



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Who Moved My Cheese? For Kids
An A-Mazing Way to Change and Win!
By Spencer Johnson, M.D. and Christian Johnson

MESSAGE TO ABC READERS

This book was adapted by the author's 12 year old son. Told as a parable, the 4 characters live in a maze and look for cheese to make them happy. Each character represents a different way to manage the changes and challenges they discover in the maze. How they find and eat the cheese defines their resiliency to change. Resilience is an ability to bounce back, recover from adversity or return to your original form. Resilience is built upon 7 building blocks: competence, confidence, support, positive values, contribution to others, coping strategies and personal power. This book will help children view change as a good thing that leads to new opportunities.

Asset Information:

This book builds assets from 7 of the 8 categories:

- **Social Competencies** -#32 Planning and Decision Making and #33 Interpersonal Competence
- **Positive Identity** -#37 Personal Power, #38 Self Esteem and #40 Positive View of Personal Future
- Support -#4 Caring Neighborhood and #5 Caring School Climate
- Empowerment - #10 Safety
- Boundaries and Expectations: #15 Positive Peer Influence and #16 High Expectations
- Commitment to Learning: #21 Achievement Motivation
- Positive Values - #30 Responsibility

In our lesson today, our goals are to:

Help students learn that change happens to everyone.

Help students understand that people handle change in different ways.

Teach students different ways to deal with change and become more resilient.

Discuss the students' upcoming change- what will be different, what will be the same, how they feel about the change.

Teach students that they have control over how they react to change.

LESSON

Definitions:

- **Parable** – A simple story that has a moral or a lesson to be learned.
- **Metaphor** – Represents something else. In this story, "cheese" represents what we want in our lives.

- **Maze** – Symbolizes the places where people look for what they want.
- **Change-** To pass from one phase to another.
- **Resiliency** – The ability to adapt to change.
- **Optimistic** – The assumption that things will turn out well or better than they are now.
- **Pessimistic** – The assumption that things will turn out badly or worse than they are now.
- **Proactive** – They have a *growth mindset*. When shaken up, they react calmly. They are cool and in control. They recognize they can't control everything, but they can control how they react to a problem. This *growth mindset* allows them to see challenges as temporary or fixable.
- **Reactive** – They have a *fixed mindset*. They react swiftly, sometimes without thinking of consequences. They make choices out of impulse. When life shakes them up a bit they explode because they are afraid of failing or don't have practice trying out new solutions. A *fixed mindset* makes challenges seem permanent and unfixable.

Conversation Starter:

Play one of these songs: *Changes* by David Bowie, *Change* by Taylor Swift, *Change* by Carrie Underwood, *Waiting on the World to Change* by John Mayer, or *The Climb* by Miley Cyrus.

Ask these questions before reading the book:

- There are many times in our lives when major changes take place. Can you think of some of those times?
- Have you every worried about a change that was going to happen in your life? What was it and how did you deal with it?

Remember to focus on change and the possible ways to deal with it. Remind the students that change happens to everyone and that there are different ways to deal with change. Not everyone deals with it the same way.

Option 1:

Review all ABC Books

Materials: ABC Student Toolkit for all three years

Quickly review the lessons from all books this year. Ask students to tell you one lesson they remember from each book. Remind students they will be packing their ABC tools and taking them to middle school.

Option 2:

Spaghetti Demo

Materials: piece of spaghetti, or wooden pencil and drinking straw (or pipe cleaner)

Hold up a piece of spaghetti. You can also use a wooden pencil and a drinking straw (or pipe cleaner) instead of spaghetti.

Ask the students:

- Do you think this is very resilient? Why? Why not?
- Which one can get through a maze more successfully?
- What happens if I bend it?

Now what happens to the spaghetti's resilience when it is place in hot water for a while? Talk about a time you acted like uncooked spaghetti and a time you acted like cooked spaghetti.

Talk about how the pencil is not resilient and the drinking straw (or pipe cleaner) is.

People can choose to be resilient as well. When faced with a problem or bad situation, we can choose to react in different ways. (If you did the shaken up soda can and shaken up water bottle activity during The OK Book lesson, remind them of this.)

We can admit defeat or feel sorry for ourselves without doing anything about it.

-- OR --

We can face the problem or bad situation and find ways to fix it or at least change (including ourselves) what we are able to change to allow us to bounce back.

Tips for being resilient: (from the Tips for Resilience handout)

- ✓ Have a friend and be a friend.
- ✓ Believe in yourself and what you know you can do.
- ✓ Take charge of your behavior.
- ✓ Look at the bright side.
- ✓ Set new goals and make a plan to reach them.

