BIG READ- *Wonder*, by R.J. Palicio

Characters:

August “Auggie” Pullman Olivia “Via” Pullman- Auggie’s sister

Isabel and Nate Pullman- Auggie’s parents Mr. Tushman- middle school director

Summer- first friend at school Jack Will- Auggie’s friend

Charlotte- smart girl Julian- jerk

Daisy- the family dog Miranda- Olivia’s childhood friend

Justin- Olivia’s boyfriend

Discussion Questions:

1. Wonder is marketed as a children’s title, but it has drawn great interest from adult readers as well. Why do you think the book appeals to adults, as much as to kids?
2. Themes:

* Identity- August tells us that "...the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way." Discuss identity for middle school. For adults.
* Normal- What *is* normal?  How do we decide what is normal?  Does it change with age?  How should "normal" people approach people with deformities?
* Kindness- What does it mean to be kind?  Can we just be kind, or do we have to practice being kind?  How do you promote kindness?
* Meanness- Is meanness always intentional?  Via struggles in her relationship with Auggie when she enters a new school.  Is she being mean or is her response understandable?
* Friendship- What factors often drive friendship? How was it different for Summer? For Jack?

1. Mr. Browne’s Precept: *When given a choice between being right or being kind, choose kind*. Why is there such a great human need to be right? How do we deal with this?
2. What other precepts stood out? (*Your deeds are your monuments…It isn’t enough to be friendly. You have to be a friend.)*
3. Discuss Jack’s statement concerning what his little brother said: “I suddenly felt really bad. The thing is, there are always going to be kids like Julian who are jerks. But if a little kid like Jamie, who’s usually a nice enough kid, can be that mean, then a kid like August doesn’t stand a chance.” How do “usually nice kids” get drawn in? How could this be changed?
4. In kid’s world, as in adult world, there will aways be “Julians.” How do adults fair in standing up to them?
5. What actions from the story would you label as bullying? The school was somewhat detached. Is that typical? Were they at fault? Discuss bullying and our responsibility as a school.
6. As an adult reader, you know that bullying is not a new problem among youth. Has the scope of the problem changed since you were a child, and if so, how has it changed?
7. How can we promote kindness?
8. How do you see Auggie’s story impacting your role as an educator?

From The Little White Bird, by J.M. Barrie: *“Shall we make a new rule of life—always to try*

*to be a little kinder than is necessary?”*