

BRIN AND MELLY

BOOK ONE BRIN AND MELLY

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

Friendship, courage, kindness, and belonging

GRADES K TO 3	CLASSROOMS	COUNSELING GROUPS	FAMILIES
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Being brave does not mean we never feel afraid. Friendship and kindness can help us find courage when it matters most.

Created for teachers, counselors, librarians, caregivers, and families

Story by Aaron Chavez

About the Story

Brin and Melly, Book One

Brin is a gentle grizzly bear who often feels alone. Melly is a small, curious owl with a big personality. When these unlikely friends meet in an unusual place, they discover that their differences can become strengths. Their friendship helps them face uncertainty, care for one another, and begin finding their way together.

SEL Learning Goals

- Describe qualities that help a friendship grow.
- Identify feelings such as loneliness, nervousness, joy, trust, and belonging.
- Explain how someone can act courageously while still feeling afraid.
- Recognize how kindness and teamwork help people feel safe and included.
- Choose a helpful response when someone feels left out or needs support.

Educator Note	There is no single correct answer to most discussion questions. Encourage children to notice details, listen to one another, and connect the story to experiences that feel comfortable to share.
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Before and During Reading

Use the questions that best fit your students and setting.

Before Reading

- What makes someone a good friend?
- Can two people who are very different become close friends? Why?
- What does courage mean to you?
- Have you ever felt nervous about meeting someone new?
- What do you notice about Brin and Melly? What might they have in common?

During Reading, Stop and Talk

WHEN BRIN FEELS ALONE

How can you tell what Brin may be feeling? What could another character do to help him feel included?

WHEN BRIN MEETS MELLY

What choices help their friendship begin? How does curiosity or humor make the moment easier?

AS TRUST GROWS

What does each character contribute to the friendship? What do they begin to appreciate about one another?

WHEN A CHALLENGE APPEARS

Can someone be brave and scared at the same time? What evidence supports your answer?

WHEN THEY WORK TOGETHER

Why is teamwork important? How would the outcome change if either friend acted alone?

After Reading Discussion

Invite students to explain their thinking and connect the story to their own lives.

Friendship

- Why do you think Brin and Melly became friends?
- What did each character give to the friendship?
- How can you help someone who seems lonely or left out?
- What is one quality you value in a friend?

Courage

- Was Brin courageous because he was never afraid, or because he acted while afraid?
- What is a small act of courage a child might show at school or at home?
- Who helps you find your courage?

Kindness and Belonging

- Which moments in the story show kindness?
- How did Brin change after Melly became his friend?
- What can a class or family do so everyone feels that they belong?

Key Message

Being brave does not mean we never feel afraid. Friendship and kindness can help us find courage when it matters most.

Classroom Activities

Choose one activity or build a short learning sequence.

1. Friendship Forest

Give each student a paper leaf. Ask students to write or draw one way they can be a good friend. Combine the leaves into a class tree or forest display.

2. Courage Is

Students complete the sentence, "Courage is..." Younger students may draw a picture. Older students can write about doing something difficult while feeling nervous.

3. Brin and Melly Team Challenge

Partners complete a task that is easier with cooperation, such as building a paper tower or solving a puzzle. Discuss what each partner contributed.

4. Kindness in Action

Begin a class kindness challenge. Notice small caring choices for one week, then discuss how those choices affected the group.

5. Different, Yet Friends

Create a Venn diagram comparing Brin and Melly. Discuss how their differences help the friendship become stronger.

Extend the Learning

Ideas for counseling groups, writing, and home conversations.

School Counselor or Small Group

- Tell about a time you felt alone, unsure, or misunderstood.
- Who helps you laugh or feel supported?
- What can you say when a friend feels afraid?
- How can you invite someone into a game, group, or conversation?
- What can you do when a friend needs more help than you can give?

Optional Writing and Drawing Prompts

Kindergarten and Grade 1	Draw Brin and Melly being good friends. Finish the sentence, "A good friend..."
Grades 2 and 3	Write about a time someone helped you feel brave, welcome, or included.
Creative Extension	Imagine Brin and Melly meet a new animal who feels left out. What happens next?

Family Connection

Ask, "Who helped you feel brave when you were young?" Invite the child to interview a parent, grandparent, or caregiver and share the story.

Teacher Reflection and Student Exit Ticket

Use this page to notice learning and plan the next conversation.

What did students notice about friendship?

What did students understand about courage?

Who may benefit from another conversation about belonging or friendship?

Student Exit Ticket

Today I learned...

One way I can show courage is...

One way I can help someone feel included is...

Continue the Journey

Keep the conversation growing across the Brin and Melly series.

About Brin and Melly

Brin and Melly is a children’s adventure series by Aaron Chavez about unlikely friends learning to face challenges together. The characters began as an original chainsaw carving Aaron created while working in China. Melly was inspired by the nickname of Aaron’s granddaughter, Melody.

Use the Guides Together	After completing this guide, invite students to compare the characters, challenges, and strengths across the series. Keep student drawings, reflections, and exit tickets in a Brin and Melly learning portfolio.
More Free Resources	Visit BrinandMelly.com for classroom read aloud resources, printable activities, author information, and future social emotional learning guides.

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