

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.
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.