



# Educator & Caregiver Toolkit

Mary and the Mirror of Wishes

by Zinnia Grace Bloom

Dialogue Edition

A gentle guide for quiet courage, kindness, self-belief,  
friendship, and emotional awareness.



# Welcome

Mary and the Mirror of Wishes is a gentle fantasy story about quiet courage, kindness in action, and the magic that begins when a child notices someone who feels unseen.

In the dialogue edition, Mary has more opportunities to name her fears, ask questions, and practice brave choices out loud. Eli also becomes more emotionally present, giving readers a clearer picture of how friendship can begin slowly and grow safely.

This toolkit is designed for classrooms, counseling groups, family read-alouds, and bedtime conversations. It does not require children to share personal stories. Instead, it invites them to notice, reflect, draw, speak gently, and try one small brave action.

## Best For

Ages 6-10 • SEL lessons • read-alouds • counseling groups • literacy circles • kindness projects • family reflection

## Core Themes

Empathy • Courage • Kindness • Self-Belief • Friendship • Emotional Awareness • Inclusion • Responsible Choices

## Adult Reminder

The goal is not to turn the story into a lesson children must answer correctly. The goal is to create a safe space where children can recognize that quiet courage counts.

# How to Use This Toolkit

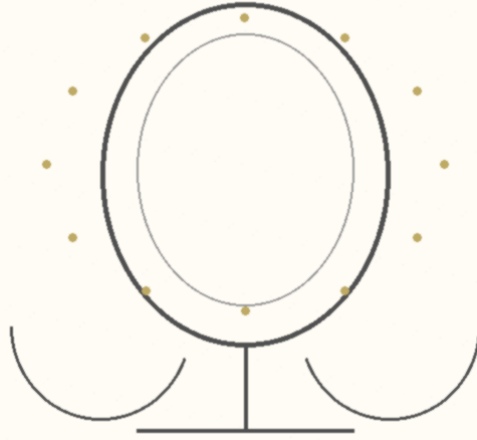
Use the pages in any order. Choose what fits your group, child, or classroom. You do not need to complete every page.

## A simple 3-step approach

1. Read gently. Pause only when it feels natural. Let the story carry the emotion first.
2. Ask one open question. Choose one prompt instead of many. Children often reflect more deeply when the conversation is not rushed.
3. Try one small action. Let the story move into real life through a small brave step: saying hello, sitting nearby, trying again, or including someone.

Helpful sentence for adults: There are no wrong answers. We are practicing noticing.





## Dialogue Anchors

Use these lines to connect story moments to real-life social-emotional skills.

### Dialogue That Deepens the Story

The dialogue gives children more concrete language for feelings that are often hard to name. These lines can be used for discussion, journaling, or a simple pause during read-aloud.

Chapter 1

“Today, I’m going to say what I mean... Well, I’m going to try.”

Self-awareness; trying without needing perfection.

Chapter 3

“Bravery is not a feeling. It is a choice that keeps walking even when feelings tremble.”

Self-management; courage can include fear.

Chapter 4

“You do not need a magic wish. You need a true one.”

Responsible decision-making; kindness begins with honesty.

Chapter 7

“Hope can be quiet and still be alive.”

Empathy; quiet children can still have strong inner worlds.

### Chapter 8

“A gift is what you offer with love, without deciding how someone must receive it.”

Relationship skills; kindness is offered, not forced.

### Chapter 11

“You didn’t make it bloom. You made it feel safe enough to try.”

Social awareness; support creates safety.

### Chapter 12

“Kindness matters before it is answered.”

Perseverance; caring choices matter even when results are uncertain.

### Chapter 16

“Sometimes sitting beside someone is the whole doorway.”

Inclusion; presence can be powerful.

## Character Growth Map

Character	Begins With	Grows Toward
Mary	quiet worry, self-doubt, wanting to help	small brave actions, trust, kind leadership
Eli	feeling unseen, hesitant to join	connection, laughter, trying, staying
Strong	steadiness and courage	teaches next right step
Peaches	joy and sparkle	teaches trust and brave joy
Sprout	hope and care	teaches growth without rushing
Silverbell	laughter and motion	teaches play as courage



# Before Reading

Choose one or two warm-up questions. Children may answer aloud, draw, or simply think quietly.

- What does being brave mean to you?
- Can someone be brave without being loud?
- Have you ever noticed someone sitting alone?
- What helps you feel safe enough to try?
- What does it mean to make room for someone?

Tip: Do not push for personal disclosures. A child can answer from the story, from imagination, or from observation.

# During Reading Prompts

Use these sparingly. The story works best when children have time to feel it.

## Chapters 1-4: Mary, the stage, the watch, and the wish

- What does Mary notice that other people might miss?
- Why does the watch say a true wish matters?
- How does Mary show kindness before any magic appears?