Option 3:

Squish It

Materials: Small tubs of play dough for each group, or 15 pipe cleaners for each group

Before we get started on our book, let's have a bit of fun. Hand each small group play dough or pipe cleaners and ask them to make a creation that they will be proud of. Give them five minutes to create. Each team takes one minute to show off their creation.

Quietly assign a "Special Role" to one student on each team. Tell them their job is to "SQUISH IT" when you give them a signal. This will give you some rather realistic reactions to change to use for this lesson. Watch for reactions. Discuss:

1. How do you feel about this?
2. Can you control the fact that they are going to middle school?
3. What can you control?

As Karen Gedig Burnett says in her book *Choose Your Life*, "We control our choices, our thoughts and our actions, but we don't control other people and their choices, and we don't control what the world places on our plate."

Extension

Print the Chinese fortune cookie sayings and choose the most appropriate ones to stick inside the lids of the mini play dough , so that each child can take a container home and also receive a 'feel good' message too.

<http://www.chinese-fortune-cookie.com/support-files/fortune-cookie-quotes.pdf>

Option 4:

Collecting Thoughts

Materials: 2 different color index cards, 2 adults

Pass out a blue and white card to each student. On the blue card have students write what their concerns or worries about middle school. On the white card have students write what they are looking forward to in middle school (hopes and dreams).

Collect the cards. Have one person read and categorize all similar blue and white cards. Save and use with the Pro/Con Discussion Activity. The purpose is to collect the information without embarrassing anyone and to show the students that many of them have the same worries and hopes. Use the information in the cards to discuss during the Pros/Con discussion time.

Read the Book:

Materials: Who Moved My Cheese puppets handout
Introduce the Characters - Sniff, Scurry, Hem and Haw

You may see/hear different reactions from the students during this lesson. Don't be surprised if students listen more than talk. Some students may be ready to go off to a new school; others may be clinging to elementary school and many in between.

Now that we have seen some of our own reactions, let's watch how the characters of this book react to change. At this time, have the children relax, take a deep breath or two and read *Who Moved My Cheese*. Mention that the author's 12 year old son had the idea for creating a kid version of his dad's book for adults and helped him write it.

Discussion:

Remind students that people react to change differently and all reactions are OK (denial, loss, confusion, anger, etc.). How you deal with your reaction is key. People may have different reactions to change as they move through the stages of accepting change:

denial: apathy, numbness, disbelief

resistance: anger, withdrawal, anxiety

exploration: asks for suggestions, gathers information, feels overwhelmed

commitment: problem solving, satisfaction, adapts to changed circumstances

Most of the questions for the discussion are found on page 61 of the book.

1. Why did the characters have to change?
2. How did each character feel and/or react?
3. Which mouse showed the most resilience? Which showed the least?
4. How does each of the characters - Sniff, Scurry, Hem and Haw react when cheese runs out?
5. Do you think Hem changed?
6. Are you like Sniff, Scurry, Hem or Haw?
7. Could Haw change his friend Hem? Or can you only change yourself?
8. What do you do when your cheese is moved?
9. What could your new cheese be?
10. How could you do something new to change and win today?

GROUP ACTIVITIES:

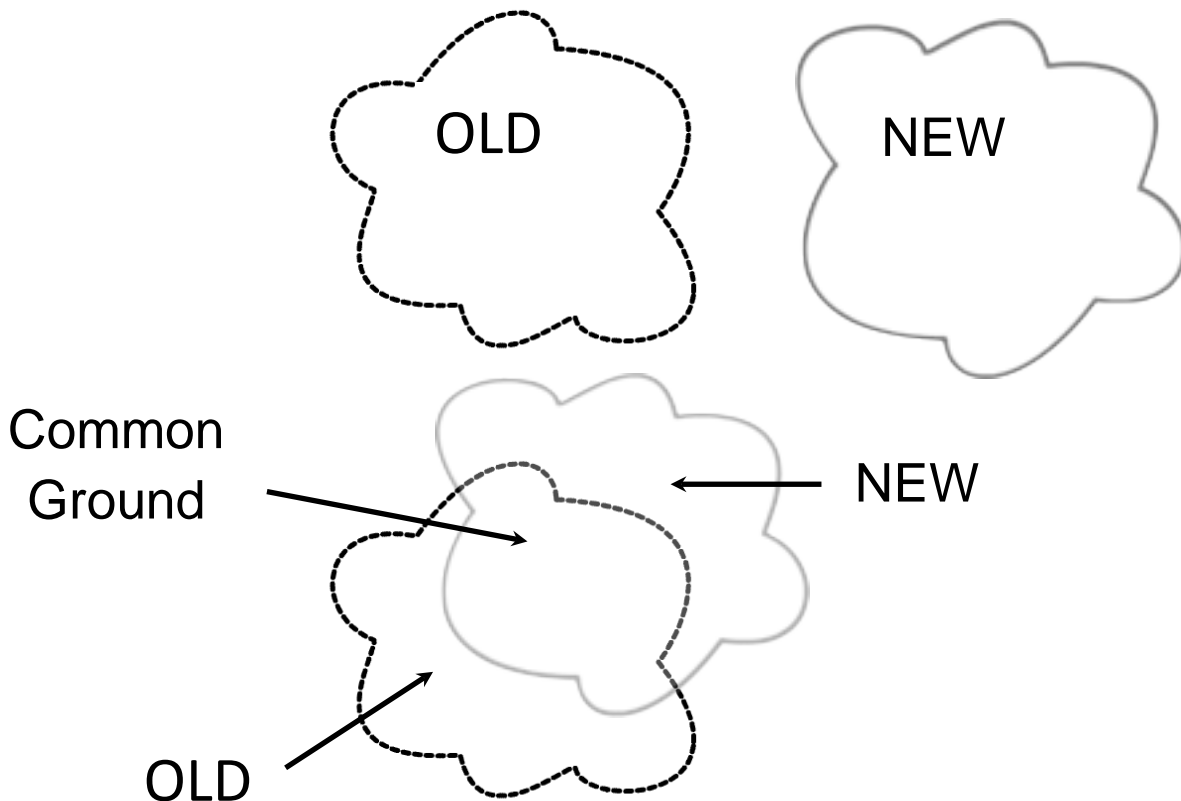
Choose one activity that you feel will work best with the students in your class.

Blob

Materials: Pipe cleaners, enough so each student can have two different color pipe cleaners - if possible keep the colors consistent in the classroom (i.e. - blue is old and red is new), or a piece of paper for each student

Draw the blob diagram on the board, or use pipe cleaners to make the two shapes. Explain that the OLD blob represents how things were before the change, in this case - elementary school. The NEW blob represents how things will be after the change - middle school. Discuss that there is some Common Ground - things that are pretty much the same in middle school as they were in elementary school. Discuss what's lost, what's gained and common ground.

Then have students create their own blob diagram with two different colored pipe cleaners. Have them make one color the OLD and the other color the NEW. Have them overlap the shapes on their desk to complete the diagram. Tell them to decide how tightly their blobs fit together - is there a lot of common ground? Is there a lot lost? Is there a lot gained?



Remind them that each student's blob diagram may be different - this allows them to be sympathetic to others. Consider pair sharing or sharing with the class if time allows.

Pros/Cons with Feelings Discussion

Make a chart like the one below on the whiteboard. Discuss with the students the pros and cons of going to middle school. Start with the cons first to debrief the negative. Capture the feeling associated with the statements. Talk about coping strategies for these worries - use the ABC Tool Kits to help. In order to more easily accept change, it's critical to understand the pros/cons as well as the feeling associated with each. Ask the students, "Are there any other pros and cons?" and keep asking until the answer is no. This discussion can take 30 minutes and please let it. The students may have a lot to share. Also write down ABC tools that students can use to help with this change and their feelings. Be aware the some students are very excited about their upcoming change and others may be dreading it and many feelings in between.

| Cons of Middle School | Con Feelings | Pros of Middle School | Pro Feelings |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
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| | | | |
| | | | |

If some students are overwhelmed by this discussion because of all of the change they will be facing soon, please bring up the concept of "shrinking the change". This is from the book *Switch* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath. Have them think about just one part of their change to middle school and let the others go for a while. For example - focus on just the first day of school and what that means to them, on the first week, etc.

Role-Play

Materials: Cards with characters, scenario handout

Divide the class into groups of 4. Secretly hand each group member a card with the name of one of the characters in the book. Read a scenario from the Scenarios handout. Have each student think of how their character would react. Have one group come up to act out the responses and let the rest of the class decide which character is which.

Change Event Cards

Materials: Change Event Cards

Divide the class into small groups. Hand out the Change Event Cards, giving one to each group. Shout out one of the characters names - Scurry, Sniff, Hem or Haw. Give students time to consider how their character would react to the change on their card. One group then presents a role-play for the class, using the change event as their storyline and demonstrating how their character would react. If time is tight, just have them discuss and not role-play.

Group Shifting Activity

Start doing the Change Event Cards activity and tell groups they can work for 5 minutes. Half

way through have one person leave the group and a new person join the group. Tell them to continue working. Discuss:

How did it feel to be the “changing” member?

