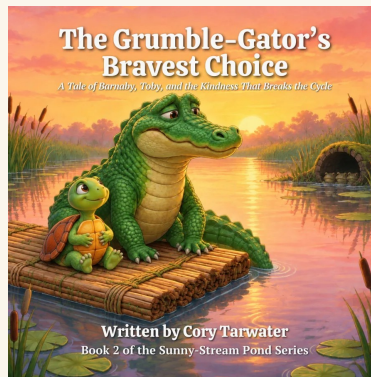


FOR TEACHERS · LIBRARIANS · SCHOOL COUNSELORS · HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES



The Grumble-Gator's Bravest Choice

A Read-Aloud & Kindness Kit for the Classroom

Ages 3-8 · Read-aloud time about 8-10 minutes · A gentle story about where hurt comes from and the one brave choice that can stop it

A note from the author

Dear Teacher, Librarian, or Friend of young readers,

Thank you for the work you do. Every child deserves to feel safe and welcome.

In my first book, Toby the turtle answers a bully with kindness, and Barnaby the Grumble-Gator becomes his friend. This book asks a harder question. Why was Barnaby unkind in the first place? The answer is that someone was unkind to him first. Kids who get picked on sometimes pass that hurt along. I wanted children to see that the hurt can stop with them.

This kit makes it easy to read the story, talk about it, and turn it into one small act of kindness your class can see. If I can help in any way, I'd be glad to.

Warmly, Cory Tarwater

Author, the Barnaby & Toby series · JCT Creations

What's inside

- 1 About the book & why it fits your classroom
- 2 Read-aloud discussion guide (before, during & after)
- 3 The Turn-Around Raft: a class activity + free printables
- 4 Bring the books to your school: copies & author story-time



About the book



The Grumble-Gator's Bravest Choice · Read-Aloud & Kindness Kit

Barnaby used to be the biggest bully in Sunny-Stream Pond. Now he's Toby's friend. One quiet evening on their raft, Barnaby shares a secret. When he was a tiny hatchling, a group of bullfrogs by the old hollow log called him "Stubby-Tail" and "Mud-Snout" and blocked his sun. He grew big, but the angry feeling stayed, and one day he roared at a family of ducklings who had done nothing wrong. "I became the very thing that used to scare me," he says.

Toby doesn't scold him. He listens. Then, on the way home, they pass the hollow log, and the bullfrogs are there, older now and all alone. Barnaby starts to paddle away. Then he stops, turns the raft around, and invites them to play. The cycle that spun for so long finally stops, not because Barnaby grew big and strong, but because he chose to be kind.

The heart of the story

Toby tells Barnaby: **"We can't change the things that happened to us, Barnaby. But we always have a choice about what we do next."** It's the line kids remember, and the one that opens the best conversations about how we treat each other.

Themes you can build on

- Hurt can be passed on, and it can also be stopped
- Empathy: noticing how someone else feels, even someone who was unkind
- Owning our choices and saying sorry
- Second chances, for others and for ourselves
- Bullying prevention, handled gently and age-appropriately

A natural fit for social-emotional learning

It maps easily onto the five core SEL competencies, so it supports an SEL block, a counselor lesson, or a kindness unit.

Self-awareness	Barnaby admits that even after he grew, he "still felt angry inside."
Social awareness	Toby listens and says, "That must have made you feel very lonely."
Self-management	When old hurt comes rushing back, Barnaby starts to paddle away, then stops to think.
Responsible decisions	He turns the raft around instead of getting even.
Relationship skills	He invites the lonely bullfrogs to come and play.

A note on care: the bullying in this story is gentle and nobody is punished. If a child shares that they are being hurt right now, thank them for telling you and follow your school's steps for getting help.



Read-aloud discussion guide



The Grumble-Gator's Bravest Choice · Read-Aloud & Kindness Kit

Simple prompts to open conversation before, during, and after the story. Choose the few that fit your group. There are no wrong answers. The goal is to listen.

Before you read

- Look at the cover. How do you think Barnaby and Toby feel about each other now?
- Do you remember Book 1? How did Toby treat Barnaby when Barnaby was mean?

While you read

- Barnaby says he “forgot” how to help. What do you think he means?
- The bullfrogs blocked Barnaby’s sun and called him names. How do you think that felt?
- Barnaby grew big, but he still felt angry inside. Why didn’t growing up make the hurt go away?
- Barnaby roared at the ducklings even though they did nothing wrong. Was that fair? Why did he do it?
- Toby doesn’t get mad at Barnaby for his story. What does he do instead?

After you read

- What does Toby mean by, “We always have a choice about what we do next”?
- Barnaby says, “It can stop with me.” What is the “it” that stops?
- Barnaby started to paddle away from the bullfrogs. Why do you think he turned around?
- The bullfrogs were sure Barnaby wanted to get even. How do you think they felt when he invited them to play?
- Has someone ever been unkind to you, and you chose to be kind anyway? What happened?

Carry it forward

Keep Toby’s line on the board all week: *“We always have a choice about what we do next.”*
When a child makes a kind choice after a hard moment, point to it and say so. Kids learn this one by seeing it noticed.



The Turn-Around Raft



A class activity · The Grumble-Gator's Bravest Choice

Barnaby turned his raft around and paddled back to make a kind choice. Your class can build a raft that shows all the ways a hard moment can be turned around with kindness.

What you need

Brown or green paper strips (the “reeds”), a large sheet of paper or bulletin-board space for the raft, crayons or markers, and glue or tape. Title the board: **“It Can Stop With Us.”**

How it works

1. Read the story together and talk about the moment Barnaby turns the raft around.
2. Give each child one paper reed. On one side, they draw or write a moment when someone might feel left out or hurt. (Someone sits alone. Someone gets laughed at.)
3. On the other side, they draw or write a kind choice that turns it around. (“Do you want to play with us?” “I’m sorry.” “You can sit with me.”)
4. Glue the reeds side by side with the kind choice facing out, so the raft is built from turn-around moments.
5. Each time someone in class makes a kind choice after a hard moment, add a new reed and celebrate it.

Younger classes (3–5): talk through the “turn-around” together and let kids draw just the kind choice.

Older classes (6–8): add a short sentence explaining why the kind choice takes courage.

Free companion printables

Four ready-to-print Book 2 pages, free with no sign-up: coloring pages, a puzzle pack, a Feelings & Choices sort (“keeps the hurt spinning” or “stops it with me”), and a Let’s Talk About It guide with a kindness-chain activity.

Scan or visit jctcreations.com/bravest-choice





Bring the books to your school



The Grumble-Gator's Bravest Choice · Read-Aloud & Kindness Kit

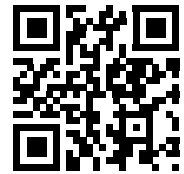
Copies for your classroom or library

Both Grumble-Gator books are available in paperback and eBook, and Book 1 also comes in hardcover. Read them together: Book 1 shows kindness changing a bully, and Book 2 shows where the hurt began and how it can stop. Libraries and bookstores can order through Ingram. For a classroom set or a school-wide kindness unit, reach out and I'll help you find the best price and the fastest route to your school.

See every store, or ask about bulk copies: jctcreations.com/buy

Author story-time visits

I'd love to read for your class, in person in Utah or over video. A visit runs about 20–30 minutes: a lively read-aloud of one or both stories, a short kindness conversation with the children, and a raft activity to leave behind. Signed copies can be arranged. It's a warm, memorable way to launch a kindness unit or mark Bullying Prevention Month in October.



Book a visit

Let's talk

For copies, a school visit, or anything else, I'm easy to reach and I answer personally.

Email	cory@jctcreations.com
Website	jctcreations.com
Book 2	jctcreations.com/bravest-choice
Free resources	jctcreations.com/printables
Where to buy	jctcreations.com/buy

Thank you for helping children choose the kind word. The hurt can stop with any one of us, and that's a lesson no child is too young to learn.