



Quote of the day:

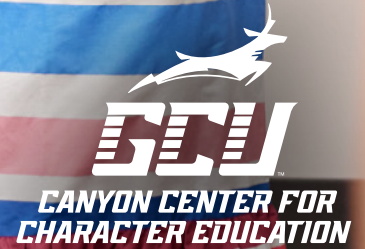
"Always stand on principle
even if you stand
alone"

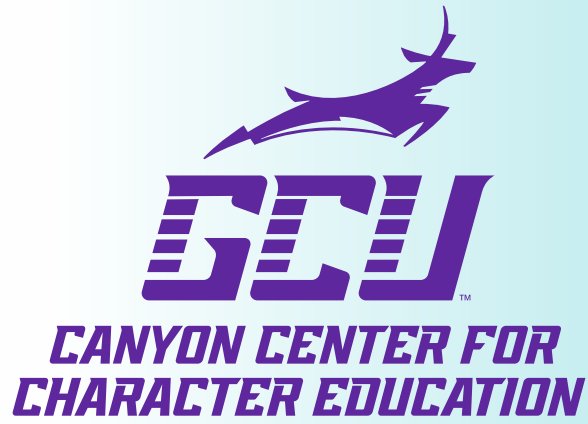
John A. ...
and U.S. P...

This Week

- A) Memorize s
- B) Level up
- C) History C
- D) choose project

ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS: CHARACTER EDUCATION





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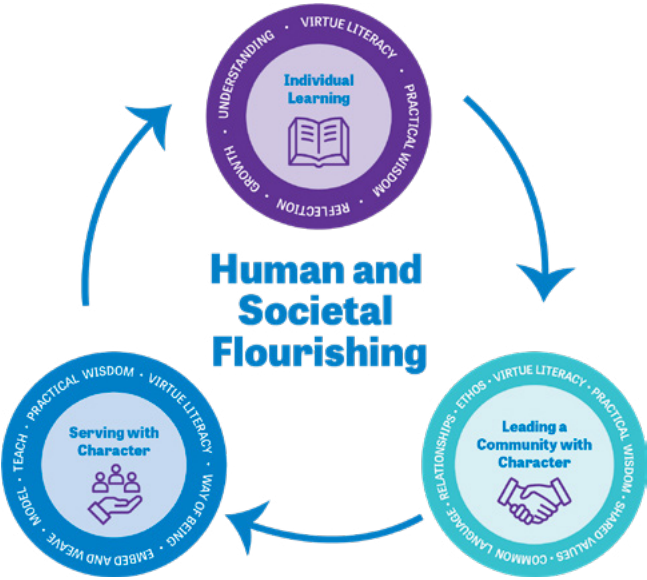
[LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gcu-character-ed)



[@canyoncenterforcharactered](https://www.youtube.com/c/canyoncenterforcharactered)



The goal of the Canyon Center for Character Education is to build a national movement around character education using GCU College of Education’s vast network of students, faculty, alumni and partners to promote school cultures that encourage human and societal flourishing through virtue formation.



USING THIS BOOK

The activities in this booklet are suggestions for how to deploy the actions set forth in the [CCCE Framework for Purposeful Cultures of Character](#). The activities provide practical applications for individuals to use. Activities can be implemented as is or adapted based on the needs of the organization and/or individual. It is critical to note, the activities in this booklet are not a comprehensive character education program and should not be utilized as a sole resource for character education initiatives. Rather, the activities should be used as tools and resources to supplement and/or provide direction for character education. It is recommended to use these activities as practical ideas when implementing a holistic integration of character education into the entire organization. Please consider connecting with the CCCE for additional guidance and/or support when embedding character education into your community culture.

AUTHORSHIP

The activities and applications in this booklet were written by members of the CCCE team, Emily Farkas and Dr. Ashley Betkowski, as well as leaders in the field of education. Each individual that contributed to the development of the booklet has extensive experience in character education in schools. The authors contributed content based on their personal experiences as principals, coaches, researchers, teachers, consultants and educators. Many of the activities were implemented in their own professional settings.

The CCCE would like to recognize and thank the following contributors:

- Dr. Ashley Deckelman
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- Dr. Lance Forman
- Dr. Nnenna Franciamore

Section 1

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Individual learning involves reflecting upon personal character development and professional practices while continuing to apply virtue literacy and practical wisdom in the pursuit of human flourishing. It is important to reflect on who you are and who you want to be in this world in order to model for and teach character to others. Individual Learning activities can be used by leaders or provided to others for personal practice.



As you navigate this book, please refer to the legend that is associated with each section. Each activity page will also align to that section's icon. These five icons come from the actions of each domain in the framework.



Reflect on individual character



Reflect on biases and influences that lead to individual character



Reflect on individual perceptions of practical wisdom, moral goodness and human flourishing



Develop a growth plan for enhancing individual character and virtues



Develop a growth plan for applying discernment in ethical decision making to ensure individual advocacy for diversity and inclusion



REFLECT ON INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER

A CALL FOR COURAGE

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To explore the concept of courage and its role in empowering relationships
- To encourage participants to reflect on their own courage and how they can model and promote it in their leadership and teaching roles

Character Traits Targeted:

Courage

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Projector and screen (or a device for video playback)
- Access to the selected Brené Brown video
- Flipchart or whiteboard with markers
- Notepads or journals and pens for participants

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1. Look at the attached courage defined page and pair up to chat about the key attributes to courage. Bring the pairs back together and facilitate a discussion on the concept of courage in leadership. Encourage participants to share their thoughts on what it means to be a courageous leader and how it relates to empowering others.

Step 2. Introduce Brené Brown and her research on vulnerability, courage and empathy. Watch the selected video clip. After watching, ask participants to reflect individually on key takeaways from the video.

Step 3. Divide participants into small groups and encourage them to share their reflections from the video. Prompt discussion on how the concepts of vulnerability and courage align with fostering relationships that empower others. Reconvene as a whole group and invite each small group to share insights from their discussions.

Step 4. Ask participants to take a moment to reflect individually on a specific area of their professional life where they can exercise more courage. Encourage them to jot down actionable steps they can take.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Dare to Lead - Brené Browne](#)



[Courage Defined](#)

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help adults, and/or students, reflect on the trait of gratitude and to learn ways to foster that as a tool to deepen relationships

Character Traits Targeted:

Gratitude

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Resources included
- Can use as a zoom or print out materials and use in person

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Send out the definition and “pre-work” for participants to be thinking about before your session

Gratitude

The state of being grateful; thankful; the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

Pre-Work

Read the following two articles:



[Five Insights on Gratitude](#)



[Embrace a Positive Mindset Backed by Research](#)

Consider the following questions:

How and how often do you tell others you are grateful for them?
How often do you think about how grateful you are but do nothing to demonstrate it? Why? Think of someone whom you would describe as a truly grateful person.

Step 2: Start the session looking at the definition of gratitude again. Discuss its benefits, including improved mental health, increased happiness and stronger relationships

Step 3: Discuss the questions and readings from the pre-work

Step 4: Guided Gratitude Meditation

Lead participants in a short guided meditation focused on gratitude. Ask them to close their eyes, take deep breaths and reflect on things they are grateful for

Step 5: Gratitude List

Use the quotes provided to read to them for further inspiration. Next, instruct participants to make a list of at least five implications the work of gratitude has on their role and in the classroom

Step 6: Have participants review the provided list of ways to foster gratitude. Each person should commit to one way to practice and make space for intentional moves with this work for the next month. Check on progress through an email with a jamboard Post-it link at the end of the designated time frame

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Gratitude Zoom Resource](#)

ARE YOU GRITTY? EDUCATORS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on your level of grit and how it can be modeled for your students

Character Traits Targeted:

Courage, passion, conscientiousness, resilience, perseverance

MATERIALS



Grit Survey <https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Read the following definition of grit by Angela Duckworth

“Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals. One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn't.

Grit isn't talent. Grit isn't luck. Grit isn't how intensely, for the moment, you want something.

Instead, grit is about having what some researchers call an “ultimate concern”—a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow.

Talent and luck matter to success. But talent and luck are no guarantee of grit. And in the very long run, I think grit may matter at least as much, if not more.”

2. Take the grit survey below to reflect on your personal level of grit. <https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>

3. Reflect on the results from your survey. In what areas can you grow in your grit?

4. In what ways can you model grit?

CLOSING/EXTENSION



Watch this [TED TALK](#) and continue journaling your reflections.

CULTIVATING VIRTUE LITERACY - REFLECTIVE JOURNALING

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The objective of this activity is to engage in reflective journaling to develop virtue literacy and explore the chosen virtue in depth

Character Traits Targeted

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Journal or notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: Inspirational quotes or relevant reading materials on the chosen virtue

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Select a Virtue: Choose a specific virtue that you would like to develop and explore. It could be something like compassion, patience, integrity, gratitude or any other virtue that resonates with you.

Set the Intention: Before you begin, take a moment to set your intention for the activity. Clarify why you have chosen this particular virtue and what you hope to gain from developing a deeper understanding of it.

Reflective Journaling: Review the prompts below and utilize those that are of interest to you as you journal. We encourage you to consider each!

- **Start with a Definition:** Write down your understanding of the chosen virtue. How would you define it? What does it mean to embody this virtue in your daily life? Explore its various aspects and nuances.
- **Personal Examples:** Recall instances from your life when you have witnessed or experienced the chosen virtue. Reflect on how it was demonstrated, the impact it had and the qualities or behaviors associated with it. Consider both your own actions and those of others.
- **Role Models:** Identify individuals, fictional characters or historical figures who embody the chosen virtue. Write about why you admire them, their notable actions or qualities and how they have inspired you.
- **Challenges and Obstacles:** Contemplate the challenges you might face in practicing the chosen virtue. Are there specific situations or circumstances where it becomes difficult to embody? Explore potential obstacles and brainstorm strategies to overcome them.
- **Personal Growth:** Reflect on how embodying the chosen virtue can positively impact your life. Consider the benefits it may bring to your relationships, personal well-being and overall character development. Envision the person you aspire to become through cultivating this virtue.
- **Action Steps:** Identify practical ways to incorporate the chosen virtue into your daily life. List specific actions or behaviors you can undertake to practice and strengthen this virtue. Start with small, achievable steps and gradually expand your practice over time.
- **Weekly Reflections:** Allocate a specific time each week to reflect on your progress. Write about the instances when you successfully embodied the virtue, as well as any challenges or setbacks you encountered. Analyze the lessons learned and adjust your approach accordingly.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Incorporate inspirational quotes or reading materials related to the chosen virtue into your reflective journaling sessions.
- Explore different perspectives on virtue by researching philosophical, religious or cultural teachings that address it.
- Share your reflections with a trusted friend, family member or mentor who can provide feedback or engage in meaningful discussions.
- Create visual representations of your reflections, such as a mind map, collage or drawing, to deepen your understanding and make the process more creative.



IDENTITY MAP

Applicability of the activity:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Participants draw or outline specifics of their identity – related to character – based on their perspective and experiences to share with group as a means to build relationships, get to know one another, or other

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Paper
- Markers, crayons, etc. (optional)
- Post it notes (optional)

PROCEDURES

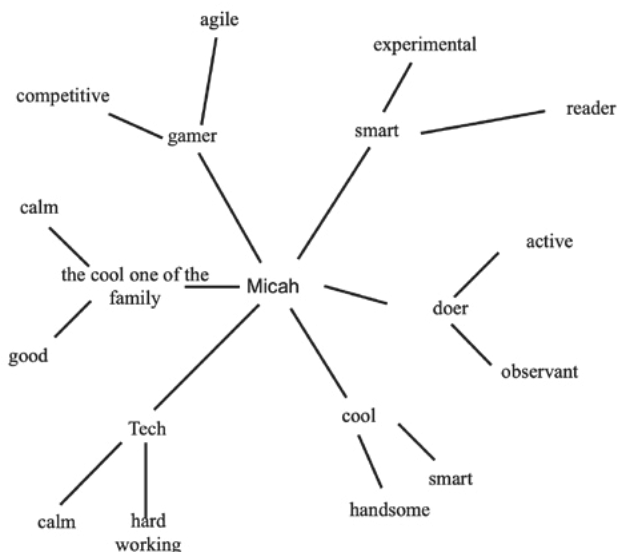
Steps for the Activity:

- Can begin with an example or modeling think aloud about identifying key characteristics of self
- Can provide a prompt to reflect on who you are as a person or qualities and traits you possess
- Participants draw or outline (web map) their identity; this can be done on paper, butcher paper or Post-it notes (allow creativity)
- Participants can wear stickies or place around room, can share drawings or just their thoughts

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Groups can also share the feelings they experienced during activity or how this connected to their character development
- Participants can share how they might use this in their contexts/roles

PICTURES/EXAMPLES





Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To develop and strengthen the ability to empathize with others, improving communication and relationships

Character Traits Targeted

Empathy

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Reflection Journal
- Leading with Character by Jim Loehr

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Empathy and sympathy are not the same. As educators, we routinely and regularly offer sympathy to families in our school. It is something that we tend to naturally do every day. Take this scenario for example: A parent comes to the office and discloses that they are living in a car, have limited food and are not able to bathe or wash clothes. We immediately sympathize with this and offer gift cards to grocery stores, pay for hotel rooms and provide free clothing and non-perishables. That's sympathy at work in our schools. Fast-forward a month later and that child is having behavior and academic challenges in the classroom, the teacher calls a parent conference, the parent accepts the meeting and then the parent doesn't show up. Suddenly, the feeling turns to, "If they only cared enough to show up and get involved, their child wouldn't be this far behind." Whoa! Where did the sympathy go? This is because we easily sympathized but never took the time to empathize. Empathy can be a hard trait to develop because sometimes it requires us to let go of some of our strongly held opinions or paradigms. Jim Loehr says that empathy is the shield against evil in our hearts. When empathy is not allowed to grow, the space in our hearts will be replaced with something else. This activity provides a six-week plan to help you practice and develop empathy.

Week 1: Self-Reflection

- Begin an empathy journal to record your thoughts, feelings and experiences related to empathy.
- Reflect on situations where you've felt empathetic or lacked empathy in the past.

Week 2: Empathy Definition and Understanding

- Read *Leading with Character* to gain a deeper understanding of the concept.
- Identify different types of empathy (e.g., cognitive, emotional) and their significance. Reflect on how you display such types of empathy and ways to enhance your empathy.

Week 3: Mindful Self-Compassion

- Practice self-compassion by acknowledging your own emotions and experiences without judgment.
- Develop the ability to recognize and validate your own feelings by journaling and reflecting.

Week 4: Active Listening

- Focus on improving your active listening skills when engaging in conversations.
- Practice being fully present and attentive to others without interrupting or rushing to respond.

Week 5: Building Empathy Towards Others

- Engage in activities that allow you to step into the shoes of others.
- Consider volunteering or participating in workshops that expose you to different perspectives. Listen attentively and refrain from judgment.

Week 6: Cultural Empathy

- Explore different cultures, traditions and belief systems. Try festivals, literature and meeting others and engaging in dialogue.
- Learn about cultural norms, customs and practices to enhance cultural empathy.

Reference

Loehr, J. (2021). *Leading with Character: 10 Minutes a Day to a Brilliant Legacy*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Set a growth plan by developing goals for improving your empathy. Try setting small, attainable goals for specific actions each month.



REFLECTION OF YOUR OWN CHARACTER

Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on your own character to identify ways to strengthen character traits

Character Traits Targeted:

Reflection, honesty, citizenship, humility, responsibility

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.



- "Character is Destiny" by Robert McGough
- ["Character is Destiny" Reading Guide \(1\).pdf](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This activity is a great way to help a group begin to understand the importance of looking at one's own character. The book can be studied as a PLC, grade level groups, parents, etc.

1. Determine grouping in which the book will be read - professional learning community, book study, parent group, older students - and the time frame allotted for the book. For the purpose of this plan, the book will be divided into three sections to read.

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

2. Determine grouping in which the book will be read (Professional Learning Community), book study, parent group, older students) and the time frame allotted for the book. For the purpose of this plan, the book will be divided into three sections to read.

3. Have participants read chapters one through five in "Character is Destiny" by Robert McGough on their own and complete reading guide for chapters one through five prior to the book discussion meeting.

4. At the book discussion meeting, place participants in groups of three to five people, depending on the size of the group, to use the reading guide for chapters one through five as a small group discussion.

5. After 30 minutes of small group discussion, have one person facilitate a whole group discussion emphasizing the discussion the various groups found would help them reflect on their individual character.

6. Repeat the same process a month later for chapters six through ten and then two months later for chapters eleven through fourteen.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

The purpose of the book is to cause us to think about our own character and ways we can continue to grow in character. Reflect on the reading and discussion with your small groups on ways you would like to grow and strengthen your character.