## Chapters 5-8: Mirror, Clarice, Skyprancers, and Charlie

- Why is the Mirror a mirror for hearts instead of faces?
- Which magical helper feels most like you today?
- What does Charlie mean when he says belief is shown by what we do?

## Chapters 9-12: Lessons in courage, trust, hope, and return

- What does Strong teach Mary about fear?
- What does Peaches teach about trust?
- What does Sprout teach about growing slowly?

## Chapters 13-16: Playground, laughter, staying, and home

- What changes when Mary sits beside Eli?
- How does laughter help Eli feel safer?
- What does it mean that Mary becomes a wish?

## After Reading Discussion

Choose 2-4 questions based on age and attention span.

### Understanding the Story

- Why did the Mirror respond to Mary?
- How did Eli change? How did Mary change?
- What made the playground feel different at the end?
- Why did the wish travel farther than Mary expected?

### Emotional Awareness

- When did Mary feel nervous?
- What helped her keep going?
- How do you know when your heart is asking you to act?
- What does small brave look like?

### Real-Life Connection

- What is one kind thing you could do this week?
- Who might need help feeling seen?
- How can you include someone without forcing them?
- What would quiet courage look like for you?

# Chapter-by-Chapter Toolkit

## 1 Feather

Focus: Mary notices her inner world.

Prompt: What helps Mary feel steady?

## 2 Stage

Focus: The world begins to answer Mary.

Prompt: What does Mary notice that others might miss?

## 3 Watch

Focus: The watch names quiet courage.

Prompt: Can courage include fear?

## 4 Wish

Focus: Mary makes a true wish for Eli.

Prompt: Why is wishing for someone else powerful?

## 5 Mirror

Focus: The Mirror wakes through care.

Prompt: What does it mean to be a wishkeeper?

## 6 Starlings

Focus: Clarice connects Mary to family courage.

Prompt: What kind of courage can run in a family?

## 7 Skyprancers

Focus: Each helper names a different strength.

Prompt: Which Skyprancer would you need today?

## 8 Light

Focus: Charlie teaches wish vs. gift.

Prompt: How can kindness be offered, not forced?

## 9 Courage

Focus: Strong teaches the next right step.

Prompt: What is one next right step?

## 10 Wind

Focus: Peaches teaches trust and joy.

Prompt: When has trust felt wobbly?



## **11 Garden**

Focus: Sprout teaches safe growth.

Prompt: What helps someone feel safe enough to try?

## **12 Return**

Focus: Mary prepares to act in the real world.

Prompt: Why do ordinary places take courage?

## **13 Playground**

Focus: Mary sits beside Eli.

Prompt: How can quiet be a bridge?

## **14 Laughter**

Focus: Mistakes become less scary.

Prompt: Why are mistakes not monsters?

## **15 Stay**

Focus: The kindness spreads to others.

Prompt: Why does the word stay matter?

## **16 Home**

Focus: Mary sees how wishes travel.

Prompt: How can small things be magic?



# SEL Alignment: CASEL 5

## Self-Awareness

In the story: Mary notices fear, hope, nervousness, and care inside herself.

Skill supported: Children identify feelings and personal strengths.

Prompt: How does Mary practice this skill?

## Self-Management

In the story: Mary breathes, pauses, tries again, and chooses the next right step.

Skill supported: Children practice emotional regulation and perseverance.

Prompt: How does Mary practice this skill?

## Social Awareness

In the story: Mary notices Eli at the edge and respects his quiet.

Skill supported: Children practice empathy and perspective-taking.

Prompt: How does Mary practice this skill?

## Relationship Skills

In the story: Mary begins gently, sits nearby, laughs with Eli, and includes others.

Skill supported: Children build communication, inclusion, and repair skills.

Prompt: How does Mary practice this skill?

## Responsible Decision-Making

In the story: Mary makes a wish for someone else and turns it into action.

Skill supported: Children connect choices to care and consequences.

Prompt: How does Mary practice this skill?

## ELA and Counseling Connections

Theme: quiet courage, kindness, and belief in action.

Character response: Mary changes because she practices small brave choices; Eli changes because he feels safely included.

Narrative writing: Children can write their own small brave scene using a beginning, feeling, choice, and result.



Counseling use: This story can support conversations about inclusion, friendship, social risk, shyness, self-belief, mistake tolerance, and empathy without requiring children to share directly about personal experiences.



# Activities

## Quiet Courage Journal

Draw or write about one time you tried something even though you felt nervous. Sentence starter: Brave does not have to be loud. Brave can be...

## Wish for Someone Else

Draw or write a wish that helps someone feel safer, happier, included, or seen. Then name one tiny action that could help the wish move.

