

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.
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.

LEVEL	LEARNER WILL...
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
Snicker 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.

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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, pursuer, 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.

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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.