SELF-PORTRAIT

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The objective of this activity is to allow participants to use creativity in their representation of themselves, as well as gain self-awareness

Character Traits Targeted:

Creativity, self-awareness, honesty, reflection

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Drawing materials
- Paper
- This could be done on digital sketch apps as well

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Participants can be given templates or just blank paper for the activity. Ask participants a series of questions pertaining to their character. With each prompt, the participants draw a visual representation of their response & this can be clarified to use no words or perhaps the facilitator allows graffiti.

Questions:

1. What are you proud of about the person you are?
2. What do you want to improve or change regarding the person you are?
3. What is in your inner self that influences the decisions you make?
4. When you turn 50, 60, 70, what do you hope others say about you at your party?

The group can share with others or visuals can be placed around the room to allow the group to walk around and view the different images and discuss, as in a carousel walkthrough.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

The group can also provide feedback to others through Post-it notes as visuals are hung around the room and discuss feedback.

The activity can be used to reflect on personal character or share with others our character identity.

PICTURES: EXAMPLES



CORE VALUE REFLECTION AND GOAL SETTING

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Staff will reflect on their demonstration of the school's identified core values and set goals to improve their ability to be a role model

Character Traits Targeted:

School's identified core values

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.



- Core Value Reflection Sheet
- Goal Setting Form
- Google Form for follow up surveys
- [\(Possible Core Value Survey\)](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

So many times we ask students to reflect on core values and set goals, however we often do not have our staff, or ourselves, do the same.

1. Work with a team to create a staff core value survey aligned to your school's identified values (example below)
 - Connect to your organization's identified core values
 - Could include information from staff evaluation forms
 - Could be based on area identified by climate surveys as needing improvement
2. Have staff take the survey to determine their current demonstration of core values
3. Work with staff to set goals in their area of choice
4. Follow up with them based on a predetermined time setting (month, quarterly, etc.)

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Have staff set goals and share them with you along with their progress
- Although this could take a while to get, staff could share their goals with families and students to have them help monitor
- Have students take surveys about staff members via Google Form to share their thoughts about how staff demonstrates your school's core values

THE POWER OF A REGULATED ADULT

Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- For teachers and staff to reflect on how they engage with students when they are dysregulated and consider strategies to maintain self control in the classroom

Character Traits Targeted:

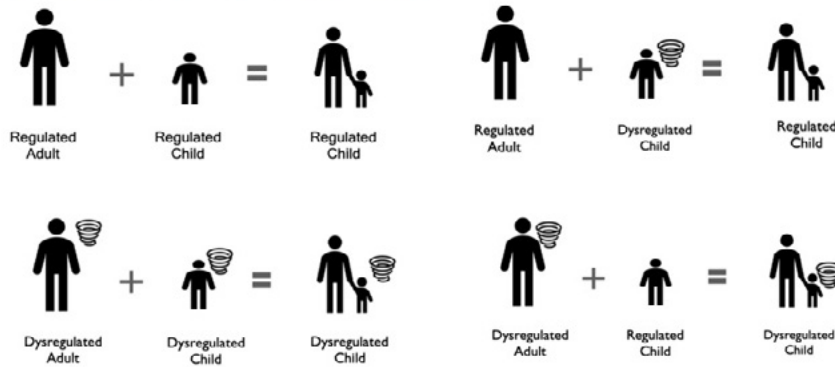
Self control

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Show the image below to educators. Ask them to take some time to reflect on this image.
2. Ask, "What resonates for you when you look at this image?"

Dynamics of Co-regulation



©Center for Cognitive Diversity 2020

3. Ask participants, "Reflect on the times, as an educator, when you might feel dysregulated as you are engaging with your students?"
4. Facilitate a discussion about: "What steps can you take when you feel dysregulated? Why are these steps critical?"
 - a. Perhaps build a chart with strategies and ideas from the group
 - b. Revisit the chart in staff meetings
5. Consider more strategies to ensure that you are modeling self control/regulation in the classroom. Consider getting additional support if you find that you are dysregulated in the classroom more often than not.

WHO I WANT TO BE: MY CHARACTER

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity will help identify who you want to be, your virtue strengths already in alignment and areas for growth

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Paper/ attached worksheet
- Writing tool
- Computer

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Think about a future milestone birthday (20, 30, 40, etc.). Imagine you will have a party with all the most important people in your life there. One of the most important people you admire and value in your life will give a short speech about you. What would you like them to say about you? Jot down some of your ideas and/or write out the entire speech to get a full idea of what you want others to know or remember you by.

2. Highlight the virtues you want to be known for.



3. Take the complementary Values in Action Character Strength Survey. Visit <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/Register>

Look at your top 5-character strengths and reflect:

- Does this surprise you?
- Does this align with who you want to be known as?

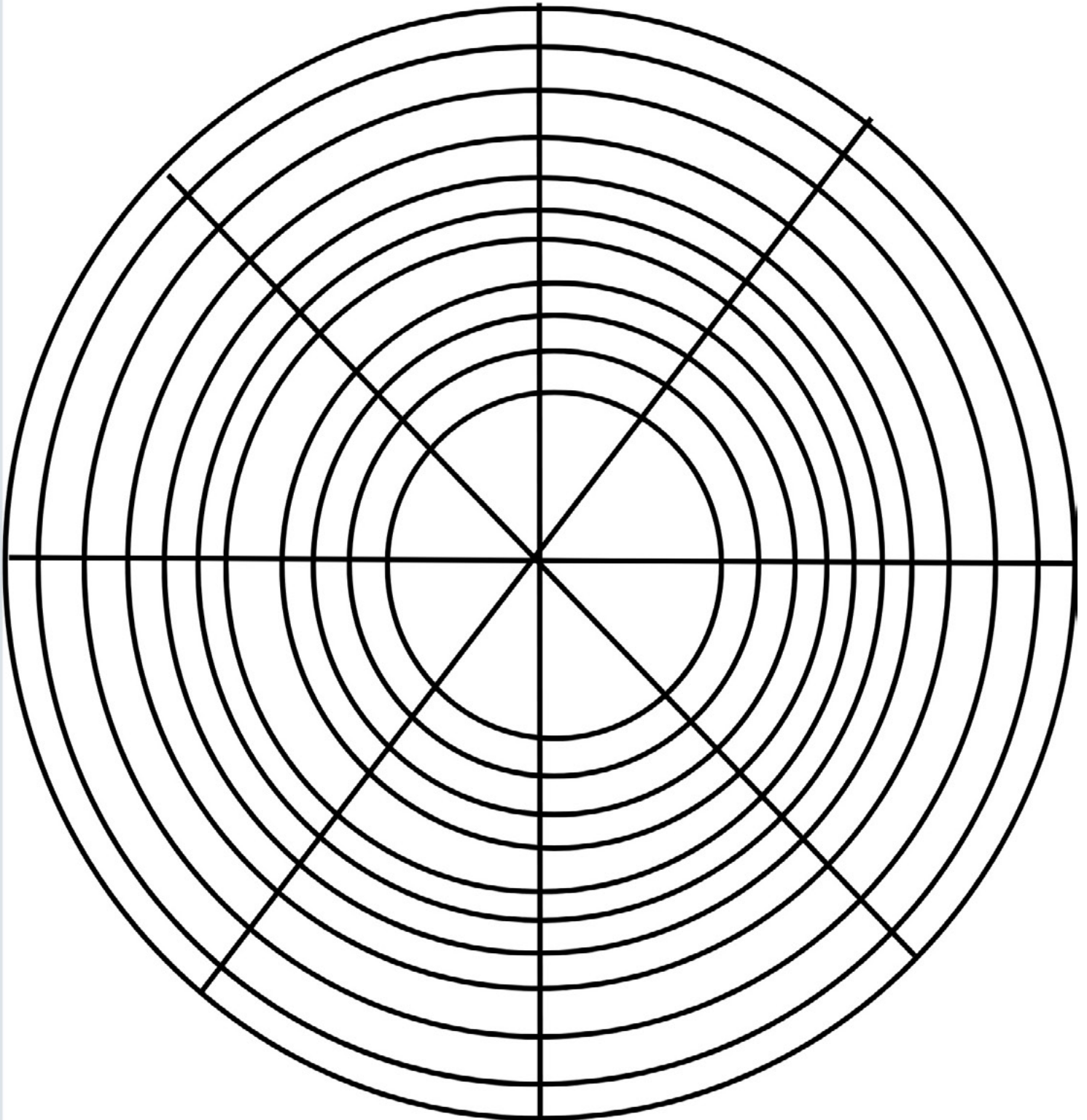
4. Create your Wheel of Life (see attached worksheet)

- Draw a large circle and divide it into 8 equal parts, like spokes on a wheel. Inside that circle, draw nine inner circles.
- Label each pie shaped section of the circle, the 8 parts, with one of the following areas of life: family and relationships, friends and social life, school and education, career and future plans, physical health and fitness, mental health and wellbeing, hobbies and interests, goals and aspirations. Or you can label it with other important aspects of your life.

- Assess your satisfaction with that aspect on a scale of one to ten – 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied. Color that pie piece from the inner circle portion to the outer circle portion according to the associated number on the scale you assigned it. For example, a four would start at the inner circle and color four circles toward the outer circle for that piece.
- Reflect on which aspects of your life have been of most importance and which you may not have focused on. Consider why that is.
- Now, connect your VIA results and self-reflection with your Wheel of Life. For each area in your Wheel of Life, consider which virtue strengths you use or focus on in that aspect as well as which you may have a deficiency or excess of virtue in (refer to 1.2 and the Golden Mean of Virtue Chart for guidance). You can write them down for reference.
- Reflect on the results. For example, is there a connection between an aspect of your life you value most and the virtue strength you display? Is there an aspect of life you could be using a virtue strength more often and would that influence how you value that aspect?
- Finally, what do these results tell you about which virtues you may want to prioritize forming as you aim for living a life of meaning?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Use the knowledge gained to write specific goals for achieving your desired outcomes. Actively practice forming the virtues you aspire to in your life.



YOUR CHARACTER REFLECTION: PERCEPTIONS OF CHARACTER USING FOLK TALES

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Participants will practice reflecting on their own character by looking at the character's of folktales

Character Traits Targeted:

Any

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Selected Aesop Fable
- Posters with character traits of fable character written on them
- Markers/Pens/any Writing utensil
- [Aesop Fable Character Traits Sample](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity: Familiarize yourself with your selected Aesop's Fable. A word of warning: many copies of Aesop's Fables will come with a little moral quip at the end of the story. Try to pay no attention to those. The focus of the staff reflection is to recognize that the traits in the stories are not good or bad, but traits that people have that can, or cannot, be used towards human flourishing. Try to veer away from the "moralistic" readings of these fables and go for more nuanced thinking. If there are character traits that you notice, please add them to the main document.

During Activity:

- Have posters of the character traits hanging up around the room. The posters will have two columns drawn on it under the character traits.
- When participants come in, they read the selected story.
- Then ask the participants to select a writing utensil and go around the room and add their name to the character traits they see in themselves in the left column.
- After everyone has finished, have the participants go around the room and write in the right column the names of other participants that show each trait. This can be done one at a time or all at once.
- Once that has been completed, have each participant find their name in the right column and see if their name is also in the left column.
- You will then lead a discussion about the perception of character and how it is similar/different when you are looking at yourself and at others.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Note: This can be a difficult activity. It requires honesty about yourself and honesty about others. When leading this, make sure to model an emotionally safe environment and consider doing the activity with them.

Extension: This activity can be used with all kinds of stories, not just fables. For more resources, questions and brainstorming, please contact Emilie Rogers at baroque.era93@gmail.com



**REFLECT ON BIASES AND INFLUENCES THAT
LEAD TO INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER**

BIAS AND ITS INFLUENCE: SEEING THE TREES FROM THE FOREST

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Participants will look at optical illusions to reflect on how influence and bias affect our perspectives

Character Traits Targeted:

Honesty, justice, compassion, empathy

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Chosen optical illusion
- [How to Build a Telescope - Left Brain Craft Brain](#)

PROCEDURES:

Steps for the Activity:

1. Participants will look at an optical illusion image. They will determine what they see and why they are seeing what they see. If you are using the telescopes, participants will guess what the whole image is based on their viewpoint. Hold a discussion in small groups or a whole group.
2. Participants will try to see the other side of the illusion with the help of other participants. If you are using the telescopes, have the participants keep them up and have each participant describe what they are seeing. See if they can collectively figure out the whole image.
3. Once participants are finished with the image, wrap up with a reflective conversation about why it was difficult to conclude the entire image accurately with their limited view. This would also be the time to start discussing what bias is, how it affects our character and what the activity and bias have in common. Bias is “a prejudice for or against a person, thing or group and it is associated with a preference that is “unfair” or “a distortion of information.”

Questions you can ask during this part of the activity:

- What is bias?
- What did you think you saw?
- What was it actually once you saw the whole picture?
- Why did you see what you initially observed?
- Was it difficult looking through the telescope?
- How did the limitations of your eyes or telescope affect you?
- Was it difficult or easier to see the other perspective once it was explained to you?
- How did you feel when you saw the other perspective or the full picture?
- How is this connected to bias?
- How does limited perception affect the conclusions we make about people, things or groups?
- How are we able to see other perspectives or the fuller picture of a person, thing or group?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing: Finish the conversation with how to combat bias. Have participants consider what it took for them to see the entire image and how that can be utilized in day-to-day encounters in your organization.

Note: For Optical Illusions two, four, five and six, you can have paper telescopes that limit the participants vision and they have to guess what the whole image is based on their limited perspective.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

[Optical Illusion 1](#)



[Optical Illusion 2](#)



[Optical Illusion 3](#)



[Optical Illusion 4](#)



[Optical Illusion 5](#)



[Optical Illusion 6](#)



MY CHARACTER IN MY COMMUNITIES

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To understand the influence of the communities around you on your character formation

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Paper/ attached worksheet
- Writing tool

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Consider the virtues your family members exhibit.

- Are there some you feel you have instilled due to exposure, or perhaps some you've witnessed and try to avoid?
- What are your family's values?
- Write a list of your family virtues and/or values and compare them to your own. Which matches and which does not?

Your family is your closest social unit. In addition to their moral influence, your community or the people you are surrounded by and identify with, are also influential in moral development.

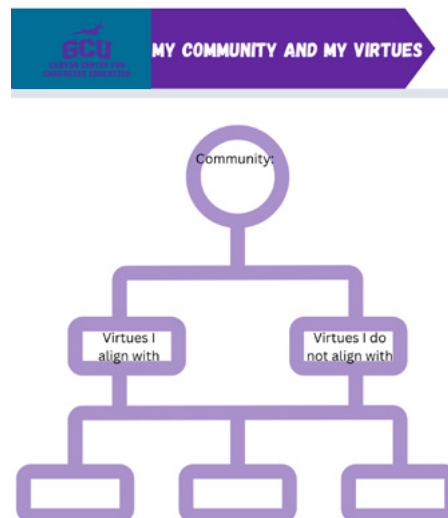
Consider your friends, neighbors, co-workers and the communities you identify with in respect to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and interest based. Each of these communities can influence an individual's character.

Complete the attached worksheet considering the communities you connect with.

- For each community, write the virtues of members within that community you identify with and/or those you do not.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Focus on a classroom or school community if in education. Discuss the present virtues or values and what they mean to each stakeholder.



HOW DIVERSE IS YOUR UNIVERSE?

Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Participants will examine those around them to begin to understand bias

Character Traits Targeted:

Equity

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- “How Diverse is Your Universe?” Sheet (below)
- Stickers if you use it as written
- M&Ms, Skittles, Jelly Beans (optional)
- “5 Minute Quick Write” sheet (page 2 of the handout below)
- Clear Cup

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Determine if you will use the sheet as written or use M&Ms, Skittles or Jelly Beans to represent colors outlined. You may change the colors on the chart based on the items you choose.
- Have a slide to open the session that sparks thoughts about how those around us make up our universe and have participants privately predict: “What percent of the time would you anticipate you are interacting with people outside of your own ethnicity/race?”
- Have participants put stickers on the circle on the handout or fill their cup with corresponding colors of candy.
- Depending on the audience, possibly create a presentation that has each of the questions from the worksheet on a slide and helps participants as they put the candy in their clear cup.
- Ask participants to quietly reflect on the questions using the 5 minute Quick Write.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

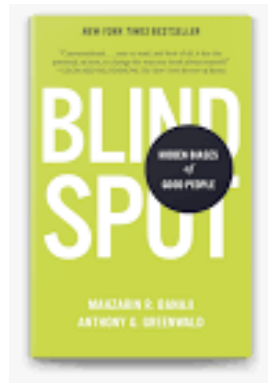
Some participants may feel things when looking at their cup and seeing one color. Work to help them as it really isn't about guilt, but rather understanding how our circle of influence could affect biases.

