older learners may use the deeper prompts. No learner is required to disclose a private experience, trauma, belief, grief, or family situation; a story example or invented example is always acceptable.

PART I · THE UNFORTUNATES OF HAVENBROOK · CHAPTERS 1–21

1. Havenbrook labels some residents “Unfortunates.” What is lost when a community judges a person mainly by a category?
2. Timbit, Pippin, and Quill are very different. What draws them together, and how do their differences become useful?
3. Timbit speaks against a village decision because of conscience. Why is speaking up difficult when a group has already decided?
4. Pippin is guarded and slow to trust. Which actions—not promises—begin to make trust possible?
5. Quill does not know his past. What parts of identity can come from memory, and what parts can come from present choices?
6. Nettle’s history with Quill shows mercy in action. What turns sympathy into practical help?
7. The three are cast out, yet the story treats the event as a beginning. How can an ending open a new path without making the loss itself “good”?
8. By Chapter 21, what makes the three begin to function like a family?

Older-reader extension: Compare Havenbrook’s use of labels with one later scene in which a character learns to see an individual rather than a category.

PART II · THE ADVENTURE BEGINS · CHAPTERS 22–38

9. Leaving home turns the Mingles into travelers. What changes when familiar rules and routines disappear?
10. Chapter 27 gives the group a shared Mingle identity. What can a chosen name do for people who do not share the same species, family, or past?
11. Plans go wrong repeatedly in this Part. Which characters adapt best when the original plan fails, and why?
12. The journey requires help from strangers and near-strangers. What makes accepting help different from becoming dependent?
13. The Good Samaritan reference appears in Chapter 31. Why does the story connect rescue with the idea of being a “neighbor”?

14. Pippin's Firnax story carries cultural and personal meaning. What makes a story identity-forming for the people who tell it?
15. Warnings about the Archon and the Aridites begin to sharpen. How should characters respond when a threat is serious but still partly unknown?
16. Chapter 38 ends with a surprising discovery. What expectations does that discovery create for the next Part?

Older-reader extension: Find one moment where the travelers make a decision with incomplete information. What evidence did they have, what did they assume, and what might they have done differently?

PART III • HORATIO'S REFUGE • CHAPTERS 39–60

17. What makes Horatio's Refuge a refuge rather than merely a safe building?
18. Horatio remains a captain even though his ship is landlocked. How much of identity depends on circumstances, and how much can survive a change in circumstances?
19. Marlowe challenges assumptions about predator and prey. What changes when the Mingles look at evidence instead of reacting only to category or fear?
20. The Great Flood discussion connects similar stories from several traditions. What can similarity suggest, and what would be irresponsible to claim from similarity alone?
21. Horatio tells difficult truths about his past. What is the difference among guilt, responsibility, restitution, forgiveness, and consequences?
22. Timbit's sense of purpose grows as Horatio gives him more responsibility. What does a good mentor do that increases another person's capacity rather than dependence?
23. The geoglyph problem becomes clearer. How does new evidence change the group's understanding of what is happening in the Wilderland?
24. Chapter 59 includes Horatio's statement that his role must decrease while Timbit's increases. What makes a handoff of responsibility healthy?

Older-reader extension: Choose one claim the characters make about the geoglyphs and separate what they know, what they infer, and what remains uncertain.

PART IV • FACING THE BEAST • CHAPTERS 61–85

25. The final Part asks many characters to act under pressure. What is the difference between courage, confidence, strength, and recklessness?
26. Timbit's invention work includes testing, failure, revision, and tradeoffs. What should a thoughtful inventor or leader do after a serious failure?
27. The Archon's system depends on fear, surveillance, and distrust. What happens to a community when people do not know whom they can trust?
28. Part IV includes irreversible loss. Why might an author refuse to reverse or soften a loss in an adventure story?

29. Timbit responds to failure by withdrawing. What is the difference between healthy recovery and hiding inside despair?
30. Pippin tells Timbit a painful truth. When can hard truth also be an act of care?
31. In Chapter 84, Timbit's decisive act is speaking rather than winning a physical fight. What kind of power does the story assign to truthful speech?
32. The first people who step beside Timbit change what others believe is possible. How can one visible act of courage become shared courage?
33. The book ends with shared grace and gratitude rather than simply stopping at the defeat of an enemy. What does that ending add?
34. Some relationships and problems remain imperfectly resolved. What can an open ending do that a perfectly tied ending cannot?

Older-reader extension: Evaluate Timbit's "freedom and life, or misery and death" framing in Chapter 84. Why is the rhetoric powerful in that moment, and what are the limits of binary framing in other moral situations?

Family Close

Choose one question from any Part that your family still disagrees about. Keep the disagreement. Name the strongest evidence for two different answers. The goal is not unanimity; it is attentive reading and better conversation.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL
The Mingles in Wilderland
READ-ALOUD PERFORMER'S GUIDE

A NOTE ON PERFORMANCE

The book was written to be read aloud: short sentences, distinct dialogue, short chapters, and natural dramatic turns. The goal is not theatrical imitation. Use your own voice, then let pace, silence, emphasis, and contrast carry the characters.

