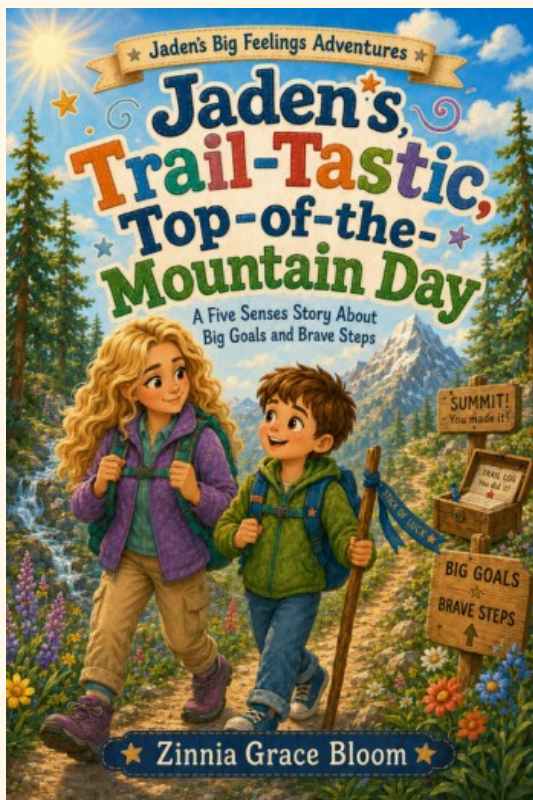




Educator & Caregiver Guide

Companion to

Jaden's Trail-Tastic, Top-of-the-Mountain Day

A Five Senses Story About Big Goals and Brave Steps

For classrooms, counseling spaces, small groups, and home read-alouds

Guide purpose

Use this companion guide to help children notice worry body clues, practice the Five Senses on the Trail grounding strategy, break big goals into small brave steps, and reflect on the brave that is already inside them.

Gentle reminder

This guide is educational and supportive. It is not a substitute for individualized mental-health, medical, or school-support advice. Adapt each activity for the child, setting, culture, sensory needs, and safety of the moment.

1. Quick Start

Use this guide when...	Try this first	Time needed
A child says, 'I can't do it' or the goal feels too big.	Name the mountain, then choose one tiny next step.	3-5 minutes
A child's worry shows up in the body.	Invite the child to notice body clues without shame.	2-5 minutes
A group needs a calm-down routine.	Practice 5-4-3-2-1 senses together.	5-10 minutes
After reading the book.	Complete one reflection page or discussion prompt.	10-20 minutes

Book snapshot

Jaden begins his mountain day excited, then the trail starts to feel too big. His worry shows up through body clues and self-doubt. With Mom's calm support, he finds a Stick of Luck, learns that his real brave tools include his feet, breath, heart, and mind, and practices Five Senses on the Trail. Step by step, he reaches the summit, signs the trail log, and realizes his brave was walking inside him the whole time.

Core message for children

Brave does not mean never feeling nervous. Brave can mean pausing, noticing, asking for support, and taking one small step at a time.

Best-fit settings

- **Home:** bedtime, after-school check-ins, before a new activity, or during a hard moment.
- **Classroom:** morning meeting, SEL lesson, transition support, goal-setting unit, or nature/outdoor theme.
- **Counseling/small group:** worry management, resilience, body clues, growth mindset, or coping-skills practice.

2. Social-Emotional Skills Map

Book moment	Child skill	Adult response
The mountain looks too tall.	Names worry and self-doubt.	Validate: 'This feels big. We can slow down.'
Jaden notices tummy, knees, feet, and tired legs.	Connects feelings to body clues.	Ask: 'Where do you feel this in your body?'
Jaden finds the Stick of Luck.	Uses a concrete reminder of brave.	Honor the object, then connect it to internal tools.
Mom teaches Five Senses on the Trail.	Uses present-moment noticing.	Guide 5 see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste.
Jaden looks back and sees progress.	Recognizes growth and effort.	Reflect: 'Look how far you came.'
Jaden signs the summit book.	Celebrates effort and identity.	Praise process: noticing, breathing, asking, trying.