## Feather of Belief

Create a paper feather. Write one belief you want to grow: I can try. I can sit with someone. I can be kind even when I am scared.

## Skyprancer Reflection

Choose a Skyprancer for the day: Strong for courage, Peaches for joy, Sprout for care, or Silverbell for laughter. Draw yourself riding with that helper.

## Mistakes Are Not Monsters

Act out or draw a small mistake. Practice saying: I can try again. Then discuss how laughter and kindness can help.

## Playground Kindness Map

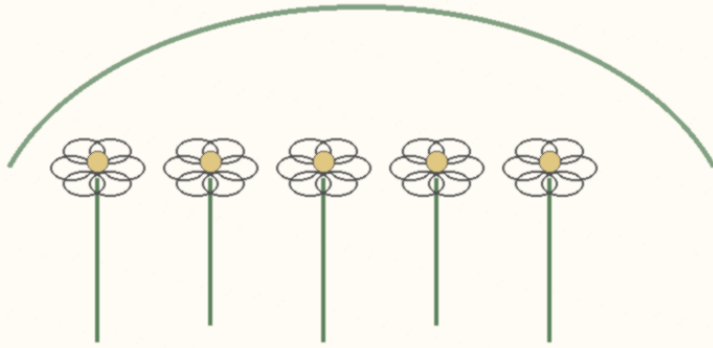
Draw the playground or classroom. Mark places where someone might feel left out. Add kind choices: sit nearby, ask to join, save a seat, smile.

# Printable Reflection Prompts

These can be copied onto slips of paper, used as journal prompts, or read aloud during a circle time.

- One small brave thing I can try is...
- One way to help someone feel seen is...
- When I feel nervous, I can...
- A mistake is not a monster because...
- One person I can include is...
- Today I can let kindness move by...





## Drawing and Writing Pages

- Draw Mary's brave object.
- Draw the Mirror of Wishes.
- Draw a wish traveling through the sky.
- Draw Strong, Peaches, Sprout, or Silverbell.
- Draw Eli feeling included.
- Draw your own small brave moment.

Invite children to draw first and write second. For younger readers, adults can label the drawing with the child's own words.

# For Sensitive Readers

Some children may relate strongly to Eli feeling unseen, Mary feeling nervous, or the fear of making mistakes. These connections can be meaningful, but they should be handled gently.

## Helpful adult responses

- “That makes sense.”
- “You do not have to talk about it if you do not want to.”
- “We can think about Mary instead.”
- “A feeling can be true even if it is hard to explain.”
- “You are safe right now.”

## Avoid

- Asking children to publicly identify who feels left out.
- Turning the story into a behavior correction.
- Rushing children to forgive, speak, join, or disclose.
- Forcing a child to accept help or attention.

Let the story do the teaching. Adults can offer calm presence, simple choices, and room to respond in different ways.

# Adult Scripts for Real Moments

## When a child is nervous to join

“You do not have to jump in all at once. What is one small brave step?”

## When a child makes a mistake

“Mistakes are not monsters. Let’s breathe and try the next step.”

## When a child notices someone alone

“How could we make room without forcing them?”

## When friendship feels awkward

“Awkward and kind can happen at the same time.”

## When a child is quiet

“Quiet does not mean empty. We can give your thoughts time.”



# One-Session Read-Aloud Plan

Time: 30-45 minutes

Goal: Children identify one small brave kindness action.

## 1. Warm-up - 5 minutes

Ask: Can brave be quiet? Invite children to show a thumbs-up, sideways thumb, or quiet think time.

## 2. Read selected chapters - 15-20 minutes

Use Chapters 1, 4, 8, 11, 13, and 16 for a shortened read-aloud arc.

## 3. Discuss - 5 minutes

Ask: What did Mary do that was small but brave?

## 4. Create - 10 minutes

Have children draw a feather and write one small brave action on it.

## 5. Close - 2 minutes

Say together: Small brave still counts.

# Take-Home Connection

Dear Families,

Today we read from *Mary and the Mirror of Wishes*, a story about quiet courage, kindness, and helping someone feel seen. Children learned that bravery does not have to be loud and that small actions - saying hello, sitting nearby, trying again, or including someone - can matter deeply.

At home, you might ask: What was one small brave thing Mary did? What is one small brave thing you could try this week?

Family practice: Choose one kind wish for someone else, then name one small action that could help that wish move.





## Closing Thought for Adults

This book works best when it is treated as an invitation, not a lecture.

An invitation to notice.

An invitation to care.

An invitation to believe small things matter.

Because they do.

Key Vocabulary: belief, courage, kindness, mirror, keeper, wish, renewal, trust, quiet courage, small brave

Suggested standards connections: theme, character response, narrative writing, speaking/listening, social awareness, self-awareness, relationship skills

May every child find one small brave way to let kindness  
move.