CORE CAST

Timbit Sciurid · TIM-bit SY-yoo-rid

Quick, earnest, enthusiastic. His thoughts tend to move forward. Fear makes him more precise; defeat makes him quieter. In the last movement of the story, let the reduction in volume and certainty be audible before his resolve returns.

Pippin Lapidore · PIP-in LAP-ih-dor

Controlled, clipped, watchful. Anger should be cold rather than shouted. Softer lines matter because they are rare. In Chapter 83, give her accusation of Timbit space before continuing.

Quilliam "Quill" Thornridge · KWIL-ee-um THORN-rij

Open, curious, sometimes bewildered but steady underneath. He notices what others miss. In Chapter 37, his recognition of Marlowe should sound like discovery, not a lecture.

Snicker · SNIK-er

Fast, sideways, occasionally alarming, with warmth under the sharpness. Do not play only the comedy; the warmth is what gives later loss its weight.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Captain Horatio Proudfoot · hoh-RAY-shee-oh PROWD-foot

Deep, deliberate, unhurried. He does not need volume to command attention. In Chapter 59, his handoff to Timbit should feel like a farewell and a commissioning.

Marlowe · MAR-loh

Dry, observant, reliable. His warmth is quiet. Chapter 82 should be read with restraint and gentleness.

Selca Emberwind · SEL-kah EM-ber-wind

Formal, melodic, slightly ceremonial. The performance should preserve complexity rather than flattening Selca into a simple villain.

Gaia Varron · GY-ah VAR-on

Cold, precise, certain. Avoid sarcasm or petty rage. Her danger comes from absolute conviction and control. In Chapter 84, the roar should break the established restraint.

Dune Shadowrend · DOON SHAD-oh-rend

Careful and conflicted until the moment of clarity. His step forward in Chapter 84 should feel both surprising and prepared by everything before it.

PERFORMING THE BOOK

Natural stopping points

- After Chapter 7 — the three have found one another.
- After Chapter 16 — Havenbrook's decision has taken shape.
- After Chapter 21 — the Unfortunates are truly on their own.
- After Chapter 34 — Firmax forms a satisfying self-contained close.
- After Chapter 45 — the table grace creates an intentional rest.
- After Chapter 59 — Horatio's commissioning closes a movement.
- After Chapter 67 — pause before the final act.

Stinkfish

When the Stinkfish game appears, lean into its call-and-response rhythm. Let young listeners join the repeated pattern if they want to. Participation should feel like play, not recitation practice.

The table grace

The grace appears at Chapters 45 and 85. Read the first simply. At the second, allow the accumulated journey to change the weight of the same words. Do not overlay the difference.

The Archon's camp

These scenes should feel tighter and more watchful. Slightly lower volume, shorter pauses between tactical lines, and more meaningful silence can create the feeling of surveillance without adding theatrics.

A note on grief

A character dies late in the book, and the story does not reverse or soften the loss. Do not rush the scene or immediately explain it. Pause. Allow listeners to react or remain quiet. No child should be required to discuss a personal loss. A story-based response is enough.

READING WITH MIXED AGES

Lower Elementary · Grades 1–3

Let younger listeners draw, hold a character marker, repeat a refrain, or simply listen. Stop before fatigue. Explain unfamiliar words only when the word blocks understanding.

Upper Elementary · Grades 4–5

Invite occasional predictions and word noticing, but keep interruption light. One strong question after a stopping point is usually enough.

Middle School · Grades 6–8

Allow listeners to notice changes in motive, reliability, and tone. Ask what the performance revealed that silent reading might not.

High School · Grades 9–12

Invite analysis of rhetoric, silence, irony, and point of view after the reading rather than during dramatic scenes.

PRONUNCIATION QUICK REFERENCE

Timbit Sciurid — TIM-bit SY-yoo-rid

Pippin Lapidore — PIP-in LAP-ih-dor

Quilliam — KWIL-ee-um

Horatio Proudfoot — hoh-RAY-shee-oh PROWD-foot

Selca Emberwind — SEL-kah EM-ber-wind

Gaia Varron — GY-ah VAR-on

Dune Shadowrend — DOON SHAD-oh-rend

Firnax — FUR-naks

Aridite — AIR-ih-dite

Geoglyph — JEE-oh-glif

Gigant — JY-gant

THE SIMPLE RULE

Read for the listener, not for the performance. Clarity first. Character second. Emotion without forcing it. Stop while everyone still wants another chapter.

STORYKEEPERS HOMESCHOOL
The Mingles in Wilderland
RESOURCES & PRINTABLES INDEX

PURPOSE

This is a locator only. No worksheet lives here. Every printable remains inside the lesson it serves so a family can print one lesson without hunting through a separate worksheet bank.

WORDS OF THE WILDERLAND

Lower Elementary — My New Word drawing/speaking page.

Upper Elementary — Word Detective table.

Middle School — Morphology & Origin table.

High School — Lexicographer Entry template.

