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Family Reading Guide for "Mavis the Bravest"

Conversation starters for parents and children

Getting Started

What This Book Is About

"Mavis the Bravest" tells the story of Mavis, a chicken who finds EVERYTHING scary—from night-time to daytime to anything hairy! Unlike her adventurous friend Marge, Mavis is naturally cautious and fearful. But when someone tries to steal their friend Sandra the sheep from their cozy barn, Mavis must decide whether she can find her "bright spark of braveness" and save Sandra, despite all her fears. This charming story shows that true courage means acting when it matters most, even when you're scared.

Key Themes Your Child Will Encounter:

- **Bravery despite fear:** Understanding that being brave doesn't mean not being scared—it means acting even when you are scared
- **Friendship and loyalty:** How caring about friends can motivate us to overcome our own limitations
- **Different personalities are okay:** Celebrating that people (and chickens!) can be very different and still be friends
- **Finding hidden strength:** Discovering capabilities we didn't know we had when we're truly needed
- **Small but mighty:** You don't have to be big or naturally brave to be a hero
- **Acting when it matters:** Sometimes the most important moments require us to push past our comfort zones

Tip for Parents: This book offers wonderful opportunities to discuss your child's own fears in a gentle, humorous way. Let Mavis's journey inspire conversations about times when your child has been brave, even when scared.

Character Connection Questions

About Mavis

- Why do you think Mavis finds so many things scary?
- How do you think Mavis feels being so different from her friend Marge?
- What makes Mavis decide to help Sandra even though she's scared?



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- Have you ever felt like Mavis, afraid of something but needing to be brave anyway?

About Friendship

- How does Mavis show she's a good friend to Sandra?
- What makes Marge and Mavis good friends even though they're so different?
- How do friends help each other when one of them is scared?
- Who in your life helps you feel brave when you're scared?

Big Ideas to Explore

What Does Bravery Really Mean?

- Is someone who's never scared brave, or is someone who's scared but does it anyway braver?
- Can you be scared and brave at the same time?
- What's the difference between being brave and being reckless?
- When is it most important to be brave?

Facing Our Fears

- What does Mavis find scary? What do you find scary?
- How does caring about Sandra help Mavis overcome her fear?
- What helps people be brave when they're really scared?
- Have you ever done something brave even though you were frightened?

Different Personalities

- How are Mavis and Marge different from each other?
- Is it okay that Mavis finds things scary and Marge doesn't? Why?
- Do you think you're more like Mavis or more like Marge?
- How can friends with different personalities help each other?

Fun Conversation Starters

About the Story

- What do you think "a bright spark of braveness" looks like?
- How do you think Mavis felt when she realized she had to help Sandra?
- What's the funniest thing about Mavis being scared of everything, even daytime?
- If you could give Mavis advice before she has to be brave, what would you say?



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Imagination Questions

- If you lived in the barn with Mavis, Marge, and Sandra, what would your personality be like?
- What other adventures might these barn friends have?
- If you could add another animal friend to the barn, who would it be?
- What would make you feel brave if you were a chicken?

Personal Connections

- What's something you were scared of but did anyway?
- Who is the bravest person you know? What makes them brave?
- When have you helped a friend even though it was hard or scary?
- What makes you feel brave and strong?

Discussion Activities

Bravery Exploration

- Share family stories about times when family members were brave
- Create a "bravery chart" tracking times your child does something despite being scared
- Act out the story with family members playing different characters
- Draw pictures showing what bravery looks like

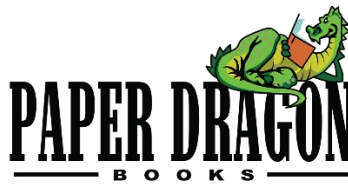
Real-World Connections

- Discuss everyday situations that require small acts of bravery (trying new foods, making new friends, speaking up in class)
- Talk about helpers in your community who are brave (firefighters, doctors, teachers)
- Practice being brave in small ways together
- Celebrate times when your child overcomes fear, no matter how small

Conversation Tips for Parents

Creating Safe Spaces

- **Validate fears as normal** - never dismiss your child's fears, no matter how small they seem
- **Share your own fears and brave moments** - showing that adults get scared too is powerful
- **Celebrate effort over outcome** - praise the trying, not just the succeeding



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- **Use humor gently** - Mavis's story shows how we can acknowledge fears with lightheartedness while still taking them seriously

Encouraging Courage

- **Ask about feelings:** "How did you feel when you were scared? How did you feel after you were brave?"
- **Explore motivations:** "What helped you decide to do it even though you were scared?"
- **Make connections:** "How is that like what Mavis did?"
- **Build confidence gradually:** "What's one small brave thing you could try?"