Extension: Participants can engage in a book study using *Blindspot*. This leads to good conversations and has a test to further look at implicit bias.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[How Diverse is Your Universe?](#)



RIVER OF LIFE

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity can be done individually and then shared out into groups for discussion and relationship building or it can just be individual reflection and understanding

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies by results of activity. Provokes vulnerability, reflection, self-awareness, honesty

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Paper
- Drawing or writing items

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Provide participants individual time in silence to consider their life to date, thinking about key points in their life that they recall, that influenced them, they are proud of and/or feel were not their greatest moment.
- Tell participants to draw a river as if it were their life. They can interpret that in any way they want. Some may choose to simply draw a timeline, some a winding river, some with scenery and pictures. Anything they use to represent their life is important to who they are. Allow variations and openness in creativity.
- This activity is used to identify key influential moments and people in developing your character
- After, the participants can reflect on what their visual representation includes and you may choose to have participants share their rivers/timelines in group discussions to learn more about one another, build relationships, promote empathy, etc.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



REFLECTION ON IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION BIAS

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Determine, acknowledge and reflect on areas of implicit bias to minimize the impact of bias

Character Traits Targeted:

Compassion, self-control, humility, integrity, responsibility

Grade Levels:

High school students, undergraduates, graduate students or faculty

Assessment (If applicable):

Written Reflection of Implicit Association Scores

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.

Computer with Internet



[Project Implicit Preliminary Information](#)



[Implicit Association Reflection Guide](#)



[Explicit and Implicit Bias Presentation](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. In a whole group, give a three to five minute overview of explicit and implicit bias, what it means and how it can impact us. Use the Explicit and Implicit Bias Presentation above.
2. Individually, have each person access the Project Implicit Preliminary Information above.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click "I wish to proceed" after reading the information about the tests.
4. Select one of the 14 tests listed that is of interest to you to take.
5. Complete an implicit bias test.
6. After taking and receiving the scores of the selected implicit bias test, complete a reflection based on your scores using the Implicit Association Reflection Guide.

OPTIONAL: At a predetermined time, small groups of three to four people can share implicit bias reflections from the reflection guide during a 30-minute time slot. Discussion helps reinforce thoughts, gives new perspectives and provides accountability.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Explicit biases are biases one knows they possess and can work to have less of a bias. It can be controlled. Implicit biases are biases a person is not aware of which makes it more difficult to change a bias you don't know you have. Using assessments and reflection to determine implicit biases will lead an individual to be aware of biases so they can work to minimize bias behaviors.

SELF-REFLECTION: EXAMINING PERSONAL BIAS AND PREJUDICES

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Learners will take a brief assessment to help measure their bias and prejudices. Learners will use those results to reflect on the results and how it may impact their leadership

Character Traits Targeted:

Leadership, cooperation, responsibility, respect, courage, self-awareness

Assessment:



Self Assessment
[Test Yourself for Hidden Bias](#)

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



[Bias & Prejudices Self Reflection Sheet](#)

Writing utensils

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

You can choose to do this activity individually or with a leadership team. If completing this activity as a team, have each individual take the assessment first and bring their results with them.

Prior to taking the assessment, read about implicit and explicit biases, using one of the following websites:



[University of Utah Health-Implicit and Explicit Bias](#)



[Learning for Justice-Reflecting on Our Own Biases](#)



[Perception Institute: Science & Perception](#)

There are many different categories for the assessment. If completing this as a team activity, you may choose to have everyone complete the same assessment or leave the option up to them. They may also complete more than one assessment.

Upon completion of the assessment, utilize the results to answer the questions on the [Self-Reflection form](#). This topic can be touchy and can cause big emotions with people. If you choose to discuss this among a team at all, please be sure that you model the appropriate behavior and show your own vulnerability. Do not force anyone to share who is uncomfortable.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

When you have completed your Self-Reflection form, put it aside for a few days. Revisit it and then do the same things in another week. Reflect on how acknowledging your biases have changed your thoughts and behavior. Continue to revisit your results, thoughts and ideas, as needed.

Extension

These are additional assessments that you can take to check your biases.



[Bias Reality Check](#)



[Non-Conscious Negativity Bias](#)



[What Do You Know about Unconscious Bias?](#)

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS / RESOURCES



[Test Yourself for Hidden Bias](#)



[Self-Reflection-Assessment Results Analysis](#)



THE ETHICAL BUDDY SYSTEM

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

Professional Development Activity
Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Cultivate confident and capable discernment with regard to diversity and inclusion advocacy in school

Character Traits Targeted:

Justice, prudence, practical wisdom

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



[List of ethical questions](#) OR



[ICED: Approach to Moral Dilemmas](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Research shows discussing ethical dilemmas in community supports the development of practical wisdom and perspective taking. By sharing moral dilemmas, educators can find strategies for navigating daily decisions.

Before Activity:

- Before participating in this activity, the lead would need to determine if this is a school-wide requirement or a volunteer activity. If you choose the volunteer option, create a sign-up procedure.
- Ask participants to think of a dilemma they recently faced and would like to discuss with someone else to problem solve.
- If you would like to see the dilemmas, concerns or reasons for participation beforehand, a questionnaire would be helpful for staff member pairings. Pairing can be done before the activity for time's sake.

During Activity:

- Participants will be paired with other participants. If a questionnaire was filled out before the activity, participants can be paired according to need or randomly. If you have people who have a lot of experience with advocacy or ethical decision making for equity, then pairing those participants with newer professionals might also be a good option.
- After pairings are complete, the lead will determine which pairs have a dilemma from their life that they would like to discuss with their buddy. If there are pairs that do not have a dilemma, the lead will assign a dilemma to them. You may look online or use a resource for examples. Also consider using AI to find dilemmas.
- Pairs will be given a set time to share their thoughts with each other and discuss their experiences, different perspectives, what virtues are in conflict with one another, etc.
- Leads will offer a list of questions that could be asked when wrestling with an ethical dilemma or ethical question that involves diversity or inclusion.
- Participants can be encouraged to take notes if it is helpful to them.
- After the allotted time, the whole group will come together and discuss if they so choose, share their topics and hear what others are working through as well. During this time, the lead can remind participants to keep ethical dilemmas with students and staff anonymous.
- This portion of the ethical buddy system is primarily to provide participants with the communal support and a recognition that they are not alone. However, if all the topics are ethical dilemmas of a sensitive nature, the lead can opt out of this portion of the activity.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing:

A follow-up between ethical buddies might be necessary depending on the type or severity of the ethical dilemma. Part of individual advocacy is following through with a proposed solution. Ethical buddies who put solutions into practice might find it helpful to meet again and discuss the results of their advocacy action, the consequences, or factors that were brought up that were not discussed before.

Extension:

This activity can be a regular meeting, a one time meeting where participants have the same ethical buddy all year, or a meeting that is called when someone has a question or dilemma that requires discernment with advocating for diversity and inclusion. In the last option, the participant who asked the question can remain anonymous and the ethical buddies can all discuss the same topic as pairs and as a group. This can be tailored to the needs of each organization.

If you have any questions, please contact Emilie Rogers at baroque.era93@gmail.com

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

The following texts have ethical dilemma exercises:

- Case Studies for Educational Leadership: Solving Administrative Dilemmas 2011 Stephen Midlock
- Leadership Case Studies in Education, 3rd. edition 2022 Peter Northhouse & Marie Lee
- Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education: Applying Theoretical Perspectives to Complex Dilemmas, 5th edition 2022 Joan Shapiro & Jacqueline Stefkovich
- Ethical Decision Making in School Administration: Leadership as Moral Architecture 2009 Paul Wagner & Douglas Simpson

List of Ethical Questions (QR code in materials)



[30 Moral Dilemmas](#)



[Moral Dilemma Question Guide](#)

THE LEADERSHIP COMPASS ACTIVITY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help staff identify their own and others' leadership styles
- To help staff strengthen self-awareness and explore areas of growth
- Provide more profound understanding of why people approach tasks in a specific manner
- Provide suggestions on how to work with each leadership style

Character Traits Targeted:

Self-awareness, honesty, courage, leadership, accountability

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [The Leadership Compass Self-Assessment](#)
 - Copy pages two and three for staff
 - Copy pages four and five separately; do not hand out until the conclusion of the activity
- Writing utensil
- Four large pieces of butcher paper

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Prior to Staff Meeting

1. Hang up four pieces of butcher paper around the room with each of the following words on one piece of paper: north, south, east, west.

During Staff Meeting

1. Explain the objectives of the activity to staff members.
2. Have staff members read the boxes under each direction word.
3. Ask them to place a check mark in the box next to the statements that describe their work habits. Encourage them to choose only the ones that describe them more often than not.
4. Tally the number of checkmarks for each section and place it in the star next to the section.
5. Explain to staff that the star with the highest number of checkmarks is their dominant leadership style.
 - a. Many people also have secondary and tertiary styles, if the numbers are very close.
6. Once staff have identified their primary style, have them go to the butcher paper with the corresponding direction.
7. Explain to the groups that they have about 5 minutes to list both the strengths of their leadership style, as well as the pitfalls of the style.
8. Once all groups are finished, have each group take a turn to share their results.
9. Once all groups have shared the results, hand out pages four and five of the document.
10. Discuss with the staff each of the different styles' ideal working relationship and the dangers of having only one style of leadership in a group.

After the Staff Meeting

1. Have each staff member copy the “Approaches to Work/Work Style” and cut out the direction that was their primary style.
2. Have each staff member post the page outside of their doors so that all staff members can reference it as needed.

If you need more information, or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Tell staff members that you will continue to do activities to help them learn about themselves and one another. Ask them for any ideas for activities that they may have.

Extension

Staff members can create a list of ideal tasks for their leadership style, as well as the tasks that they most dislike or feel the most inadequate completing.



YOUR LABELS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To understand that we all carry labels but we are all human and all loved

Character Traits Targeted:

Empathy, compassion, reflection, open-mindedness, vulnerability, civility, kindness, love, humility

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Video (below)
- Stickers or Post-it notes
- Writing items

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:



- Have participants use Post-it notes to write labels of who they think they are and place them on their body
- Watch "[The labels we carry](#)"
- Allow participants to remove any labels they do not want to carry
- If participants are willing, discuss emotional connection, reflection, feeling, etc.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Have participants explain how these labels have shaped their character and how their biases have led to labeling of others.

PICTURES



YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY: A SELF-REFLECTION OF BIAS IN PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Participants will write personal histories using guiding questions to reflect on hidden biases or influences that affect their character

Character Traits Targeted:

Justice, humility, honesty

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Bias Narrative Survey
- Character Biases Graphic Organizer
- Writing utensils
- Extra paper

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

- This activity can be done in a group or privately. While this can be used to talk about any bias, this survey is built to also consider individual aspects of character. It is not necessary to pick out specific character traits.
- It is also fine if you only want to use the survey or the organizer. The survey is a way to provide more detail and give more room for participants to tell their story, while the organizer is to help provide concise thoughts and a clear “cause/effect” that can be beneficial for wrestling with biases.

During Activity:

- Pass out survey and graphic organizers.
- Have participants start with the survey and have extra paper ready in case they need more room for writing.
- Once they have completed the survey, have them fill in the organizer with the important information from the survey.
- If appropriate, participants and lead can have a group discussion or one-on-one meeting to go over the activity.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Extension: If needed, this activity can be broken up into multiple parts or used as a character development exercise for staff members when discussing the core character traits of your organization.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Self-Reflection Bias Survey](#)



[Character Bias Graphic Organizer](#)



**REFLECT ON INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM,
MORAL GOODNESS AND HUMAN FLOURISHING**



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Individuals will create a personal creed

Character Traits Targeted:

Self-awareness, accountability, responsibility, leadership

Grade Levels:

5-12, adults

MATERIALS



- [Directions for Creating a Creed](#)



- [Creating a Personal Creed Worksheet](#)



- [Sample creeds](#)
- Writing utensils
- Paper

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This process can be used for creating a personal creed as well as a group or team creed. This activity may also be used with students as well as adults.

Prior to Activity

1. Have sample creeds available for staff members to view.

During Activity

1. Explain what a creed is and the purpose for creating one. Information can be found on the attached document.
2. Have staff read some of the sample creeds that you have prepared for them. You may choose to include personal creeds as well as group creeds, depending on your goal.
3. After staff have looked at the examples, give them the directions for creating their own personal creed. Follow the directions on that sheet and provide them the attached worksheet for organization.
4. Stop after each step and give time for reflection, questions and feedback.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

Provide time at the conclusion of the activity for anyone who is willing to share to do so. These will not be perfect; merely first drafts.

Extension

You may choose to write a group creed together first to help staff better understand the purpose. You can do this as an entire school or in grade-level or subject area teams.

After the first meeting where your team does this activity, you can schedule a follow-up meeting to allow them time to revise and perfect their creeds. Time could be given to allow staff to use construction paper to write and design their creed to display in a place of their choosing.

FINDING YOUR PURPOSE | ADULTS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

Professional Development Activity
Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help staff members identify their purpose and find their “why”

Character Traits Targeted:

Self-awareness, honesty, courage, self-discipline

Grade Levels:

Adults

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Copies of Start with “Why” handout](#)
- Writing utensils



- [Simon Sinek's TED Talk](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Have staff members view [Simon Sinek's TED Talk](#).
2. Following the TED talk, give staff five minutes to complete the “what” and “how” circles on the [Start with “Why” handout](#).
3. Take the next five-10 minutes to analyze your “what” and “how.”
 - a. Why does “what” and “how” you do your job truly matter to people?
4. Now give staff members about five minutes to create their own “why” statement.
5. Have staff members share their “why” statements with the group. Do not force participation in this part of the activity.

If you need more information or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

Remind staff members that our purpose should be forefront in our minds. What we do matters – we educate people!

Extension

Staff members can use this to lead into creating a new mission statement for their team or your school as a whole.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

[Start with “Why” handout](#)

References:

Missouri Leadership Development System.

Sinek, Simon. *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2009.

HUMBLE LEADERSHIP

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To engage adults in a fun and interactive way while exploring the understanding and practice of humble leadership qualities

Character Traits Targeted:

Humility

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Humility podcast](#)



- [Podcast notes](#) (digital journal)

- Index cards or small pieces of paper
- Pens or markers
- A hat or container to hold the index cards

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Start off by listening to the podcast, beginning at min 17:30 and going through 26:00.

Step 2: Use the digital leadership journal for participants to do some personal reflection as they listen to the discussion on humility. Encourage them to think about where they are in their own journey of humble leadership.

Step 3: Share out takeaways from listening to the podcast to generate a consensus for why humility is important in leadership.

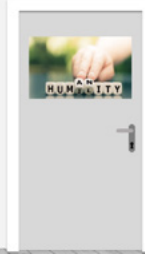
Humble Leadership Challenge Activity

1. Prepare index cards or pieces of paper, enough for each participant.
2. Write different scenarios or leadership challenges on the index cards. These scenarios should revolve around demonstrating humility in leadership roles. Examples:
 - Giving credit to a team member for their idea during a meeting
 - Seeking input and feedback from team members before making a decision
 - Acknowledging and apologizing for a mistake made as a leader
 - Listening actively and empathetically to a team member's concerns
3. Begin by explaining the rules of the game to the participants.
4. Instruct each participant to draw one index card from the hat or container. This card contains a scenario or leadership challenge.
5. Participants must act out the scenario or challenge on their card without explicitly revealing it to others.
6. Other participants observe and guess the leadership quality being demonstrated (e.g., humility, active listening, openness to feedback).
7. Encourage a lively discussion after each performance where participants can share their observations and insights.
9. After the game, facilitate a discussion on the importance of humility in leadership roles.
10. Encourage participants to share their thoughts on how the demonstrated qualities can positively impact teams and organizations.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

On Humility... ?

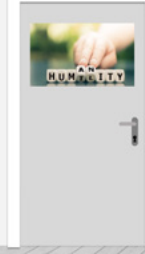
- A humble leader is really remembering you are human
- Acknowledges one's own limitations and mistakes
- Recognizes the value of others, and seeks their help
- Asks questions; invites input
- Openness to critical input
- Willing to change/improve



Podcast Discussion... ?

Join your small group and pick one person to pull up the podcast and screenshare so your group can listen to 8 or 9 min of the podcast we put in the chat (from 17:30-26:00). Open up the journal and make a copy so you can work on your individually... answer the guiding questions and have some discussion within small groups about the importance humility in your job!

[On Humility - 9 min](#)





Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Write a reflection on someone's character that has impacted you

Character Traits Targeted:

Integrity, neighborliness, honesty, perseverance, compassion, community, motivation, leadership, gratitude, curiosity, service

Grade Levels:

6-12

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Computer or paper and pencil
- [Learning by Example Graphic Organizer](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Students will use the writing process to produce a written reflection about someone in their lives they admire. The person should be someone that has impacted their lives directly.

1. Pre-activity: Teacher shares about someone they admire and how that person impacted their life. Give examples of virtues you saw in the person as you tell the story.
2. Brainstorm: Have students write a list of the names of people they admire that have directly impacted their lives and character traits of that person. Use the supplied Learning by Example Graphic Organizer, pen and paper or a word document. Select one person from the brainstorm list to complete this activity.
3. Graphic Organizer: Complete the graphic organizer that asks students questions about their selected person as to why they admire them (step three).
4. Reflective Writing Essay: Use the information from the graphic organizer to help write an essay highlighting the virtues of the person that has impacted you.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Options:

1. Students could interview the person or a family member they write about for this assignment.
2. The essays could be read at a school or community event.
3. Students could present a bound copy to the person or a family member.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To engage teachers in the practice of the 5 Whys technique to explore and deepen their understanding of important questions related to self-awareness, their choice of profession and character education in schools

Character Traits Targeted:

Many can apply

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Question sheet (below)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Welcome participants and provide an overview of the workshop's purpose.
2. Explain the objectives: To practice the 5 Whys technique and deepen understanding of key questions.
3. Share some background on this process, for example:

The 5 Whys technique is a problem-solving and root cause analysis tool often associated with Lean methodology. This method involves asking "why" five times, or more if necessary, in response to a problem or issue to uncover the underlying causes or factors contributing to it. By repeatedly asking "why," it helps teams or individuals move beyond surface-level symptoms to identify the root cause of a problem, allowing for more effective solutions and preventive measures. The 5 Whys technique encourages deeper exploration and understanding of complex issues to drive continuous improvement in processes and systems.

Activity 1: Self-Awareness

4. Present the first question: "Why is self-awareness so important when leading people?"
5. Explain the 5 Whys technique: Participants will ask "why" five times to explore the underlying reasons for their initial response.
6. Facilitate a discussion where participants share their initial thoughts and responses to the question.
7. Divide participants into small groups and have them practice the 5 Whys technique for this question.
8. Reconvene as a large group and encourage each small group to share their insights and conclusions.

Activity 2: Choice of Profession

9. Present the second question: "Why am I in the field of education?"
10. Repeat the 5 Whys technique, allowing participants to explore their motivations and reasons for choosing education as a career.
11. Facilitate a brief discussion where participants share their initial thoughts on their choice of profession.
12. Encourage participants to practice the 5 Whys technique individually or in pairs for this question.

Activity 3: Character Education

13. Present the third question: "Why does character education matter in schools?"
14. Apply the 5 Whys technique to delve into the significance of character education in the school setting.
15. Facilitate a group discussion where participants share their initial perspectives on character education.
16. Invite participants to practice the 5 Whys technique independently for this question.

Reflection and Discussion

Lead a reflection discussion on the insights gained from the 5 Whys activities. Encourage participants to share any revelations or shifts in perspective they experienced.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share with the participants the link to the virtues in action website to take the self assessment. Encourage them to apply the 5 why technique to some of the findings from their survey.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



[5 Whys video](#)



[Question sheet](#)



[Character Strengths Survey](#)

PHRONESIS: NAVIGATING RIGHT AND WRONG

Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To develop practical wisdom by reflecting on challenging and unclear situations

Character Traits Targeted:

Honesty, integrity, perseverance, reasoning

Grade Levels:

This is for adult personal development

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Tennessean news article](#) (or related article)
- Reflection journal

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Developing phronesis, or practical wisdom, is an iterative process that involves action, reaction, reflection and recalibration. This process involves, at times, failures and mistakes, but what makes us stronger and better able to address challenges in the future is through reflection of our decisions, outcomes of our decisions and unintended consequences we may have caused. Where do we find the answer amid the gray areas of our days where there is no clear path forward. How do we make decisions that may be acceptable according to policy but may not be morally good or promote the common good. Furthermore, how do we decipher “right and wrong” and how do we affix those labels to circumstances we face?

Introduction

For this activity, you will need a news article detailing a financial or procedural violation or case in a public school. You may use this article regarding a school in Nashville, TN or you may find your own article. If you intend to use your own article, simply search “school fraud” or a related search term and relative articles should populate in the search results.

[Read the fraud article](#) and take time to do some further investigation into the matter. If you are using your own article, do some deeper research on the situation to see if you can find differing opinions on the topic or other related stories. Consider these reflection questions after reading the article:

- What policy violations, if any, occurred at this school?
- While the school was eventually closed, were there actual financial fraud violations occurring at the school?
- Do you think the actions of the school leader in the article were wrong? How do you know?
- What, specific, action or behavior can you point to in this case that was wrong? Can you align with that action or behavior with violation of a law?

After reflecting on the article and considering the reflection questions, make an entry to your reflection journal by responding to the following prompt:

- How do we know something is wrong when there was no violation of law?
- How do we navigate right or wrong when the rules don't explicitly state what is right or wrong?
- What is your moral compass? What is guiding your perceptions of right and wrong? What helps you navigate difficult situations? And how would you have avoided the situation in which the principal in the article found himself?

IS YOUR PURPOSE A NOBLE PURPOSE?

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help adults learn the difference between a purpose and a noble purpose and connect that to their individual leadership approach

Character Traits Targeted:

Noble purpose

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Attached resource sheets
- Paper, journals and pens

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Read the article below to prime the pump about the difference between purpose and noble purpose. After reading, ask participants to jot down a couple key takeaways or things that resonated with them.

Step 2: Have the group circle up and share out their takeaways. Facilitate a discussion about the reading and their reflections. Push the thinking about why a noble purpose is essential for their current role and how it may change or shift the work they do.

Step 3: After the discussion, read the attached sheet about discovering your noble purpose out loud to the group.

Step 4: Individually have each participant work on beginning a draft of their noble purpose.

Thinking about the 4 guiding principles listed below along with the reflections from the discussions and reading, start a beginning draft statement of your noble purpose. Don't get too caught up in the perfect wordsmithed statement, but rather get to the core idea of your why.

1. Intention to accomplish something
2. Intended accomplishment must be meaningful to oneself
3. The intention must serve others and the world beyond oneself
4. It is motivated by compassionate love and morality

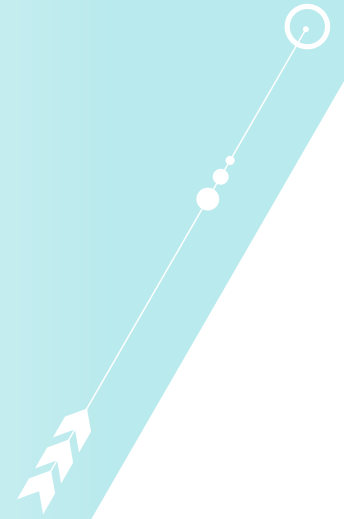
PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



[Five Steps to Finding Your Life Purpose article](#)



[Discover your noble purpose](#)



DEVELOP A GROWTH PLAN FOR ENHANCING INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER AND VIRTUES

ADULT SURVEY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Using feedback to reflect on your character and develop a growth plan

Character Traits Targeted:

School core values

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Survey

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Note, this activity can be used for anyone in leadership looking to improve based on feedback from peers.

- Leaders of the school will give all staff members this survey.
- The survey is on a scale of 1-5 (strongly disagrees to strongly agrees)
- Survey questions include:
 - It is my impression that <your name> fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community cooperation
 - It is my impression that <your name> has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students
 - It is my impression that <your name> recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments
 - It is my impression that <your name> is an advocate and spokesperson for the school and all stakeholders
 - It is my impression that <your name> makes it a priority to foster caring attachments among adults within the school community
 - It is my impression that <your name> fosters a positive and professional adult culture
 - It is my impression that <your name> works to enhance trust between the staff and the school community
 - It is my impression that <your name> adapts her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent
 - <Your name> demonstrates our school's core values of
 - <List core values here>

CLOSING/EXTENSION

After your staff completes the survey, reflect on your individual character and develop a growth plan based on this information

- Consider areas of improvement
- Consider staff needs
- Consider school needs
- Make small goals leading to a larger goal
- Determine what you can do daily, weekly, monthly and/or quarterly to achieve the goals.

TEACHER AND GRADE LEVEL TEAM IMPLEMENTATION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Using a common framework, teachers will reflect on their implementation of character focused development

Character Traits Targeted:

All identified by school

Assessment (if applicable):

Use a checklist or scoring guide

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Framework to guide self-assessment (Character.org 11 Principles)
- Time for teams to individually assess and then assess as a team
- Goal Sheets for teachers to write a goal in the area they want to focus on
- Rubric for teachers and teams to assess their work

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- As a school team, identify a framework (linked below) you would like to use to assess your implementation of character education. This activity is based on the 11 Principles from character.org because it is used to recognize schools of character.
- Have teachers assess their implementation based on a scale from 1-4.
- Have teachers reflect on their strengths and areas of improvement for their classroom, grade level team and school.
- Based on results, have grade level teams set goals for improvement of implementation. Teams should also make recommendations for school-wide improvement for the school climate team.
- Create an action plan based on identified goals.
- Re-assess the implementation each semester.
- Adjust goals as needed.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

If your students are old enough, they could provide feedback using the rubrics based on what they see in their class and school.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[11 Principles for Schools](#)



[11 Principles Scoring Guide](#)



[Canyon Center for Character Education Framework](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To develop a growth plan for specific character traits

Character Traits Targeted:

Targeted traits depend on the individual's traits selected to grow

Grade Levels:

9-12, adults

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Computer and internet for online VIA assessment
- Character Strengths Goal Sheet

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

As Dr. James Arthur from the Jubilee Centre states, "Character is caught, taught and sought." This is an opportunity for you to do just that – see what you have caught, what you have taught and to seek. To aid in achieving this mission, please complete the following:



1. Take the VIA Character Strengths Survey at <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>.

You will need to register for a free account. The character strength survey will take approximately 15 minutes.

2. Save your results in a PDF or Word document.

3. Ask two coworkers or people that know you well to take the survey online about you. They will also need to create a free account and save the results in a PDF or Word document.

4. Analyze your self-assessment results and the results from your coworkers.

5. Complete the Character Strengths Goal Sheet that will ask you to list some of your character strengths and to select one or two character traits you would like to make stronger based on all survey results.

6. Have a conversation, based on the goal sheet, with a trusted colleague or mentor about the results. You do not need to share the specific results with your colleague or mentor if you do not feel comfortable doing so. This is an opportunity to have a conversation with a trusted individual about your character growth goals and someone to provide accountability as you work towards those goals.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Gaining feedback from others, self-reflection and having a plan are important things to do to grow in areas of character. Sharing your plan with others provides support and accountability as you work on strengthening character traits.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS (IF APPLICABLE)



[Character Strengths Assessment and Goal Sheet](#)

REFLECTING ON CORE VALUES

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on your core values and consider the level of impact they presently have in all areas of your life

Character Traits Targeted:

Accountability, humility

Grade Levels:

Highschool, professionals

MATERIALS



[Dare to Lead List of Values](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Look at this list of values in the link below/QR code above.
2. Select your top 10 values, what is important to you. If there is something from the list missing, feel free to add it.
3. Narrow it down to your top five by crossing out five of the 10 you selected.
4. Then narrow it down to three.
5. Reflect: What do the three top values tell you about what is important to you? How do your selected values impact the different areas of your life (Home, work etc.)?
6. Reflect: How can you intentionally ground yourself in these values over the next few weeks?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Practice what you decided and come back to this in a month or two. Re-do the activity and see if your core values shift from season to season.

GOAL SETTING SURVEY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create character goals in the workplace via a bullet point survey/self-reflection tool

Character Traits Targeted:

Any

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Pencils or pens
- [Goal Setting Survey](#)
- Plenty of Time

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

- If helpful, you can opt to have the questions from the survey posted somewhere and participants can write in their own journal or document.

During Activity:

- Participants will spend time answering the questions of the survey.
- After participants have finished, have them split up into small groups and discuss their answers. The goal of the small group will be for participants to listen to others, find commonalities and build a safe community around character development.
- To help build this type of community, it is encouraged that the activity leader takes the survey at the same time and shares their strengths and struggles with the participants.

For workplace leaders: This activity is a good time to relate and listen to subordinates. Listen to see if you can support them in their character goals.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

After Activity:

Set regular meetings with participants. It can be their small groups, one-on-one, etc., anything that is sustainable for your workplace. Regular meetings can be once a month, once a quarter or it can fit within an established professional development schedule.

GRUB AND GROW: EXPLORING SELF-AWARENESS AND UNPACKING BIAS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To introduce teachers to the concept of a book club approach for professional development, emphasizing self-awareness and bias examination

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Copies of relevant readings (e.g., can be research articles, blog posts, practical implementation articles, podcasts etc.)
- Handouts or access to resources on self-awareness and bias.
- Journal
- [Grub and Grow](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Introduction to Grub and Grow Book Club

- Begin by welcoming participants and introducing the concept of the “Grub and Grow” book club.
- Explain that the focus will be on personal growth, self-awareness and bias examination.
- Share the learning objectives for the overall process (five meetings a year)

Step 2: Material Selection

- Discuss the chosen readings for the work ahead, explaining why it was selected and how it aligns with the objectives.
- Encourage participants to express any other ideas they may want to share on topics

Step 3: Group Discussion on Self-Awareness and Bias

- Facilitate a group discussion on self-awareness and bias.
- Use prompts to initiate the conversation, such as “What is self-awareness and why is it important in our personal and professional lives?” and “How can biases affect our decision making and interactions?”
- Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences.

Step 4: Launching the “Grub and Grow” Model

- Explain the structure including the frequency and duration of meetings (e.g., five times a year, one and a half hours per session).
- Discuss logistics, such as where and how meetings will take place (e.g., we will be meeting at a different

restaurant each time).

- Set expectations for participation and engagement.

Step 5: Initial Meeting

- Schedule the first meeting
- Provide guidelines for reading and preparing for the discussion.
- Encourage participants to jot down notes on self-awareness and bias each time they read.

Step 6: “Grub and Grow” Meeting 1

- Host the first book club meeting in a comfortable, relaxed setting with snacks and refreshments. You organize the place for the first one and then ask for others to plan the next ones.
- Facilitate the discussion by asking open-ended questions related to self-awareness and bias within the context of the reading.
- Encourage participants to share their reflections and insights.

Step 7: Meeting Closure

- At the end of each session use an exit ticket of a square, triangle and circle. What squared with you in this session? What are three points you are taking away and what questions are still circling in your mind?
- Encourage a few people to share out based on time.
- Provide information about future meetings.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help staff develop and practice expansive listening skills, which enhance their ability to understand, empathize with and effectively communicate with students, colleagues and parents

Character Traits Targeted:

Compassion, empathy, kindness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Paper
- Markers
- [Expansive Listening](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Activity 1: The Listening Spectrum

- Draw a spectrum on the whiteboard, ranging from “Selective Listening” on one end to “Expansive Listening” on the other.
- Discuss the differences between selective listening (hearing but not fully engaging) and expansive listening (fully focusing on the speaker).
- Ask participants to reflect on their own listening tendencies and place themselves on the spectrum.

Activity 2: Empathetic Listening Pairs

- Pair up participants.
- Instruct each pair to take turns speaking about a topic that is personally important to them for 3 minutes while the other listens expansively without interrupting or offering advice.
- Afterward, ask the listeners to share what they learned about their partners’ experiences.

Activity 3: The Listening Challenges Game

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Provide each group with a list of listening challenges (e.g., “Listen without interrupting,” “Listen without giving advice,” “Listen to understand emotions”).
- Instruct each group to discuss and come up with strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- Have groups share their strategies with the whole group.

Activity 4: Role-Play

- Assign roles to participants: one as a teacher and the other as a student, parent, or colleague.
- Have the participants engage in role-play scenarios where they practice expansive listening skills in different educational contexts (e.g., parent-teacher conference, student-teacher interaction).
- After each role-play, ask participants to reflect on what they did well and what they could improve regarding expansive listening.

Activity Wrap-Up and Discussion:

- Reconvene the whole group and discuss the challenges and benefits of expansive listening in the education field.
- Share handouts with expansive listening tips and techniques for further reference.
- Encourage participants to set personal goals for improving their listening skills and incorporating them into their professional lives.

Follow-Up:

- Encourage continued self-reflection and skill development in listening.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To develop and strengthen the virtue of kindness by fostering a more compassionate and considerate attitude towards oneself and others

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Personal reflection journal

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Kindness may seem as though it is an easy trait to model and exemplify. Who wouldn't want to be kind, after all? It is much more difficult to be kind in the face of unkindness.

How do we respond when people are not kind to us? Being kind when others are not is not easy. Feelings of anger, retaliation and even hate can creep into our lives when we do not actively pursue, embrace and model kindness.

Listed below are several activities that you can practice over the course of a month to develop and strengthen this trait.

Week 1: Self-Reflection

- Begin a kindness journal to document your thoughts and actions related to kindness.
- Spend time reflecting on past experiences where you could have been kinder to yourself and others.

Week 2: Practicing Self-Kindness

- Identify areas in your life where you are self-critical or self-judgmental.
- Each day, practice self-compassion by replacing self-criticism with self-affirming thoughts and actions.

Week 3: Mindfulness Meditation

- Start a daily mindfulness meditation practice to enhance awareness of your thoughts and emotions.
- Focus on cultivating self-awareness and non-judgmental self-observation.

Week 4: Random Acts of Kindness

- Begin performing daily acts of kindness towards others.
- Keep a kindness log to record your actions and the reactions of those you help.

IDENTIFYING YOUR OWN CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Identify your core character strengths and how you can use these strengths to flourish

Character Traits Targeted:

All

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Internet access



- [The Science of Character video](#)



- [The VIA Character Strengths Survey](#)



- [The VIA Classification of Character Strengths](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Begin by watching [The Science of Character video](#)
2. Sign up to take the free [VIA Character Strengths Survey](#). Your results will be emailed to you.
3. Reflect on your top five character strengths and how you use these in your work.
4. Journal or discussion idea: How am I using my character strengths now? How might I use these strengths more? Complete this sentence: "I can build upon my character strengths by . . ."
5. What new insight have you gained from watching the video and taking the survey?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Participants can journal or create a personal list of character strengths to keep in a visible place: day planner, wallet, computer, post-it note etc.

TIPS FOR USING CHARACTER STRENGTHS IN A NEW WAY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on individual character strengths and choose one to focus on
- Reflect on how you currently use this character strength
- Reflect on how you could use this strength more frequently or in new ways
- Build connections and community through small group discussion

Character Traits Targeted:



- Varies based on results of the [VIA Strengths Finder](#)

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Your VIA survey results
- [Tips for Using Each Character Strength in a New Way handout](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Note: Please complete Individual Step 1: VIA Character Strengths Survey before beginning the following activity.
2. Print this: [Tips for Using Each Character Strength in a New Way handout](#) (also linked above). Read the tips for how to use each of the 24 character strengths in a new way. Research shows using your signature strengths in new ways can lead to increases in happiness and decreases in depression for up to six months.
3. Identify one of your signature strengths for the focus of this lesson.
4. In a small group or personal journal, reflect on these prompts:
 - What is one way you have used this strength in the past month?
 - Who in your life has helped foster this strength?
 - What is one thing you could do this week to further develop this strength?
 - How could this strength help you achieve a goal you have?
 - Can you think of a time when you could have used more of this strength?
 - How do you think the world would benefit from more of this strength?
 - Is it possible to have too much of this strength?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Develop an action plan for further development of this character strength and how you will measure your growth. In a conversation with a trusted colleague, share the character strength on which you have focused and how you plan to continue to develop it.

Share your action plan with your trusted colleague and ask them to serve as an accountability partner.

Check in with your accountability partner and celebrate successes and offer support for challenges encountered.

Adjust your action plan as necessary.

At the conclusion of this activity, celebrate with your accountability partner and set a new goal!

FINDING MEANING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:


- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on individual character strengths
- Reflect on how you experience meaning in your life
- Develop an understanding of the six character strengths that have a strong correlation to meaning
- Reflect on how you could cultivate meaning in your life
- Build connections and community through small group discussion

Character Traits Targeted:

 Varies based on results of the [VIA Strengths Finder](#)

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

 [Building a Meaningful Life by Boosting 6 Character Strengths](#) handout

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Research shows that cultivating meaning and purpose in your life can make you happier, healthier and more resilient in the face of challenges. Character strengths can provide a pathway to increase meaning in your personal and professional life. There are six strengths that have a strong correlation to personal meaning: spirituality, appreciation of beauty and excellence, curiosity, gratitude, perspective and social intelligence.

Reflect on these prompts in a partner or small group discussion or journal.

1. What is one thing you can observe to increase your appreciation of beauty and/or excellence?
2. How can you increase your level of curiosity? List several ideas.
3. How can you boost your social intelligence?
4. What steps can you take to fine tune your ability to see the world through a different lens or viewpoint?
5. List three positive things that happened today.
6. Have you tried meditation? What strategies have you employed to develop a meditation practice?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share your experiences in cultivating meaning in your life with a trusted colleague.

Develop an action plan for further development of one or more of the six character strengths that are correlated with an increased sense of meaning.

Using your preferred method of note taking, record your action plan and a timeline for implementing the steps of your action plan.

Share your action plan with your trusted colleague and ask them to serve as an accountability partner.

Check in with your accountability partner and celebrate successes and offer support for challenges encountered.

Adjust your action plan as necessary.

At the conclusion of this activity, celebrate with your accountability partner and set a new goal!

WORD OF THE YEAR MEDALLIONS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To identify one word that you plan to focus on for the year pertaining to personal growth

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Medallions (paper, plastic, etc.)
- Art supplies

PROCEDURES:

Steps for the Activity:

Scaffold prompts to help participants identify their “one word” for the year (there is a book on One Word)

- This word should be something they plan to focus on throughout the year pertaining to self-growth

Prompts:

1. Write down as many words you can think of that are something you can think of that you want to focus on throughout the year (ex: reflection, pause, cherish, strength, joy)
2. Separate the words into categories (ex: high and low priority, positive and negative, action and noun)
3. Choose one category to focus on
4. In the category, select the top three words
5. Consider actual needs and steps to enact the top three words throughout the year
6. Choose one word that you want to focus on most

Use art supplies to create medallions to represent the one word

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Can hang medallions, share out selections and revisit the medallions throughout the year to discuss progress.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS/ EXAMPLES





**DEVELOP A GROWTH PLAN FOR APPLYING DISCERNMENT IN
ETHICAL DECISION MAKING TO ENSURE INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY
FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Objective 1: To develop an appreciation for other perspectives and experiences
- Objective 2: To develop discernment skills to support marginalized communities or those with different experiences from our own

Character Traits Targeted:

Appreciation, justice, love and mercy

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Brené Brown on Empathy: [Brené Brown on Empathy](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Begin with an entry in your personal reflection journal by responding to this definition of cultural competence:

Cultural competence is the ability to understand, appreciate and effectively interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, gender and socioeconomic status.

- Focus your reflection on the portion of the definition that deals with “understanding and appreciating” another’s perspective and experience.
- Where might you be falling short with understanding?
- Where might your empathy be running thin for what others are facing?

Watch the Brene Brown clip on empathy and reflect on what this means to you. Add these reflections to your journal entry from above:

- When have you passed judgment on a particular group or individual?
- When have you sought to be understood before understanding?
- When have you displayed sympathy without empathy?

Next, find someone who has a different life experience from you or is a member of a different community. This may be a colleague, parent, or community member. For this activity, it is best to not use students due to legal or ethical issues related to information/data collection from minors. Request a time to interview the individual or family to start a discussion. This interview can be wide-ranging, but if you are struggling with where to begin, start with the perspective of school since that is a common language you can both speak. Send the questions in advance and consider the following as you get started:

- What was school like for you growing up?
- What is your best memory of school? Worst?
- Did you feel like you were accepted in your school community? Why or why not?
- What challenges or barriers to success have you had to overcome?
- Did you feel welcome in the school? Why or why not?

These are just conversation starters. The question stems can help you dive deeper into conversation as long as the individual is willing to discuss.

After the interview, compare your findings with your responses in the reflection journal from the beginning of the activity. Consider these reflection questions for your journal:

- What did you learn from a different perspective that helped you fill gaps with empathy and understanding?
- How do these findings impact your actions in the school community?
- What policies, procedures, or school communications from your classroom or school perpetuate the feelings expressed in the interview?
- What might you do to address these issues of equity and perception in the policies, procedures and communications?

EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES: A JOURNEY OF OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- “Exploring Perspectives” is an interactive activity designed to help you develop virtue literacy, particularly in the area of open-mindedness
- Throughout this activity, you will engage in a series of exercises and reflections to broaden your understanding, challenge your assumptions and cultivate an open mind
- Let’s embark on this journey together

Character Traits Targeted:

Open-mindedness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Journal or notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: other people for discussion

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

*These activities can be completed over multiple days or weeks, depending on your preferred pace.

Exercise: Step into Different Shoes

- Choose a topic or issue that you hold a strong opinion about.
- Research opposing viewpoints on that topic. Explore articles, blogs, videos or interviews from reliable sources.
- Take notes on the key arguments, evidence and perspectives you encounter. Try to understand the underlying values and motivations behind these differing viewpoints.
- Reflect on how these alternative perspectives challenge or expand your own understanding of the topic.
- Write a short summary of your findings and insights from this exercise.

Exercise: Seek Out Diversity

- Identify an area of your life where you lack diversity in your experiences, such as the books you read, the people you interact with, or the media you consume.
- Select one aspect of that area and make a deliberate effort to diversify it. For example:
 - If you usually read fiction, explore non-fiction or books from different cultures.
 - If your social circle is homogeneous, seek opportunities to connect with individuals from different backgrounds.
 - If you predominantly follow a particular news outlet, explore alternative sources that provide different perspectives.
- Engage with these new experiences and perspectives. Take note of how they make you feel, what you learn and how they challenge or confirm your existing beliefs.
- Reflect on the value of diversifying your experiences and the impact it has on your open-mindedness. Consider incorporating these diverse experiences into your regular routine.

Exercise: The Socratic Dialogue

- Choose a topic or question related to open-mindedness that you find interesting or challenging.
- Set aside some uninterrupted time for self-reflection and introspection.
- Imagine having a dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor who holds a different perspective on the chosen topic.
- Write down the questions they might ask and the responses you would provide.
- Engage in a thoughtful and open-minded conversation with this imaginary interlocutor, challenging your assumptions and exploring alternative viewpoints.
- After the dialogue, reflect on the insights gained and any shifts in your perspective.

Exercise: Embrace Cognitive Dissonance

- Identify a belief or assumption that you hold strongly.
- Purposefully seek out information, research or arguments that contradict or challenge that belief.
- Engage with these conflicting ideas without immediately dismissing them. Allow yourself to experience cognitive dissonance and discomfort.
- Analyze your emotional reactions and cognitive biases that may arise when confronted with contradictory information.
- Reflect on how this process impacts your open-mindedness and ability to consider alternative viewpoints.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

After completing these exercises, take some time to reflect on your journey towards developing open-mindedness.

Consider how your perspectives have evolved, what challenges you encountered and how these experiences have influenced your overall approach to understanding differing viewpoints.

Write a personal reflection on your growth and commit yourself to integrating open-mindedness into your daily life.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To develop and strengthen the virtue of prudence by making more thoughtful and wise decisions in various aspects of life

PRUDENCE

Grade Levels:

This is for adult learning

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Reflection journal

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Phronesis is the meta-virtue that guides our decisions and helps us navigate particularly challenging moral situations. The practice of phronesis, or practical wisdom, is an iterative process throughout the course of our lives that we are continually refining through a process of action, reaction, reflection and recalibration. Are there some traits that can assist us in this cycle? Which character trait(s) may be particularly important when making decisions? Prudence is such a trait and it involves thoughtful decisions, considering long-term consequences and exercising sound judgment. Practical wisdom fills in the gaps in this process and helps us recognize and understand how competing virtues may be vying for our attention and decision. Prudence, however, helps us use thoughtful considerations as we weigh the options.

This activity includes some mindfulness exercises to help you think through the decisions you are making. Remember, reflection is the key to prudence and decision making. Robert Greenleaf said that foresight is an issue of ethics. If we don't know where we'll end up after making the decision before us, then we'll wind up in a place we don't need to be. Prudence and the thoughtful cycle of reflection helps us build foresight.

Week 1: Self-Reflection

- Begin a prudence journal to document your decisions, their outcomes and your thought processes.
- Reflect on past decisions and their consequences. Consider the following prompts:
 - How have major decisions I have made in the school delivered unintended consequences.
 - Did I act fairly?
 - Did I consider all perspectives and experiences before making the decision?
 - How might have a barrier been erected between me and the families in the school from unintended consequences from my decision?

Week 2: Understanding Prudence

- Study the concept of prudence and its importance in decision-making.
- Read *Leading with Character* and *The Servant as Leader*

Week 3: Mindfulness and Decision-Making

- Start a daily mindfulness practice to enhance self-awareness.
- Pay attention to your thought patterns and emotions when faced with decisions.

Week 4: Developing Decision-Making Criteria

- Identify your core values and long-term goals.
- Use these as a foundation to create a set of criteria for making prudent decisions.

Week 5: Decision-Making Scenarios

- Practice applying your decision-making criteria to everyday scenarios.
- Consider how your values and goals influence your choices and influence and impact others.
- Note that applying decision-making strategies and considering how your choices impact others requires a great deal of empathy. If you are struggling in this area, consider practicing the strategies in *Personal Development: Empathy*.

UNPACKING SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY: FOSTERING AUTONOMY AND EXPLORING STRUCTURE AND CONTROL

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help teachers understand and apply the principles of self-determination theory, emphasizing the importance of providing structure and routines in the classroom to support student autonomy

Character Traits Targeted:

Many will apply

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Handouts or access to resources on self-determination theory
- Whiteboard, markers and sticky notes
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Case Study (attached)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Introduction to Self-Determination Theory

- Introduce the concept of self-determination theory, emphasizing the role of autonomy in motivation and learning.
- Share the learning objectives for the session.

Step 2: Understanding Autonomy and Structure

- Facilitate a discussion about what others understand autonomy and structure in the classroom to be.
- Clearly define autonomy as students' sense of control and choice in their learning (as opposed to the teacher's)

Step 3: Self-Determination Theory Principles

- Provide handouts or access to resources outlining the key principles of self-determination theory, including autonomy, competence and relatedness.
- Discuss how these principles relate to classroom practices.

Step 4: Autonomy and Classroom Structure

- On a whiteboard or chart paper, create a chart with two columns: "Autonomy Enhancers" and "Classroom Structure."
- Ask participants to brainstorm and share strategies and practices that enhance autonomy while maintaining classroom structure.

Step 5: Case Study Analysis

- Present a classroom case study that highlights the tension between providing structure and fostering student autonomy (attached).
- In small groups, ask participants to analyze the case and suggest strategies to strike a balance.
- Encourage groups to consider the principles of self-determination theory.

Step 6: Sharing and Discussion

- Reconvene the participants and have each group share their analysis and strategies.
- Facilitate a discussion on the challenges and benefits of maintaining a structured classroom while promoting student autonomy.

Step 7: Make a Commitment

Ask each participant to reflect on their teaching practices and identify one specific action they can take to enhance autonomy in their classroom while maintaining structure.

Invite participants to share their action plans or commitments with the group.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Follow-Up:

- Encourage participants to implement their action plans and schedule follow-up sessions to discuss their experiences and share successes and challenges.
- Continue to provide resources and support for teachers as they work toward fostering autonomy in their classrooms through effective structure and routines.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



- [Classroom Case Study](#)



- [Dr. Frugo Structure Vs Control clip](#)



- [Self Determination Theory Video Clip](#)



- <https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/>



- For more videos, handouts and content to refer to, check out the asynchronous course through GCU: [Character Education - Leading with Virtue 5: Self-Determination Theory and Character Education](#)



... named
... with in G
... and gave
... job. But other
... of Daniel.

... Daniel, they made
... pit with hungry lions.
Daniel was in the pit all night
long. He prayed to God.

Section 2

LEADING A COMMUNITY WITH CHARACTER

Leading a community with a culture centered around character involves gathering stakeholders to develop a shared vision and core values, creating a shared language, fostering relationships and “a way of being” focused on character formation. The continued review and enhancement of the initiative with all stakeholders involved, as well as continuous training and support will bolster the implementation of character education. By employing practical wisdom and cultivating that in others, the community will flourish. Leading a Community with Character activities can be used by leaders and/or leadership teams with all stakeholders of the community.



As you navigate this book, please refer to the legend that is associated with each section. Each activity page will also align to that section's icon. These five icons come from the actions of each domain in the framework.



Gather organizational stakeholders as a community to participate in the development and enhancement of a positive ethos centered on character



As a community of diverse stakeholders, develop a shared vision with common values, language and purpose concentrating on cultivating character and human flourishing (consider the four domains of virtues: intellectual, civic, moral and performance that lead to practical wisdom and human flourishing)



Foster relationships that empower others to lead, model, teach and seek character



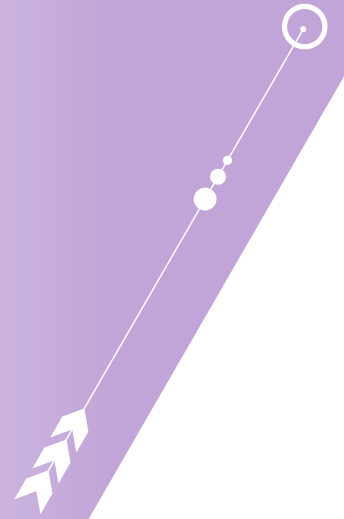
Implement a character initiative across the organization



Continue to implement and provide ongoing training and support for community stakeholders



Continue to evaluate the initiative to drive growth



**GATHER ORGANIZATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS AS A
COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT
AND ENHANCEMENT OF A POSITIVE ETHOS CENTERED
ON CHARACTER**

COMMUNITY PANEL

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To increase community voice within our character education program

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Purpose of this panel:

- To share a framework of plans for character education/social emotional development in our school and get your feedback as community leaders regarding what we can do better and how we can enhance our work at school to help our students and school serve our community.
- We would like to work with you to help reach outside the walls of insert school name. Your leadership in helping us grow our impact outside of our school is key to helping our students grow and learn how to serve others in a way that makes a difference for everyone.
- How can community leaders work with our classes and students as they learn about our area's needs so they may develop community service learning opportunities to meet our area's needs.

Steps:

- Determine which community members you would like to invite on your community panel. Suggestions include: first responders, business owners, mental health workers, district leaders, etc.
- After establishing the community panel, determine dates of meetings (two to three times per year) and how you will meet (virtual/in-person).
- After you meet, send out a follow-up email for those who were not able to attend.

Suggestions:

- Hold both types of meetings (virtual and in-person).
- Record the virtual meetings.
- Leave the conversations/topics open-ended.
- Establish goals and agenda prior to the meetings.

DEEP KINDNESS BOOK STUDY

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Work together to study what “Deep Kindness” is and how we can be better at being kind

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Deep Kindness by Houston Kraft for each participant
- Device to participate in Zoom Meetings

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Invite parents, community members and teachers to be part of a virtual book study focusing on Deep Kindness
- Each member should purchase (or have purchased for them) the book Deep Kindness by Houston Kraft
- Share the schedule for book studies
- Create slide shows to guide your work with your participants that align with your team's needs (examples below)
- You may use the study questions provided by Houston Kraft to guide your discussions
- Email a follow up including a recorded session to participants

CLOSING/EXTENSION

During the book study, be sure to challenge participants to step out of their comfort zone and really strive for deep kindness. Be sure to provide opportunities to share their success with that during the study.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS

Bookmark we sent to participants after they signed up for the book study (we glued it together so it was two-sided)



- [Study guide provided by Houston Kraft](#)



- [Book Study Part 2](#)



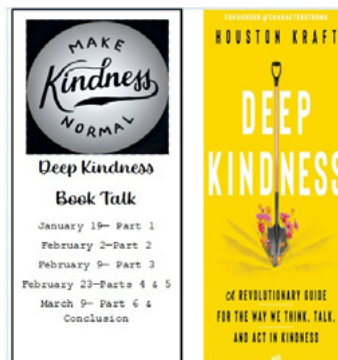
- [Book Study Part 3](#)



- [Book Study Parts 4 & 5](#)



- [Book Study Part 6](#)



ENHANCING INTERVIEWING AND HIRING PRACTICES FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To guide school stakeholders in auditing and updating their interviewing and hiring practices to prioritize character education with a focus on virtues

Character Traits Targeted:

Noble purpose, humility, courage, empowerment and foresight

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Copies of character education resources or relevant reading materials
- Large poster paper or whiteboard
- Markers, pens and sticky notes
- Handouts on character-based interview questions (attached)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Introduction

- Begin by welcoming school stakeholders, including administrators, teachers and HR personnel.
- Emphasize the importance of character education in the school community.
- Share the objectives for the session.

Step 2: Understanding Character Education

- Provide stakeholders with handouts or access to resources that define character education and explain the importance of virtues like noble purpose, humility, courage and foresight.
- Facilitate a discussion to ensure everyone has a common understanding of these virtues and their significance in education.

Step 3: Self-Assessment

- Ask stakeholders to individually reflect on their current interviewing and hiring practices.
- Provide a self-assessment questionnaire or checklist to help them identify areas where character education can be incorporated.

Step 4: Group Discussion

- Divide stakeholders into small groups.
- Encourage them to discuss their self-assessment findings and identify common strengths and areas of improvement in their current practices.

Step 5: Identifying Virtues in Candidates

- Provide stakeholders with a list of character virtues, such as noble purpose, humility, courage, empowerment and foresight.
- Ask each group to select one virtue and brainstorm interview questions that would help identify candidates who possess that virtue.
- Share these questions on a whiteboard or poster paper.

Step 6: Character-Based Interview Questions

- Distribute prepared handouts with character-based interview questions for each virtue (attached).
- Allow stakeholders to practice asking and answering these questions in pairs or small groups.
- Discuss the importance of these kinds of questions in the interview process

Step 7: Auditing Current Practices

- Instruct stakeholders to revisit their self-assessment from Step 3 and identify areas where character-based interview questions can be integrated.
- Encourage them to make specific notes on how they plan to incorporate these kinds of questions into their current interviewing and hiring processes.

Step 8: Group Sharing and Feedback

- Bring the small groups back together and ask them to share their insights and action plans.
- Encourage constructive feedback and suggestions from other stakeholders.

Step 9: Closing Remarks and Commitment

- Thank the stakeholders for their dedication to enhancing character education through interviewing and hiring practices.
- Encourage them to commit to implementing their action plans and to collaborate on this initiative.
- Provide contact information for follow-up questions or support.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Follow-Up:

- Schedule follow-up meetings or workshops to track progress, share success stories and address any challenges encountered in implementing character-based interviewing and hiring practices.
- Continue to provide resources and support for stakeholders as they work toward fostering character education in the school community.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Practice Interview Questions](#)

PARENT CHARACTER EDUCATION PANEL

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To increase community voice within our character education program

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Purpose of this panel:

- The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee is to give our Character Education Team input focused on our Character Education Work/ Social Emotional Work with students and adults
- Our Character Education Team focuses on the following three areas
 - Character Education/Social Emotional Learning
 - Student Wellness Activities
 - Staff Wellness Activities
- We will share preliminary plans in the above areas and take your feedback and thoughts as we finalize for implementation.

Steps:

- Send out an open invitation to all parents.
- Example- Google Form:
 - Email
 - Name
 - "I would like to help with the Character Education Planning"
- Hold both types of meetings (virtual and in-person)
- Record the virtual meetings
- These meetings should have a clear agenda and goals.
- After you meet, send out a follow-up email for those who were not able to attend, that includes the presentation and any follow-up work.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Extension:

- Send out a follow-up Google Form
 - Questions
 - Thoughts/Ideas



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity (possibly)
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create a cohesive staff among grade levels and subject areas

Character Traits Targeted:

Cooperation, trust, honesty, respect, courage, kindness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of staff members, divided into families
- Questions for families to discuss at each faculty meeting

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Prior to Activity

Before you begin this activity, divide your staff members into groups of five to seven. Mix up your teams and grade levels to have a variety of staff members in each family. See the sample for more details.

During the Activity

At each Faculty Meeting, schedule in 10-15 minutes for staff members to meet with their families and discuss the questions you provide. There are sample questions provided for you; they get more personal as the year progresses.

If you need more examples, or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

To end the activity, you can give staff an opportunity to share out anything that really resonated with them. They may not share a family member's answer/response without permission.

Extension

Staff Family groups can be used in many ways. You can use them to do staff games, such as scavenger hunts, the Amazing Race, Family Feud, etc. Staff Families can also be used during celebrations, such as a Christmas party or Spring Fling. Family members can have a designated table where they sit together. You can keep staff in the same family for multiple years in order to deepen the connection.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



- [Faculty Meeting Family Questions](#)



- [Movie Quote MatchUp Family Game](#)



- [Sample Staff Family Configuration](#)



- [Staff Family Activity-Theme Song BINGO](#)

CREATING A CHARACTER EDUCATION COMMUNITY TASK FORCE (STEP 1 OF THE CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Character traits targeted create a character education task force of community members identified as primary and secondary stakeholder

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

These steps are designed to be used in conjunction with each other to create a community-wide commitment to character development and core values. However, many steps in the process can be modified to meet your school or district's needs and some can be done as stand-alone activities.

Note: At CharacterPlus we firmly believe that any character education initiative or effort is strengthened by involving primary and secondary stakeholders at all levels: students, faculty, staff, administration, parents, community leaders and local businesses. We recommend involving key stakeholders who have a strong interest in character education in a participatory process of identifying and defining core values.

The list of stakeholders will vary for each community and identifying and inviting their participation is an important part of the process. Some or all of these suggestions may apply to your school or district.

1. Brainstorm. Get together with people in your school or district, officials and others already involved in or informed about your character education initiative and have them come up with ideas for who should be invited. After 10 or 15 minutes, stop and discuss each suggestion, perhaps identifying each as a primary or secondary stakeholder.
2. Collect names from the community, particularly members of a group who may have a concern.
3. Consult with schools or districts that either are or have been involved in character education initiatives.
4. Gather more ideas from stakeholders as you identify them.
5. If appropriate, advertise. You can use the school newsletter, website and a poster campaign to get the word out about your initiative and invite input from potential stakeholders you may not have considered.
6. Develop objectives for your first task force meeting with a small group of key stakeholders.
7. Finally, plan and invite all identified stakeholders to your first meeting.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Develop a schedule of meeting dates.

Create a calendar to share with staff, faculty and potential stakeholders.

Advertise the date of the first meeting on social media, school website and in classroom newsletters.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME/WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US (STEP 2 OF THE CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Increase interest in and commitment to the character education initiative
- Select core values through consensus-building

Character Traits Targeted:

Character traits will be identified in this consensus-building task force activity

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- "What's Important to Me" survey
- Small stickers (any kind will work)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

These steps are designed to be used in conjunction with each other to create a community-wide commitment to character development and core values. However, many steps in the process can be modified to meet your school or district's needs and some can be done as stand-alone activities.

Task Force Meeting: Identifying Core Values

Note: Consider using a skilled facilitator to lead this group activity.

Step 1: Distribute copies of the "What's Important to Me" survey to participants. Allow time for them to complete the survey and for quiet reflection and contemplation. This activity is designed to promote thinking and results can be used as part of a partner discussion or kept private.

Step 2: Ask participants to think about the values that were important during their upbringing and jot down a few notes.

Step 3: If more thinking around important core values is desired, guide participants to think about the values they wish to instill in their children, current or future grandchildren, young nieces or nephews and have them jot down a few notes.

Step 4: After time for reflection, ask task force members to share their notes with a partner and discuss those values that are important to them.

Step 5: Direct pairs to compare their lists to look for commonalities.

Step 6: Repeat this process by asking partners to form small groups of four.

Step 7: Ask small groups of four to join together to create small groups of 8. Allow plenty of time for small groups to discuss areas where they agree and where they have differences of opinion.

Step 8: Appoint one person from each group to write the character traits the group has agreed upon on a poster or whiteboard. These will be "table lists."

Step 9: Display table lists and allow time for groups to read and discuss the traits displayed. The discussion can be in small groups or a whole-group activity.

Step 10: The facilitator then leads the group through identifying traits that are similar and could be grouped together.

Step 11: Guide the group in highlighting traits that appear to be the same and can be renamed while still maintaining the intent. For example, if groups have come up with both "nice" and "kind" as possible traits, which one better represents what they would want to be included in the final list?

Step 12: Discuss the idea of what is a character trait/core value and how to distinguish it from a desired outcome. (Be sure to select character traits that people can strive to exhibit rather than things they value like community, success and family.)

Step 13: Introduce the four domains of character: performance, moral, civic and intellectual. More information can be found from the CCCE resource, "[What are Virtues](#)".



Step 14: Give participants an opportunity to revisit their lists. Have them identify under which category their traits fall. Is there a balance? Have table groups rephrase or remove words they don't want to include.

Step 15: Once the list has been refined, explain the voting process.

Step 17: Give each task force member four stickers.

Step 18: Ask task force members to walk around to each table list and use the stickers provided to indicate the four character traits they feel most strongly about by placing the sticker next to the core value. Encourage them to choose traits from multiple domains (performance, moral, civic and intellectual).

Note: Task force members can place only one sticker by a trait.

Step 19: After all stickers have been used to identify core traits, the facilitator can guide a discussion to identify the 6-8 traits with the most stickers.

Step 20: Encourage discussion and comparisons of the traits selected to promote consensus building and to ensure all voices are heard.

Step 21: Discuss any traits that did not receive a majority of the votes but members feel strongly about including. The facilitator will help the group "agree to disagree" if needed and traits that are not widely agreed upon are left off the list.

Step 22: The final list of agreed-upon traits should contain 6-8 core values that are a balance between the four domains that everyone can support. These values will be the ones voted on by the community, staff and students.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share a preview of Step 3

COMMUNITY CORE VALUE INPUT/COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE (STEP 3 OF THE CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Involve the larger community in solidifying character traits
- Encourage community belonging through service

Character Traits Targeted:

All character traits selected by task force

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Poster Board for advertising event
- Poster Board for each character trait
- Markers/poster paint
- Stickers (garage sale pricing stickers work great for this activity)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Invite community members to donate blood and while they are at the blood drive, encourage community input in solidifying character traits. **Note:** This is a great opportunity to provide older students with the opportunity to organize a service event. You can assist them with planning the date and location and encourage them to make contact with a local organization that organizes blood drives.
2. Identify a community partner to facilitate the drive (if you do not hold it at the school).
3. Schedule the time and place for the blood drive.
4. Have students create posters and media posts to advertise the event.
5. Ask students to create posters for each of the character traits that are being considered as community values to display at the drive.
6. Have students create a poster that explains the character education initiative and the process for identifying character

traits. Be sure the posters identify that this is a “draft list” of potential character traits that are being considered for adoption.

7. Inform the community through a disclaimer that it is possible there will be changes to the list of traits based on input from students, staff, parents and task force members.
8. Each character trait should be listed on a separate poster.
9. Display the posters in the area of the blood drive that will get a lot of traffic, such as the snack station.
10. Provide each adult at the event (even adults who are unable to donate) with four stickers to place on character trait posters. Direct them to choose the four traits they feel are most important and to vote only one time per character trait.
11. At the conclusion of the blood drive, collect the posters to bring to the next task force meeting for discussion.
12. Be sure to record some comments from participants to include in a news article for the district website.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share the results of this community activity on the school website and classroom newsletters. Highlight the results of the blood drive, including how many units were donated, as well as comments made by community members about their experience.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PRIORITIZING CHARACTER (STEP 4 IN CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Promote community engagement in the character education initiative through personal contact with the larger community
- Raise awareness of the character education initiative in local civic groups
- Garner community input on core values

Character Traits Targeted:

Character traits will be identified during this process

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Notecards
- Pens

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

These steps are designed to be used in conjunction with each other to create a community-wide commitment to character development and core values. However, many steps in the process can be modified to meet your school or district's needs and some can be done as stand-alone activities.

This activity provides the larger community an opportunity to participate in raising awareness of the district character education initiative and prioritizing character. This is another way, aside from a public event like a blood drive, to get input on the core values being considered.

1. At the Character Education Task Force meeting, provide all task force members with blank notecards and an ink pen.
2. Encourage task force members to jot down the character traits under consideration onto the cards. The personalization of the notecards with handwriting and comments from individual task force members may increase community interest in the notecards.
3. Committee members then bring cards with them over the next month to share at Rotary Club, neighborhood association meetings, or wherever a group of community members have gathered.
4. Ask individuals to rank character traits they most value and would like taught in the local schools.
5. Take the notecards back to the next task force meeting for discussion.

This activity can be repeated to elicit more feedback.

INCLUDING STAFF AND STUDENT VOICE IN SELECTING CORE VALUES (STEP 5 OF CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Gain input from staff regarding core values
- Gain input from students regarding core values

Character Traits Targeted:

Character traits will be identified in this activity designed to elevate student and staff interest and commitment to the character education initiative

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Survey for staff
- Survey for students

PROCEDURES:

Steps for the Activity:

These steps are designed to be used in conjunction with each other to create a community-wide commitment to character development and core values. However, many steps in the process can be modified to meet your school or district's needs and some can be done as stand-alone activities.

1. Define the Purpose of the Survey: Clearly state the purpose of the survey, which is to give all staff and students an opportunity to select the school or district's new core values.
2. Identify the six to eight Character Traits from step four that students and staff will vote on. Ensure the traits are understood by students and staff. This may require using the trait in a sentence or providing a basic definition.
3. Choose Survey Tool: Select an online survey tool such as Google Forms, SurveyMonkey or another preferred platform. You will want to make two identical but separate surveys: one for staff, one for students.
4. Create the Survey Directions: Ask respondents to select four character traits that resonate with them. Include options for respondents to vote or rate each trait, depending on your chosen format.
5. Design the Survey: Customize the survey's appearance to make it visually appealing and user-friendly. Ensure the survey is easy to navigate and understand.
6. Set Up Distribution Channels: Determine how you'll distribute the survey to staff and students. Options may include email, shared links, or embedding the survey on a website or learning management system.
7. Ensure Anonymity (if desired): If you want to maintain respondent anonymity, configure your survey tool accordingly. Most schools choose to have this done anonymously.
8. Test the Survey: Conduct a test run of the survey to check for any errors, glitches, or confusing elements.
9. Launch the Survey: Distribute the survey to staff and students as planned. Communicate the purpose, deadline and instructions clearly.
10. Monitor Responses: Keep track of survey responses as they come in. Monitor for any issues or questions from respondents.
11. Analyze Results: Once the survey deadline has passed, analyze the responses for each character trait. Identify trends, patterns, or consensus among respondents.
12. Share Findings: Prepare a summary of the survey results including the top four to six character traits identified by consensus.
13. Consider Action Steps: In the next Task Force meeting, discuss how the survey results will inform the final selection of core values, as well as how you will share the core values within your school, district and larger community.

CONFIRMING AND DEFINING CORE VALUES (STEP 6 OF CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Identify core values from Step 5 of the CharacterPlus Process
- Define core values identified
- Plan sharing campaign

Character Traits Targeted:

Character traits that were identified in Step 5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

Survey results from Step 5 of the CharacterPlus Process

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

These steps are designed to be used in conjunction with each other to create a community-wide commitment to character development and core values. However, many steps in the process can be modified to meet your school or district's needs and some can be done as stand-alone activities.

- **Preparation:** Gather the results of the student and staff surveys (Step 5). Prepare copies of the survey findings and any relevant data for task force members (how many students and staff responded, building response rate, etc. Set a date, time and location for the task force meeting.
- **Task Force Invitation:** Invite members to the task force. You could open this meeting up to more task force members or the PTA, etc. to ensure even greater representation from various stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members.
- **Create a meeting agenda:** Develop an agenda for the meeting, outlining the steps taken to prepare and present the survey, the results and time for planning for the roll out of the final list of traits.
- **Consider asking building representatives to come to discuss the survey and share survey results with the task force.**
- **Survey Results Presentation:** Present the key findings from the student and staff surveys. Highlight any notable trends, patterns or areas of agreement or disagreement. Highlight any disparity between buildings or age levels.
- **Discussion of Findings:** Facilitate a discussion among task force members to share their insights and interpretations of the survey results. Encourage open and respectful dialogue.
- **Define Core Values:** Consider replicating the consensus-building activity used to determine core values for this task, which is defining core values.
- **For each core value, work as a group to define it in clear and concise terms. These should be in student-friendly language, with the group coming to consensus on the meaning of** these words. You may also want to craft statements that encapsulate each core value, making them actionable and memorable.
- **Review and Refine:** Review the defined core values and statements as a group. Seek input and feedback from task force members.
- **Finalize Core Values:** Once the task force reaches consensus on the core values and their definitions, finalize them.
- **Document the Core Values:** Prepare a document that outlines the core values and their definitions. Share this document with the task force for approval.
- **Plan for Implementation:** Discuss how the newly defined core values will be integrated into the community, school, or organization. Identify potential events, programs or activities to promote these values. Most schools create a behavior matrix that clearly outlines what each core value looks like, sounds like, or feels like in every setting of the building.
- **Next Steps:** Determine what actions need to be taken following this meeting. Assign responsibilities for any follow-up tasks.
- **Closing and Appreciation:** Thank all task force members for their participation and contributions. Set expectations for future meetings or actions.
- **Follow-Up Communication:** Communicate the defined core values to the broader community, school or organization. Share the outcomes of the meeting and the core values document.

CHARACTER EDUCATION LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN (STEP 7 OF CHARACTERPLUS PROCESS)

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create enthusiasm for the character education initiative
- Increase community buy-in for the initiative
- Develop insight into how character traits are a part of the lives of people in the larger community

Character Traits Targeted:

all selected and agreed-upon core values

Grade Level (if applicable):

Middle School but can be adapted for fifth grade or high school

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Digital camera for photographs
- Computer/tablet access
- Centrally located display area

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

These steps are designed to be used in conjunction with each other to create a community-wide commitment to character development and core values. However, many steps in the process can be modified to meet your school or district's needs and some can be done as stand-alone activities.

1. This activity will involve students writing letters or emails explaining and celebrating the character education initiative in their school/district
2. This is a time to share agreed-upon core values and the importance of them in the daily lives of students and staff
3. Take photos of discussions and small group activities to share with stakeholders
4. Each student is encouraged to write to family or friends and ask for a response
5. Encourage letter recipients to respond with their reactions to the core values and how they use these or other core values in their on lives
6. Ask letter recipients to include a photograph in their response that is reflective of the area in which they live
7. Maintain a US and world map to track responses and include photo links and Google Map pins
8. Choose a visible location in the school or campus to display a visual "counter" or tally to show the number of responses as they come in
9. To build enthusiasm and excitement, select highlights of responses and efforts to share on the school website as the activity progresses

CLOSING/EXTENSION

At the conclusion of this activity, have students create a public relations campaign sharing the map of responses and selected highlights of the experience. Share photos of students as they participated in small group discussions and activities as well as photos shared by recipients.

Students can create a video project to share on the school website and at the next school assembly and board meeting.

A NIGHT OF HEROES

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Recognize and celebrate everyday heroes in our lives and community

Character Traits Targeted:

All-emphasize with students that we have people in our lives who embody our school/district character traits

Grade Levels:

Elementary, Middle, or High

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Poster board
- Markers/poster paints
- Hero sandwiches for event

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Ask students to discuss the idea of “everyday heroes” and the character traits they embody.
2. Students can journal or discuss in small groups the everyday heroes in their lives.
3. Students can write letters, emails, or develop a phone script to invite an everyday hero to “The Night of Heroes” event at the school.
4. Students can create posters and media content to advertise the event.
5. Student Leadership Team can create posters of character traits to display the night of the event and choose music or video clips for the opening of the event.

Night of the Event:

1. Begin with a welcome in the gym.
2. Students showcase character trait posters.
3. Students share media created for event, if applicable.
4. Provide directions for the evening: students and parents head to classrooms for a class meeting and recognition of their everyday hero.
5. Return to the gym for closing words and a hero sandwich.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Follow the evening with student-created thank you letters, cards, emails, or video messages to supporters, heroes and community participants.

Students can publish highlights of the event on the school website and share with teachers for classroom newsletters.

WHY CHARACTER EDUCATION?

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To get buy-in from faculty, parents and community members on the importance of character education

Character Traits Targeted:

Open-mindedness, empathy

Grade Levels:

Faculty, parents and community members

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Internet and projector
- Youtube Video
- Index cards (or post-it notes)
- Pen markers
- Quotes about character
- Tape (for quotes)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. State the purpose of the meeting: The purpose of our time today is to think about what skills we want students to have when they finish high school and to think about why character education is important. (thirty seconds)
2. Think About: Have each person think about the following questions- When our students leave our institution, how will they say our institution prepared them for life? What will the students remember about the school? (two minutes of think time)
3. Discuss: Discuss answers with those at your table (five to ten minutes depending on discussion)



4. Quotes: Post the seven quotes about character in various places around the room. [Quotes on Character.pdf](#)
Have groups of three to four people go to a quote, read the quote and discuss what that quote means (large sticky notes could also be used where people can write their thoughts on the sticky note instead of discussing the quote). After two to three minutes, prompt groups to move to the next quote. Continue this process until all quotes have been discussed by all groups or as time allows.

5. Whole Group Discussion of Quotes: Read the quotes, starting from the most ancient to the most recent. Ask volunteers to share what those quotes say to them and applications of the quotes in today's world. (five minutes- depends on discussion)



6. Watch Video: The Jubilee Centre in Birmingham, England is the world leader in research on character education. Watch this video about why character education matters. As you watch the two minute video, write down ideas and new thoughts on the note card provided. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhJK82T6ns>

7. Share: Upon completion of the video, give participants two to three minutes to finish writing down or processing thoughts from the video. Then allow table groups 10 minutes to share their thoughts about why character

education matters.

8. Why Character Education: Have this list of Why Character Education? Go over the list with the group and add items the group stated in the previous activity or put a check by items that are repeated.

Why Character Education?

- Prepare students for college, career and civic life
- Bring schools and communities together
- Improves school and classroom climate
- Create safer and more caring schools
- Closes the achievement gap
- Improves academic achievement for all
- Academic integrity
- Professional ethics
- Service to others
- Community building and commitment

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Complete three two one: On a notecard, list the following: three ways character education can benefit our school community, two things the school is already doing to incorporate character education in the school and one question I have about character education. The notecard can be turned in to assess where the group is and needs that can be addressed in future meetings.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS

[Quotes on Character.pdf](#)







AS A COMMUNITY OF DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS, DEVELOP A SHARED VISION WITH COMMON VALUES, LANGUAGE AND PURPOSE CONCENTRATING ON CULTIVATING CHARACTER AND HUMAN FLOURISHING (CONSIDER THE FOUR DOMAINS OF VIRTUES: INTELLECTUAL, CIVIC, MORAL AND PERFORMANCE THAT LEAD TO PRACTICAL WISDOM AND HUMAN FLOURISHING)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity is for new school leaders entering a new school environment and should, ideally, be conducted over the summer before the school year begins
- Objective 1: To build community and teamwork in an existing environment with new leadership
- Objective 2: To model humility, transparency and appreciation for the faculty and staff
- Objective 3: To collect important data regarding the current status of the school for vision-casting purposes

Character Traits Targeted:

Humility, teamwork, honesty, humor and bravery

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

Scheduling system (such as Signup Genius or Calendly)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Beginning tenure as a new school leader or as an experienced leader moving into a new school or environment can be challenging and draw upon feelings of anxiety for all parties involved. This activity will help to ease tensions during a leadership transition, promote a feeling of appreciation for all faculty and staff and provide valuable data and feedback for a new school year.

Preparation

You will need to set up an automated calendar or meeting invitation system for this activity. There are many free options available such as Signup Genius or Calendly. Create 20 minute slots throughout the day for as many days as it will take to meet, individually, with every faculty and staff member. If you are the leader of a school with a large faculty and staff, you can adjust this down to 15 minutes.

Introduction

Everyone in the school community is provided an opportunity with the school leader for this activity. Everyone is important and everyone has value and perspective. It will be detrimental to the school culture if teachers are allowed to participate but general assistants and custodians are not. Everyone is included in this activity. Send an email to all faculty and staff asking them to sign up for a time to meet you and share about the school (using the signup link you created in the preparation section above) Tell them that you will ask them four questions and be sure to include the questions in the email. It is also important to note the time limitations for this activity and that each meeting will last for a maximum of 20 minutes. The questions are as follows:

1. What is going well in the school?
2. What needs to be strengthened?
3. What needs to be removed/deleted?
4. What makes this school special?

5. IF TIME PERMITS: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about yourself or the school?

Reflection

This activity serves several purposes. First, it provides a special, personalized time for each person to have with the school leader. Don't underestimate how it makes people feel to have personal facetime with the school leader. This personal time also ensures that you don't start the first summer Inservice or professional development meeting as strangers. Second, it provides a great deal of information that may not have surfaced in a large-group meeting. Having this meeting as a private one-on-one meeting with each individual may create a space where people feel more willing and safer to share. Also be aware of individuals who take advantage of this moment to spread negativity. Always presume positive intent while also being aware that some may exploit this opportunity to grind an axe. Lastly, this activity provides a lot of actionable data that can be used for school planning purposes.

Further Reflection and Implementation

After the final meeting, take time to categorize or theme the responses for each question and code them for frequency. This frequency data will provide you with actionable information that can be used when planning for the new school year. You may also find that the high-frequency items also align with your thoughts for the new school year. At the first faculty meeting, present the frequency data (without personal identifiers) and let the findings lead to the new vision for the school year. While the vision may be the one you originally imagined, sharing the faculty and staff data that supports the vision makes it their own and creates greater ownership of the vision and any school changes.



CHARACTER INFORMATION FOR INSTAGRAM

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

*Adapted from Katie McMahon, Mt. Brook Elementary, Birmingham, AL

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To provide nuggets of information to the community about character education

Character Traits Targeted:

Intellectual, civic, moral and performance

Grade Levels:

Teachers, parents and community members

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Instagram Account
- Sample slides of possible character education facts

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

In today's world, people like to receive small pieces of information at a time. Instagram is one way to provide parents and the school community with quick, small pieces of important information about character education that can be tailored to the needs of the school community.

1. Instagram Account: Use the school's Instagram account (or other social media account that the community uses) to post small pieces of information about character education.
2. Sample Slides: The sample slides included in this plan provide a starting point of information that might be important to share with the school community. If using Instagram, 10 slides can be posted at once. The sample slides have three series of slides, differentiated by slide color, that provide information that might be of interest to your school community.
3. Post: Copy, or create your own, information about character education to post to the school's Instagram Account. Try to post a new series of character information you want to share with the community weekly.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Instagram Posts could be made with the school's core values, why have core values, what is a touchstone, the school's touchstone, service learning, current research about the benefits of character education, etc...

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS

Sample Instagram Posts: [Instagram.pdf](#)



CORE VALUE ASSESSMENT

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Assess your school's identified set of core values for continued relevancy within your community

Character Traits Targeted:

Shared Leadership for your school's core values

Grade Levels:

PreK - 12

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- A list of your school's current core values
- A list of other possible core values
- Large Chart Paper
- Dot Stickers (any color)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Communicate out to all stakeholders that it is time to provide input regarding your school's identified set of core values
- Create chart-sized posters with your core values on them (see pictures below)
- Consider adding other values as a staff or student group identifies (may consider trying to include values from each of the 4 domains: intellectual, civic, moral and performance)
- Provide opportunities for families to give their input at large community gatherings (open house, conferences, parties, etc.)
- Create a sheet with all families' names on it
- Highlight names of families as they check in for their stickers
- Allow families to vote on core values using their stickers (see pictures below)
- Use results to narrow down and allow students/staff input on the final set of values or use as part of your entire set of results after students and staff provide input

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- To make sure you have all families input, you could follow up with phone calls or emails to those who didn't check in for a set of stickers
- Be sure to ask for some community members' input as well

PICTURES/HANDOUTS



CREATING A SHARED VISION

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To create a feeling of cohesion among staff members; to create a shared vision for the school

Character Traits Targeted:

Cooperation, leadership, stewardship, foresight, empowerment

Grade Levels:

Adults

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Instructions (found below)
- Writing utensils
- List of values to use as reference
- Examples of vision statements

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Prior to Staff Meeting

1. Communicate to staff members that you will all be working together to create a new vision statement.
2. Explain that you will work on this at the next few staff meetings.
3. Ask staff to be thinking about what they think the school vision should be and what type of message they want communicated.
4. Write each of these questions on a different large piece of paper.
5. Hang the paper in the room where your faculty meeting will take place.

At the Initial Staff Meeting

1. Provide staff with the instructional sheet below.
2. Use a Gallery Walk to have staff answer each question.
3. Once staff members have completed the Gallery Walk, have them return to their starting point, with each group presenting the staff's thoughts on each question.
4. Explain that at the next staff meeting they will use this information to start creating their vision statement.

At the Second Staff Meeting

1. Hang up the sheets from the prior meeting.
2. Remind staff to think of the following when creating a vision:
 - a. Draw on the beliefs and mission of your school.
 - b. Describe what you want to see in the future.
 - c. Be specific.
 - d. Be positive and inspiring.
3. Have the same teams as before get together to create a vision for the school.
4. Give them time to come up with a vision; remind them that it doesn't have to be perfect as you will likely combine many of their ideas into one final vision.

5. Have each group write their ideas on one large piece of paper.
6. When staff have completed their visions in their groups, have each group share their ideas.
7. Tell the staff that at your next staff meeting you will work together, using their ideas from today, to finalize your building vision.

At the Final Staff Meeting

1. Post the paper from the previous meeting with the staff's ideas for visions.
2. As a whole staff, brainstorm and work together to create one cohesive vision that is simple and encompasses your ideal future.

If you need more information, or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

Once a vision has been determined, incorporate it into daily announcements, on meeting agendas, etc. Communicate the vision to the staff, students and community to ensure clarity and cohesiveness.

Extension

Have students create a student-friendly vision for your school. Work to incorporate that into the vision that your staff created.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



- [Creating a Shared Vision Directions/ Questions](#)



- [List of Values](#)



- [Sample Vision Statements](#)



- [Gallery Walk Instructions](#)

DEFINING YOUR SHARED VALUES

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Identify the values of each of us in order to begin setting the virtues of (organization)
- Connect using our values and virtues to bond as a team

Character Traits Targeted:

All

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Virtues/ Values sort cards (1 set per person)
- Paper Bags
- Sorting Header Cards (3 for each person)
- Space for Groups
- Poster paper
- Art supplies
- Yarn

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Share the following with participants:
 - Values are ideals that a person uses to guide their judgments or opinions.
 - Virtues are the actions or behaviors a person responds with based on their values.
 - Virtues are how we practice our values and demonstrate character.
2. Provide paper bags of Virtues/ Values sort cards and sorting Header Cards (3) to participants for them to complete the Core Values sort as individuals:

ACTIVITY

Place the three colored cards labeled “Very Important”, “Somewhat Important” and “not important” at the top of your sorting columns.

Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important

Quickly (without a lot of thought) sort the white cards, according to how important that value or trait is to you, today – not based on what you want people to think, what you think others would expect or what you want it to be. Just be honest

3. After sorting into three columns, ask participants to:
 - Take the “Not Important” and the “Somewhat Important” columns and place them back in the bag.
 - Take the TRAITS/VALUES under the “Very Important” column and put them in order from the most important to the least important.
 - Take all the traits/values- after ranking- and... keep the top three.
 - Put the others back in the bag.

4. Provide reflection time and share the following with participants:
 - Take a moment, a quiet two minutes, to write and reflect on:
 - Why are these three traits/values important to you?
 - How do you define them?
 - Based on these three traits/values,
 - What do you expect of others in order to work in connection and with cooperation?
 - How do these three traits/values affect you and how you present yourself when connecting and cooperating with others?
5. Ask participants to do the following:
 - In groups of four, take quiet five minutes to discuss:
 - What your top values are
 - How you defined them
 - What you learned about yourself in this activity
 - As you discuss, write them on Post-it notes and put in a pile
 - In groups of four, take four minutes to write:
 - Two action steps of how you would want the (organization) to work, run, operate based in the twelve values and personalities you just spoke with.
 - Put your action steps on the poster.
6. Work to identify commonalities in the poster to determine your top values and revisit the definitions as a group to solidify (can be done in another session).

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Work as a group to make a circle. Start with one person holding yarn and saying “I am _____ (name) and “ _____ (value/virtue) matters to me because _____” and then toss the yarn ball to someone else to repeat while always holding their piece of the yarn. At the end, you have a spider web that is only strong if everyone is holding on.

Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
accountability	dedication	creativity
simplicity	routine	punctuality
approval	recognition	trustworthiness
independence	sincerity	friendliness
integrity	productivity	responsibility
honesty	respect	caring

ESTABLISHING A CHARACTER-BASED READING PHILOSOPHY

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Stakeholders will create a school wide reading philosophy that aligns with the school ethos

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of character traits
- Any documents that inform school ethos
- Reading Philosophy Guide

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

Set a time where all stakeholders can meet. If needed, have stakeholders review any literature that will be helpful with the activity.

During Activity:

- Stakeholders will determine a “reading philosophy” by looking at the character traits and ethos that the school uses. Stakeholders, which should include educators, will reflect on the purpose of reading and stories and how reading’s purpose can connect with school ethos and its culture of character.
- Stakeholders will first have to discuss the purpose of their character education program, its ethos and how it is utilized in school.
- Then, stakeholders will discuss the purpose of reading in school, what the purpose of reading is as a whole, why it is a valued skill in society, what character traits they see in reading and character’s purpose in reading instruction.
- Once stakeholders have discussed reading’s purpose and what character traits they see connected to reading, stakeholders will need to discuss how to put these ideas into a reading philosophy.

Stakeholders will need to consider these things:

- Will the reading philosophy be a document or a short line that can be memorized?
- How will we introduce this new philosophy to our school?
- How are we going to utilize this philosophy? Is this a philosophy that can fit into our character program?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing: This may take multiple sessions. If you have any questions or need advice on starting a conversation about character-based reading, please contact Emilie Rogers at baroque.era93@gmail.com

Extension: These are some books that could help guide the conversation about reading and its purpose. Some of these are written with a religious perspective, but they still offer a range of ideas on reading and stories in society.

- Brenda Ueland If You Want to Write
- Vigen Guroian Tending the Heart of Virtue
- Mortimer Adler How to Read a Book
- J.R.R. Tolkien On Fairy-Stories
- Dorothy Sayers Some Thoughts on Creative Reading

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Establishing a Formation Reading Philosophy](#)



FINDING THE GOOD IN ONE ANOTHER

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To increase staff confidence
- To increase staff cohesion
- To encourage staff members to focus on positive aspects and outcomes

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness, empowerment, honesty, cooperation

Grade Levels:

Older students, if you choose to use it with students

MATERIALS

- Materials needed to complete the activity:
- A paper plate for each person
- Writing utensils

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Hand out a paper plate to each staff member.
2. Tell them that today they are going to think of the things about their coworkers that they are grateful for.
3. Give them a couple minutes of “think” time.
4. Now, instruct them each to write their name at the top of their paper plate and pass it to the left.
5. The person who now has the paper plate will write a compliment about the person whose name is at the top.
6. Pass the plate again and follow the same steps. Continue this until each person has five or six compliments on his or her plate.
7. Have the plate passed back to the owner and give them a minute to read what their colleagues wrote.
8. Ask for volunteers to share some of the compliments they received.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

Explain to staff that education is the hardest business there is and we want to always take time to appreciate one another.

Extension

Staff members can do this with their classrooms as well.

You can also have staff members bring the plates back to a meeting later in the year and have additional people add compliments to each plate.

FOCUS ON CHARACTER

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Focus on Character provides school communities with a common vocabulary related to character traits other than their identified core values. This activity outlines a process for developing core values and shared language with intentional implementation

Character Traits Targeted:

This activity can target any traits you would like to add to your character work

Grade Levels:

PreK-12

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

List of character traits identified by students, staff and parents

Area to create and house the plan and activities (Google Folder or other way of sharing files)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Identify a list of character traits (including your core values) that your community believes important for ongoing character development
- Create a list aligned with your school calendar so your community has a focus each week
 - Examples of alignment include: gratitude-Thanksgiving week, patriotism - week of 9/11, service-Veterans Day
 - Include words that support your core values, school and district mission, etc.
- After creation of the list, determine a shared meaning for each of the traits you have identified
 - This may include using surveys, several focus groups, team meetings, individual meetings, or other.
- Share the list and create a shared document for each week that includes activities, resources, videos, etc.
- Organize the activity documents by month and put in a monthly folder
- Share the folder with all staff members
- Share the expectation that we focus on these during class meetings and during instruction when possible

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- These activities provide guidance for staff to provide a common language
- Including in a weekly email to families from the principal and in classroom correspondence helps reinforce the traits at home
- Remind staff that while this is a guide, we continue to focus on teaching all traits throughout each day - this just gives everyone a focus for the week

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



The link below has an example of a yearly focus you and your staff could replicate for your community.

[Focus on Character](#)



The link below has an example of a possible lesson template you could use to create lessons based on your school's identified focus.

[Generosity 12/18](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Inform families of your work around character education and provide challenges for families to participate in on a monthly basis

Character Traits Targeted:

School's identified values

Grade Levels:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Newsletter Software
- Way to disseminate

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Talk with community members about how they would like to receive information about character education.
- Work with families to create a template to help keep the information organized the same way monthly.
- Create the newsletter to reinforce common language and provide activities for families.
- Include information for families to understand what students and staff participate in during character work at school.

Pictures of our Character Focus may be seen below. There is also a link to the same example.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Example of Newsletter](#)

FOCUS ON CHARACTER


March 6 - [Integrity](#) - Doing the right thing even when no one is looking


March 13 - [Sincerity](#) - Being genuine and meaning what you say

March 27 - [Perseverance](#) - Pushing yourself to work through challenges and obstacles

IN PURSUIT OF PERSEVERANCE

Use the document below to help your family focus on perseverance this month.



 Perseverance.pdf [Download](#)
276.1 KB



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Staff members will work collaboratively to identify common values. Staff will determine the values most important to the school

Character Traits Targeted:

Cooperation, accountability, leadership, stewardship, foresight

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of sample values (below)
- Writing utensils for each staff member
- Four to six large sheets of butcher paper hung around the room
- Markers placed near each piece of paper

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This activity can be completed in multiple sessions, or all at one time.

Prior to Activity

1. Copy the list of values so that each staff member has one.
2. Hang the butcher paper in the meeting area and put the markers with the paper.

During the Activity–Individual

1. Explain to the staff that you will be working to determine your school's values.
2. Hand out the values sheet that you copied. Use the sample attached, or create your own. Ask staff members to circle the top 10 values that they believe are important to/for your school.
3. Give them about five minutes to complete this section.
4. Have them now narrow down the ten to five by putting a checkmark next to those.
5. Finally, have the staff highlight the three values that they believe are critical for your school culture.

During the Activity–Team

1. Once staff members have their individual lists, divide them up into five or six teams. Direct each team to a large piece of butcher paper.
2. Give them the following directions.
 - a. With your team, discuss which values any of you have in common.
 - b. Then, write those values on the large piece of paper.
 - c. Looking at that piece of paper, discuss with your team which of the values listed would be your top five.
 - d. Have these ready to share with the group as a whole.

During the Activity–Share Out

1. Have each team take a few minutes to share their results. You can ask/allow them justifications, or simply tell the values that they chose.
2. After everyone has shared, you will combine the smaller groups into two larger groups, repeating the exercise again.
3. After the two large groups have shared, have everyone combine into one group to determine their common core values.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

To complete the activity, explain to the staff that these are now the core values for your school. In the future, work together to determine the best way to share these values with your students and your community members.

Extension

You may also choose to incorporate student ideas and perspectives into this activity, as well as community members.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[List of Values](#)

WRITING PERSONAL VISION STATEMENTS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Objective 1: To create personal purpose and mission to foster responsibility and self-regulation in the classroom

Character Traits Targeted:

Responsibility, perseverance, resilience

Grade Levels:

Grades 3-5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

Projector

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Do your students have a vision? Do they know where they want to be at the end of the year? You may be familiar with SMART goals and the use of this framework in the educational setting. The “T” portion of the SMART acronym is for “Timely”, which means the goal should be achievable in a reasonable amount of time. A fourth grade team creating a SMART goal to increase overall literacy achievement by 30 points in five years may be a great team goal, but it does not fit the SMART framework. There are many, smaller steps along the way that can help us make progress towards that five-year goal.

The same can be said for children and personal vision statements. This is not a new idea, but too often we have children in 3rd grade, for instance, write personal vision statements for attending college. That is a great aspiration and we should be talking about college with our young children. However, that third grader is not getting to college in 180 days. That is a longer-term, much longer-term, goal with many smaller steps that can be addressed in third grade. The activity below will help you hone in on specific, timely goals for your children that they can use as a guide for the school year. This not only impacts academics, but it can impact behavior, too. A student's behavior must be acceptable in the classroom in order to achieve the goal that they wrote in the vision statement. Directing them back to their goal when they make a mistake is a more positive way to focus their attention instead of consistent, negative reinforcement of broken rules.

Day 1: Introduction to Personal Vision Statements

Discussion (10 minutes)

Start with a discussion about goals and dreams. Ask students what they want to be or achieve when they grow up. Explain that a personal vision statement is a written description of their future goals and dreams.

Read-Aloud (10 minutes)

Read a children's book that emphasizes the importance of setting goals and dreaming big. Suggested books include




[Oh, the Places You'll Go! by Dr. Seuss](#)



or [What Do You Do with an Idea? by Kobi Yamada](#).

Video (5 minutes)

 Show a short video explaining what a personal vision statement is. You can use resources like [Kid President's Pep Talk](#) to inspire them.

Day 2: Values and Interests Exploration

Discussion (10 minutes):

Discuss the concepts of values and interests. Explain that values are things that are most important to them and interests are activities they enjoy doing. Help students brainstorm and share their values and interests.

Activity (20 minutes):

Provide students with magazines or printed images and ask them to cut out pictures or words that represent their values and interests. They can create a vision board with these images on a piece of paper.

Day 3: Setting Goals

Discussion (10 minutes):

Explain the importance of setting goals to achieve their dreams. Discuss short-term and long-term goals. Use examples relevant to their age, such as doing well in school, making new friends, or learning a musical instrument.

Activity (15 minutes):

Ask students to write down three short-term goals (things they want to achieve in the next year) and three long-term goals (things they want to achieve in the future). Encourage them to be specific and realistic.



**FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS THAT EMPOWER OTHERS TO
LEAD, MODEL, TEACH AND SEEK CHARACTER**

BREAKING BARRIERS IN A NEW SETTING

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity is for new school leaders entering a new school environment and should, ideally, be conducted during the first staff meeting of the school year before the school year begins
- Objective 1: To model humility, transparency and trust for a community of educators
- Objective 2: To establish a community of care and trust to promote these traits and others, on grade level teams

Character Traits Targeted:

Humility, teamwork, honesty, humor and bravery

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Chart paper
- Markers

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This activity takes some preparation and should, ideally, be done as a follow-up to the New Leader Interviews activity. The New Leader Interview activity provides an opportunity for all school members to have personal, one-on-one time with the new school leader, which disarms the tension or apprehension with this activity a bit.

Preparation

This activity should be conducted during the first inservice or professional development day before the school year begins. You will need to select someone from the faculty to serve as your scribe for the activity. Ideally, a faculty member who is not a classroom teacher such as a counselor or instructional coach should be selected. It is important to not select the assistant principal or someone who has leadership/evaluative responsibilities in the school as this can damage the trust of the activity, which is vital to its success. The individual you select will be required to record the questions and comments from the faculty during the activity.

Introduction

You will need at least three charts for this activity. Introduce the activity by telling the faculty that you would like to give them the opportunity to ask you anything they like. It is important that you state you will answer all questions on the charts, read aloud the comments and ask them follow-up questions from the comments, if needed. Introduce the scribe for the session and inform the faculty that the scribe will keep all questions confidential and will write all of the questions and comments in order to keep the handwriting consistent and preserve anonymity.

Delivery

Once the activity starts, the school leader must leave the room and close the door so that questions, comments and discussion cannot be overheard. This, again, preserves anonymity for the activity. The scribe will facilitate the activity and request that the faculty share questions and comments for the charts. Each chart is completed before going to the next.

Chart 1: Professional Questions for the School Leader: Example questions that may appear on this chart are: Do you collect lesson plans? How do you feel about “jeans Friday”? What do you think about departmentalizing grade levels?

Chart 2: Personal Questions for the School Leader: Example questions that may appear on this chart are: What are your hobbies? What gets you stressed out? Do you have any kids?

Chart 3: Things We want the School Leader to Know About Us: Example statements that may appear on this chart are: We are a family. We've been through a lot of transition in recent years. “Food Truck Friday” has really boosted morale in the school.

Reflection

After the scribe is done facilitating the activity, he/she will request that you rejoin the room. Undoubtedly, there will be smiles and snickers as the audience “can’t wait for you to ask that silly question on the Personal Questions Chart”. It is important to not shy away from this silliness. Embrace it. Start with the Professional Questions Chart and read each question and answer it and provide explanation, if needed. Then move to the Personal Questions Chart and answer each of those questions. Finally, read each statement on the last chart and expound or ask questions about the statements, if necessary. Take as much time with the reflection period as needed. Do not rush this. The honesty, humility and bravery you are modeling during this portion of the activity will go a long way as you ask the teams to be transparent and honest during professional learning communities later in the year, for instance.

Closure

Express gratitude and appreciation for the faculty taking the time to participate in the activity. Open the floor for any final questions or comments that were not addressed during the session.

Further Reflection

This activity will provide a foundation of trust, honesty and appreciation for your leadership for the school year. There is an additional, related takeaway from this activity. Effective school leaders when entering into a new school or environment take the time to analyze the environment and decide what needs to be maintained, strengthened or deleted. Items rooted in school tradition or culture that are removed when they should have been maintained is a failure of leadership and will decimate the morale of the faculty under the new administration. After completing this activity, you will have an entire chart, produced by the faculty, of things that are important to them. These are things that should be maintained while you are preparing for changes, improvements and a new vision for the school. Maintaining these items will support the culture and climate as you push forward with new ideas and initiatives.

PICTURE WALK

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Participants select pictures that align to their response to a given prompt and share with group as a means to build relationships, get to know one another, or other

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

- Materials needed to complete the activity:
- Pictures from internet that could align to the prompt response
- