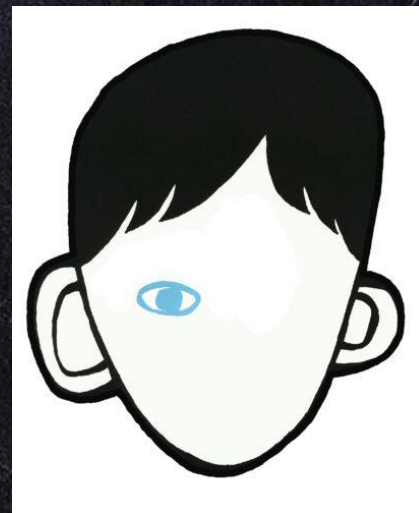
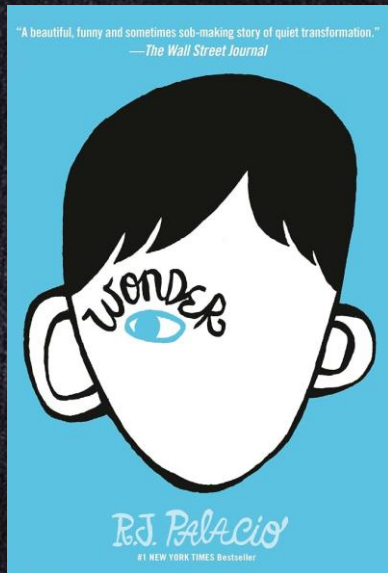


Wonder

By R.J. Palacio



Project Overview

This school year, the fifth-grade teachers at Bielefield Elementary School implemented a character-building project designed to help students develop empathy, kindness, respect, courage, and a sense of responsibility toward others.

The project centered around the novel *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio and the use of **Mr. Browne's Precepts** as meaningful opportunities for students to reflect on their own choices, relationships, and the type of person they want to become.

An important component of the project will be **Mr. Browne's Precepts** from *Wonder*. Students will examine these short statements and consider how they can apply them to their everyday lives. Students will receive copies of the precepts so they can refer to them throughout the project and use them as a foundation for reflection and classroom discussions.

Art and Student Expression

In art class, students selected one of the themes inspired by Mr. Browne's precepts in *Wonder* and created an individual abstract painted canvas. Students explored themes including empathy, kindness, respect, courage, and a sense of responsibility toward others, using color, shape, line, texture, and composition to visually communicate their chosen idea. Rather than creating a literal representation, students made abstract and personal artistic choices to express how they understood and connected with each theme. This activity encouraged students to express their ideas creatively while strengthening the connection between literacy, character education, personal reflection, and the visual arts.

Project Goal

Our goal was to help students understand that character is demonstrated through our everyday choices and actions. Through literature, discussion, reflection, art, and collaboration, we gave our fifth-grade students meaningful opportunities to ask themselves:

“What kind of person do I want to be?”

Our students emerged from this experience not only as stronger readers and communicators, but also as more thoughtful, compassionate, and respectful members of our school community.

Connections to Curriculum

Reading:

Comprehending and analyzing a grade-level novel.

Speaking and Listening:

Participating in meaningful discussions and listening respectfully to others.

Writing and Reflection:

Connecting themes from literature to their own experiences and choices through art

Social-Emotional Learning:

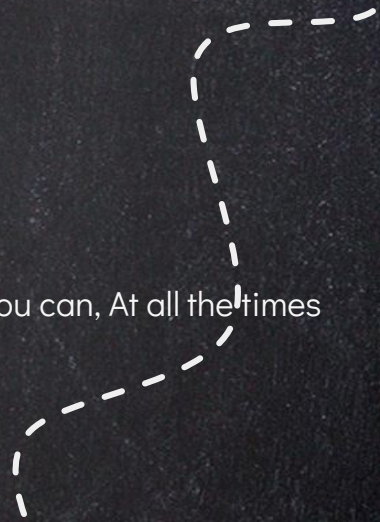
Developing empathy, self-awareness, positive relationships, and responsible decision-making.

Art:

National Core Arts Standard “Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.”

Mr. Browne's Precepts

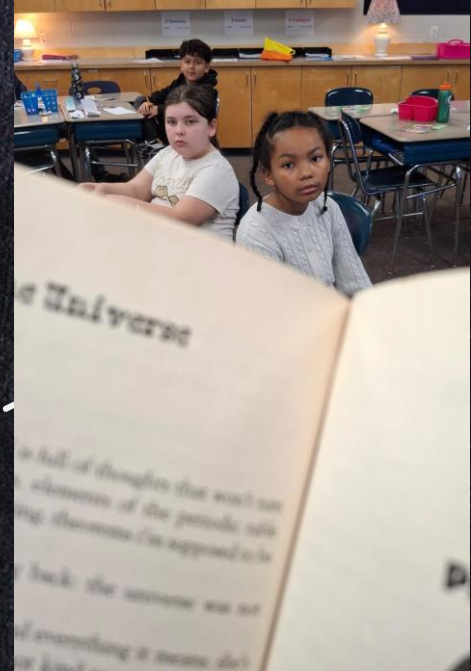
- **SEPTEMBER:** When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind. —Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
- **OCTOBER:** Your deeds are your monuments. —inscription on an Egyptian tomb
- **NOVEMBER:** Have no friends not equal to yourself. —Confucius
- **DECEMBER:** Audentes fortuna iuvat. (Fortune favors the bold.) —Virgil
- **JANUARY:** No man is an island, entire of itself. —John Donne
- **FEBRUARY:** It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers. —James Thurber
- **MARCH:** Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much. —Blaise Pascal
- **APRIL:** What is beautiful is good, and who is good will soon be beautiful. —Sappho
- **MAY:** Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as you ever can. —John Wesley's Rule
- **JUNE:** Just follow the day and reach for the sun! —The Polyphonic Spree, "Light and Day"



Read Alouds



Read Alouds



Read Alouds



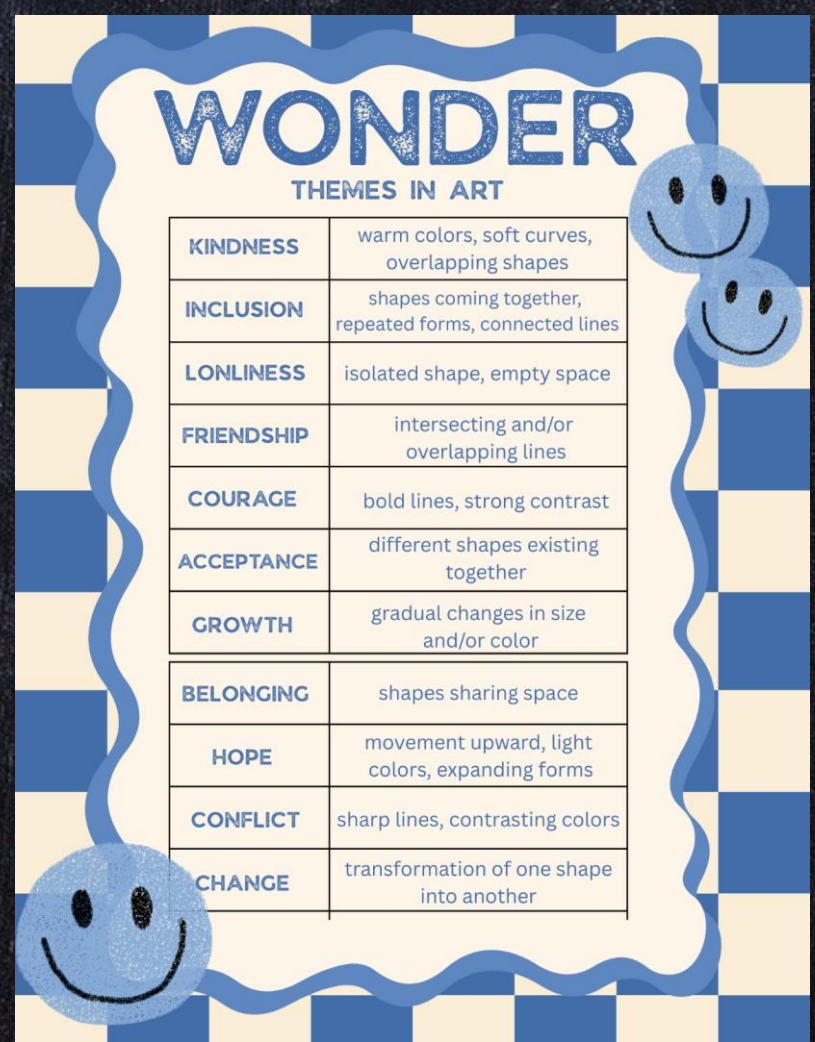
Readers' Statements

This book gave us the opportunity to explore our social emotional experiences!

- About “little white lies...” “They may seem covered up, but they make you feel distant from others. There’s more doors shutting (when you tell them).”
- “People cannot help how they look! We should be kind to everyone.”
- “When I was in fourth grade, I felt like someone was bullying me. I said to myself, ‘Why me? Why did they choose me?’”
- “I used to be close to my sister. But now she is a teenager. She goes in her room and won’t let me in.”

Bringing Wonder to Art Class

Students engaged in discussions about how artists can communicate feelings and ideas through abstract art. They discussed this chart identifying different colors, shapes, lines, and artistic choices they could use to represent their intended themes and feelings in their paintings. Students then used this chart as a reference while planning how they would visually communicate their personal interpretation of their chosen **Wonder** theme.

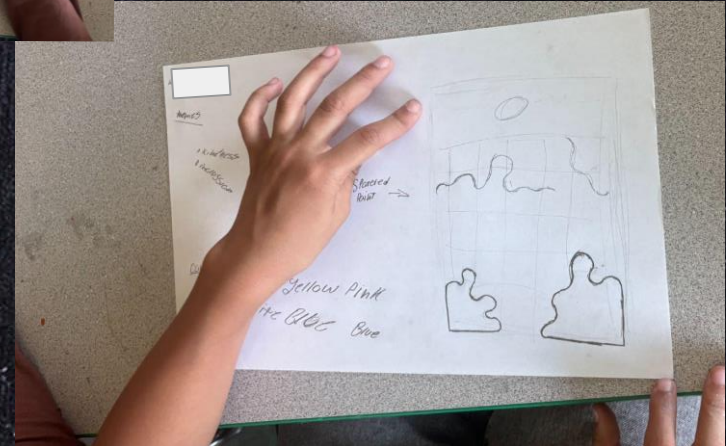
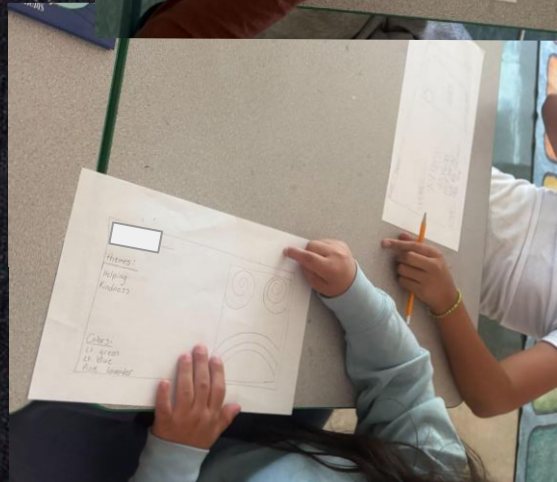
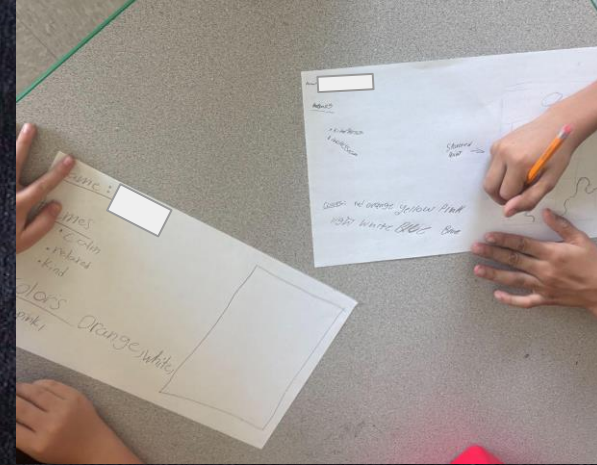