Key vocabulary

Word or phrase	Child-friendly meaning
Big goal	Something important that may feel hard at first.
Brave step	A small try you can do while feelings are still there.
Body clue	A signal from your body that tells you how you feel.
Five senses	Seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling, and tasting what is around you right now.
Pace	How fast or slow you move through a hard thing.
Helper	A person who stays near, listens, and helps you plan.

3. Read-Aloud Plan

Before reading: set the trail

- Show the cover and invite predictions: What looks exciting? What looks challenging?
- Introduce the idea: A goal can feel like a mountain. We do not have to climb the whole mountain at once.
- Create safety: Children may speak, draw, point, or pass. No one has to share a private worry out loud.
- Teach the phrase: 'I can try one small step.'

During reading: pause points

Pause when...	Ask children...	Listen for...
Jaden is excited at the start.	How can you tell his body feels excited?	Wide smile, bouncing energy, eager words.
The mountain seems too big.	What changed in Jaden's body and thoughts?	Tiny brave, tight knees, what-if thoughts.
Mom pauses with him.	What does Mom do that helps?	She slows down, gets close, names worry kindly.
Jaden finds the Stick of Luck.	Why might a brave tool help?	It gives the child something concrete to hold or remember.
They practice Five Senses.	Can we practice one sense together right now?	Children name what they notice without judging it.
Jaden reaches the summit.	What helped most: the stick, his body, his helper, or his small steps?	Multiple answers; emphasize all supports working together.

After reading: reflect

- What was Jaden's mountain? What is a mountain in your life?
- What did Jaden's body tell him when worry grew?
- What did Mom say or do that helped him keep going?
- What is one brave step you can try this week?

4. Teaching Five Senses on the Trail

Why this works

The senses bring attention back to the present moment. Children do not need to make worry disappear before moving forward; they can notice, breathe, and choose one safe next step.

Step	Guide language	Child response
5 See	Name five things your eyes can find.	trees, rocks, shoes, sky, a pencil
4 Feel	Name four things your body can feel safely.	chair, feet, shirt, breath
3 Hear	Name three sounds around you.	voices, fan, footsteps
2 Smell	Name two smells, or say 'no smell right now.'	soap, snack, fresh air
1 Taste	Name one taste, or take a sip of water if allowed.	water, mint, snack, toothpaste
One step	Say: 'I am here. I am safe. I can take one small step.'	Choose one doable action.

Practice tips

- **Practice when calm.** Children use coping tools more easily when they have tried them before big feelings arrive.
- **Keep it flexible.** If taste or smell is not safe or available, let the child name one thing they notice inside their body instead.
- **Do not rush.** A slow adult voice is part of the support.
- **End with choice.** Ask, 'What is your next tiny step?'

5. 35-45 Minute Educator Lesson

Time	Step	What to do
3 min	Welcome	Invite students to show with fingers: How big does your brave feel today? No sharing required.
5 min	Preview	Define big goal, brave step, and body clue. Show a simple mountain/path drawing.
12-15 min	Read aloud	Use the pause points. Keep questions brief so the story keeps moving.
5-8 min	Model	Practice Five Senses together using the room, hallway, garden, or playground.
8-10 min	Create	Students draw a Stick of Luck or Brave Tool and write one small step.
5 min	Close	Students complete: 'My brave can grow when I...'

Materials

- The book
- Chart paper or board
- Crayons/markers
- Optional: small paper sticks, craft sticks, nature pictures, sensory cards, or trail-map paper
- Copies of the printable pages in this guide

Group agreements

- We can feel nervous and still belong.
- We do not laugh at someone else's mountain.
- We can pass, draw, whisper, or ask for help.
- Brave steps must be safe, kind, and chosen with support.

6. Caregiver Guide for Home

Use the story at home when...

- your child worries about a new class, sport, appointment, trip, or performance;
- a task feels too big, such as cleaning a room, starting homework, or joining a group;
- your child wants to quit because their body feels tired, tight, or overwhelmed;
- you want a warm way to talk about perseverance without pushing perfection.

Caregiver script: Pause - Notice - Step

1. 'This feels like a mountain right now.'
2. 'Let's help your body notice what is here.'
3. 'What can you see, feel, hear, smell, or taste?'
4. 'What is one tiny step we can try together?'
5. 'I will stay near while you try.'

Helpful phrases

Instead of...	Try...
Don't be scared.	I see this feels big. I'm here with you.
Just do it.	Let's choose one small step.
There's nothing to worry about.	Your worry is talking loudly. Let's listen to your senses too.
You have to finish.	Let's notice what your body needs, then decide the next safe step.

7. Activities and Extensions

Activity	How to use it	Skill focus
My Big Goal Mountain	Children draw or name a goal that feels tall, then break it into 3-5 small trail steps.	planning, self-efficacy
Stick of Luck / Brave Tool	Children decorate a paper stick or choose a small object that reminds them to pause and try.	symbolic support, agency
Five Senses Trail	Use the printable to practice 5-4-3-2-1 in the room, outside, or during a transition.	grounding, present-moment awareness
Look Back Moment	After a task, invite children to notice one place they started and one place they are now.	progress recognition
Summit Book	Create a class or family 'summit log' where children sign after a brave try.	celebration, belonging
One Small Step Jar	Write tiny steps on slips of paper and pull one when something feels too big.	choice, action

Extension prompts

- Write a class poem using the structure: I see..., I feel..., I hear..., I can...
- Create a paper mountain mural. Add a star each time the group practices one brave step.
- Pair the book with a nature walk, indoor picture walk, or classroom 'trail' made of paper stepping stones.
- Invite children to make a 'helper sign' that says what helps them when a goal feels big.

8. Differentiation, Inclusion, and Safety

Need or setting	Adaptation
Sensory-sensitive learners	Offer visual choices; skip smells/tastes; avoid strong scents; allow headphones or quiet space.
Speech/language support	Use picture cards, sentence frames, pointing, drawing, or partner sharing.
Neurodivergent learners	Preview the routine, show a visual schedule, allow repetition, and make next steps concrete.
Anxious or perfectionistic children	Praise effort and pausing, not speed or finishing. Avoid surprise public sharing.
Children with mobility differences	Define 'steps' as any action: asking, choosing, breathing, rolling, reaching, drawing, or speaking.
Trauma-informed care	Do not force disclosure. Keep choices predictable. Ask permission before using touch or close proximity.
Outdoor or food activities	Check allergies, medical needs, weather, terrain, hydration, and supervision.

Important language shift

The goal is not to make children push through distress at any cost. The goal is to help them notice their body, access support, and choose a safe next step.

9. Observation Checklist and Reflection

Skill	Not yet	With support	Independently	Notes
Names one body clue of worry				
Names one helpful adult or peer				
Uses one sense to notice the present moment				
Uses a brave phrase or self-talk				
Chooses one small next step				
Reflects on progress after trying				

Family or educator reflection

Today I noticed...

The child practiced: _____

A helpful support was: _____

One next brave step could be: _____

Language for feedback

- You noticed your body. That is brave work.
- You took one step even while worry was there.
- You asked for help. Helpers are part of brave.
- You looked back and saw progress. That matters.

Printable 1: Five Senses on My Trail

When worries wiggle, I can notice what is around me right now.

Trail notice	My words or drawing
5 things I can see	
4 things I can feel	
3 things I can hear	
2 things I can smell	
1 thing I can taste or notice inside	
One small step I can take	

Brave words

I am here. I am safe. I can take one small step.

Printable 2: My Big Goal Mountain

Prompt	My plan
A goal that feels big is:	
A helper who can stay near is:	
My brave tool or reminder is:	
Step 1:	
Step 2:	
Step 3:	
When I need a rest, I can:	

Tiny step reminder

I do not have to climb the whole mountain at once.

Printable 3: Summit Reflection

After a brave try, look back and notice what helped.

Reflection question	My answer
My brave try was:	
Before I tried, my body felt:	
A sense I used was:	
A helper or brave tool was:	
One thing I am proud of:	
My next small step is:	

Summit words

My brave was walking inside me.

Closing Note

A child does not need a giant brave feeling before beginning.

They need a safe helper, a calm pace, a way to notice the present moment, and one small next step.

Use this guide again

Return to the Five Senses on the Trail routine whenever a child is facing a new mountain: school transitions, performances, social worries, appointments, hard conversations, or everyday tasks that feel too big.

Big goals. Brave steps. One trail at a time.