Making It Personal

- **Connect to family values:** "This reminds me of how our family believes in helping friends"
- **Share family bravery stories** from childhood or from other family members
- **Plan related activities:** visit farms or petting zoos, read other books about courage, create family courage traditions
- **Celebrate all personality types:** emphasize that being cautious is okay and different from being cowardly

Questions by Age Group

For Younger Readers (Ages 3-5)

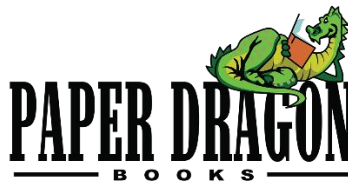
Focus on basic concepts and simple emotions:

- What makes Mavis scared?
- How does Mavis help her friend Sandra?
- When have you been brave like Mavis?
- What helps you feel brave when you're scared?

For Older Readers (Ages 6-8)

Explore deeper themes about courage and friendship:

- Why do you think caring about Sandra helps Mavis be brave?
- How can someone be scared of everything and still be a hero?
- What's the difference between Mavis's bravery and Marge's adventurousness?
- When is it most important to be brave even when you're scared?



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Handling Different Fears and Anxieties

If Your Child Has Many Fears Like Mavis

- Emphasize that Mavis is lovable and valued despite (or even because of) her careful nature
- Focus on how Mavis doesn't need to stop being cautious to be brave
- Celebrate small acts of courage without pressure for big ones
- Acknowledge that being careful can also be smart and safe

If Your Child Is More Like Marge

- Discuss how Marge's adventurousness is great, but Mavis's courage in the moment is equally valuable
- Explore how adventurous people can support more cautious friends
- Talk about times when even naturally brave people feel scared
- Emphasize that different personality types have different strengths

If Your Child Worries About Friends

- Validate that worrying about friends shows caring and compassion
- Discuss age-appropriate ways children can help friends who are in trouble
- Talk about when to get adult help versus handling things themselves
- Emphasize that wanting to help friends is a beautiful impulse

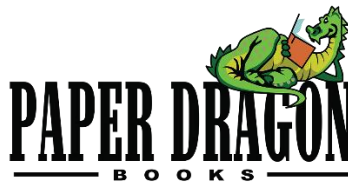
Activity Ideas

Courage Building Activities

- Create a "brave things I've done" book or poster
- Practice small brave acts together (trying new foods, saying hello to someone new)
- Role-play scenarios where someone needs help
- Make brave awards or certificates for family members

Creative Projects

- Draw or paint your own "bright spark of braveness"
- Create a barn scene with all the animal friends
- Write or tell stories about times you were brave
- Make friendship bracelets to celebrate helping friends



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Farm and Animal Connections

- Visit a farm or petting zoo and observe chickens and sheep
- Learn about different animal personalities
- Discuss how farmers take care of animals and keep them safe
- Read other books about farm animals and their friendships

Remember

"Mavis the Bravest" provides wonderful opportunities to discuss fear, courage, and friendship in a gentle, encouraging way. Mavis's journey from fearful to brave shows that heroism doesn't require a personality transplant—it just requires caring enough to act despite fear.

Use Mavis's story as a starting point to explore your child's own experiences with fear and bravery. The book's message—that even someone who finds everything scary can discover courage when it matters—can help children understand that they too have that bright spark of braveness within them.

Most importantly, let the story validate your child's feelings while also inspiring confidence. Being scared is normal and okay. Being cautious is often smart. But when someone we love needs us, we can find strength we didn't know we had. That's what makes Mavis—and your child—truly brave.