ACADEMIC LEARNING TRAILS

Trail 1 · Map the Wilderland

Lower Elementary — learner-created simple map with title, symbols, legend, path.

Upper Elementary — Route Evidence table.

Middle School — four-criteria route matrix + uncertainty box.

High School — weighted decision matrix + evidence-classification key.

Trail 2 · The Creeping Desert

Lower Elementary — water-cycle diagram + soil-water drawing.

Upper Elementary — Cause → Effect → Repair organizer.

Middle School — feedback-loop diagram + source note + intervention plan.

High School — intervention comparison matrix + recommendation memo.

Trail 3 · Timbit's Workshop

Lower Elementary — My Problem / First Idea / What Happened / What I Changed.

Upper Elementary — criteria-and-constraints design sheet.

Middle School — engineering decision matrix + failure analysis.

High School — requirements table + student-adapted failure review.

Trail 4 · The Storykeepers Archive

Lower Elementary — SEE / THINK drawing page.

Upper Elementary — structured Archive Entry card.

Middle School — source comparison + revision record.

High School — archival dossier template + optional Creative Reconstruction section.

VALUES & THEMES

Lesson 1 · Purpose & Vocation

Lower Elementary — Character Helper Cards; Need Cards; Draw & Tell.

Upper Elementary — Character Gift Cards; Need Cards; Student Reflection.

Middle School — Team Planning Sheet; Student Reflection.
High School — Case Matrix; Position/Advisory Memo pages.

Lesson 2 · Friendship

Lower Elementary — Friendship Action Cards; Situation Cards; Draw & Tell.
Upper Elementary — Response Cards; Decision Cards; Consequence Reveals; Student Reflection.
Middle School — Repair Map; Case Cards; Student Reflection.
High School — Friendship Ethics Matrix; Position Brief; Friendship Covenant.

Lesson 3 · Perspective

Lower Elementary — Viewpoint Frames; Scene Pieces; Draw the Hidden Side.
Upper Elementary — Voice Cards; Event Cue; Listener's Response Sheet.
Middle School — Evidence Cards; Revision Record.
High School — Perspective Ethics Dossier; Position Brief.

Lesson 4 · Being Your Own Person

Lower Elementary — Choice Cards; Floor Signs; My Choice Wheel.
Upper Elementary — Course Map; Decision/Current Cards; Consequence Reveals; Captain's Log.
Middle School — Identity Layers; Caelum comparison; Student Reflection.
High School — Moral Independence Case File; Position Brief.

Lesson 5 · Belonging

Lower Elementary — Belonging Supports; Story Cards; My Belonging Structure.
Upper Elementary — Mingle Puzzle envelopes; Cooperative Reflection.
Middle School — Sound Cue Cards; Listening Analysis; Student Reflection.
High School — Belonging Council File; Covenant; Position Brief.

Lesson 6 · Quiet Leadership

Lower Elementary — Care Trail Station Cards; My Quiet Leadership Trail.
Upper Elementary — Field Notebook; Service Plan; Student Reflection.
Middle School — Mission/Role/Complication Cards; Leadership Evidence Record.
High School — Leadership Evidence Audit; Intervention Design; Position Brief.

Lesson 7 · Courage

Lower Elementary — Courage Path signs; Courage Cards; My Next Courageous Step.
Upper Elementary — Bridge Design/Test Record; Bridge Reflection.
Middle School — Inner/Outer Voice Script; Performance Reflection.
High School — Courage Threshold Matrix; Position Brief.

SCRIPTURE & STORY · OPTIONAL FAITH COMPANION

Lesson 1 · The Good Samaritan

Lower Elementary — Mercy in Action.

Upper Elementary — Samaritan/Nettle comparison + short response.
Middle School — Claim–Evidence–Reasoning page.
High School — Intertextual Mercy brief.

Lesson 2 · The Peaceable Kingdom

Lower Elementary — A Peaceful Place.
Upper Elementary — Peaceable Community wheel + response.
Middle School — Isaiah / Wilderland / Real Ecology comparison.
High School — literary/worldbuilding analysis page.

Lesson 3 · “He Must Increase”

Lower Elementary — I Can Learn to Do It.
Upper Elementary — Mentor Moves sorting/reflection.
Middle School — mentorship recommendation page.
High School — succession Position Brief.

Lesson 4 · Choose Life

Lower Elementary — My Next Right Choice.
Upper Elementary — Easy/Hard and Life-Giving/Harmful sort + reflection.
Middle School — Choice / Pressure / Consequence analysis + response.
High School — rhetoric and agency argument page.

DISCUSSION BY STORY PART

No worksheets. Questions stay grouped after Parts I–IV, with one optional older-reader extension per Part.

READ-ALOUD PERFORMER’S GUIDE

No worksheets. Includes cast voices, pronunciation, stopping points, mixed-age guidance, Stinkfish, table grace, Archon-camp texture, and grief guidance.

READING THE STORY

No worksheets. Includes readability interpretation, pacing options, format choices, and four-band reading guidance.