How did it feel to lose a member?

How did it feel to gain a member?

Would did the group lose with this change? What did the group gain? Was there common ground?

What can you control about this change? What can't you control about this change?

Discuss how this may happen with friend groups as you move to middle school. These changes may be out of their control, but how they react to this situation is well within their control.

CLOSING

Show this video. It gives the top 10 tips for middle school. It sums up all the things we have been teaching the kids in Cornerstone over the past 3 years, but in a middle school context.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riKfkQjSr4w&feature=related>

Three Minute Huddle

Everyone has an initial reaction or response when change occurs, but we may react some ways sometimes, and other ways other times depending on other things that are going on in our lives

All of these reactions are OK. Just some are more effective for dealing with change
Recognize yourself – be aware of how you're reacting – are you acting like Sniff, Scurry, Hem or Haw?

YOU have the control over how you react. You don't just have to follow your first instinct. Choose to react in ways that will let you deal with change most effectively.

GRADE WIDE EXTENSIONS

Learn about middle school:

Take a tour of the campus while students are in session.

Invite 6th graders come to the elementary school and talk about their transition to Middle School and answer any questions.

Invite 6th grade teachers come to elementary school and talk with students regarding their expectations and answer any questions.

After students get their schedules have them walk around school and find where each class is located and how much time it takes to get from one class to the other. Always have them factor in that it takes longer when there are many students going from class to class.

EXTENSIONS FOR TEACHERS

Three Minute Huddle (Led by teacher)

Here are some ideas to promote self-confidence and *positive self-talk* in your students. As the most important role model in their school day, you show youth how to maintain a positive attitude and *growth mindset*! Look for that special “key” that unlocks a sense of confidence

and helps youth risk developing competence when they try new skills.

- ❖ In the morning line, before walking into the classroom, have the students *stand tall* (shoulders back, smiles on faces, heads up), ready to learn.
- ❖ Practice a class "Confidence Walk" (step lively, eyes open and alert, with a smile).
- ❖ Model *positive self-talk* and encourage your students to use it. Listen for positive statements and reinforce them when you hear them.
- ❖ Encourage students to use *proactive* language. *Notice, name and celebrate* their use of phrases:
 - I'll try it or I'll do it
 - I can do better if I try again
 - Let's look at all our options
 - I choose to
 - There's gotta be a way
 - Look for solutions
- ❖ If you hear *reactive* language, ask your students for ways to rephrase the statement and make it a *proactive* statement. Instead of saying, I can't, rephrase with I wish I could or help them look for other options.

Classroom Enrichment

Journals

Materials: Journal Page worksheet

Use the Journal Page worksheet. Discuss questions or concerns the students have about going to middle school. What have you heard from friends regarding middle school?

Tips for Resilience

Materials: Tips for Resilience

Hand out Tips for Resilience and discuss each of these tips. Ask students to add more tips.

Handwriting on the Wall Cards

Materials: Handwriting on the Wall

Use the handwriting on wall handout - turn this into 7 cards, each group has a card, decide what this phrase means to them in terms of moving to middle school and share with the class. If you didn't do this as an exercise, the teacher can walk through this with the students.

RESOURCES

Books:

- *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson
- *Choose Your Life* by Karen Gedig Burnett
- *Parenting Preteens with a Purpose* by Kate Thomsen, M.S. C.A.S
- *Switch* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath
- *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol Dweck
- *Navigating Through Change* by Harry Woodward

Websites:

- <http://www.stepitup2thrive.com/> for information on theory of change
- <http://mindsetonline.com/> for information on growth mindset by Carol Dweck
- <http://www.anniefox.com/> for more information of teen issues

Video:

- Shows the who moved my cheese book acted out with animation. 2 minutes
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C0M2CL9TJE>
- Here is one from the author of SWITCH: 4 minutes
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpiDWeRN4UA&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PL6D7364A5A9FE0B5A
- From Chicago Bears coach Ditka: 1 minute
- <http://www.YOUtube.com/watch?v=EIHshx7QW44&feature=related>
- 3 minutes: focus on business, but good for all:
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=jwxrsngEJDw>
- *Who Moved My Cheese* movie preview:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aamsXQf8QTQ&feature=related>

Training from Project Cornerstone:

Staff Training

Contact: Ziem@ProjectCornerstone.org

Parent Training

Contact: Lori@ProjectCornerstone.org

Expect Respect student training workshops

Contact: Kelly@ProjectCornerstone.org

Some information from this lesson came from *Navigating Through Change* by Harry Woodward.