WONDER	
THEMES IN ART	
KINDNESS	warm colors, soft curves, overlapping shapes
INCLUSION	shapes coming together, repeated forms, connected lines
LONLINESS	isolated shape, empty space
FRIENDSHIP	intersecting and/or overlapping lines
COURAGE	bold lines, strong contrast
ACCEPTANCE	different shapes existing together
GROWTH	gradual changes in size and/or color
BELONGING	shapes sharing space
HOPE	movement upward, light colors, expanding forms
CONFLICT	sharp lines, contrasting colors
CHANGE	transformation of one shape into another

Artists at Work

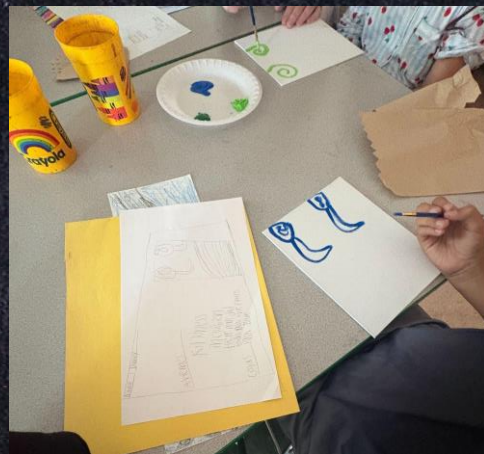
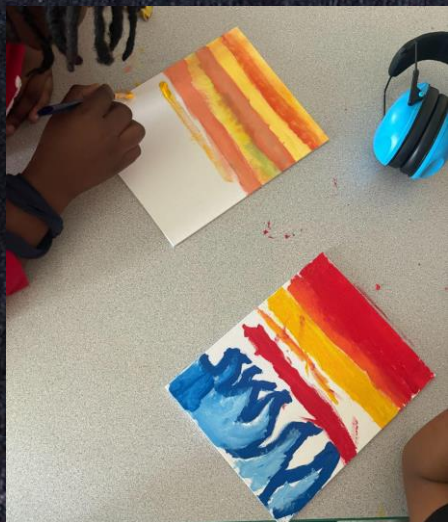
Planning Phase

During the planning phase, students determined their themes for their abstract art piece. They wrote out what theme they'd be showcasing and the colors they'd need to create their art. Then, they sketched out their intended design using line, color, shape, size, contrast, etc.

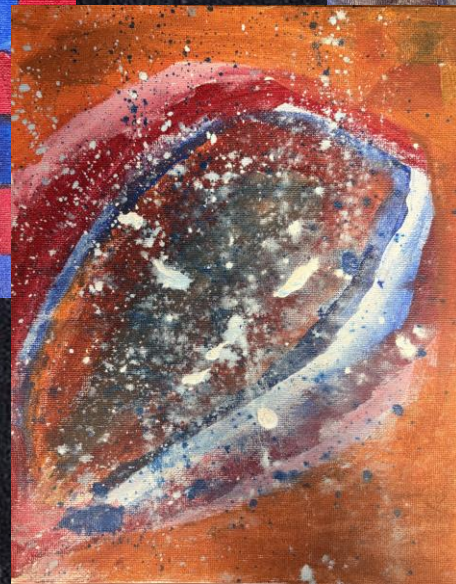


Artists at Work

Painting Phase



Completed Paintings



Artist Statements

The precept that inspired my artwork was "Kind words do not cost much yet they accomplish much." I used colors to communicate the precept and theme of acceptance. This connects to my life because when I was in kinder garden every one called me short.

The precept that inspired my artwork when given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind. I used kindness and calm acts and acceptance to communicate the precept and theme of shapes, colors ect. This connects to my life because I used to get bullied and then someone stood up for me.

The precept that inspired my artwork was have no friends not equal to yourself. I used overlapping shapes to communicate the precept and theme of friendship. This connects to my life because I care a lot about my friends.

The precept that inspired my artwork was fortune favors the bold. I used different kinds of lines to communicate the precept and theme of change. This connects to my life because I changed to a new school bravely.

Thank you!

**This presentation was made possible by staff and students at
Frederick J. Bielefield Elementary School!**

- **Ms. Conte, Mrs. Turcsany, Mrs. Castagno, and Mr. Santiago**
- **The 5th Graders**
- **Special thanks to Ms. Lombardo who facilitated the artwork students made!!**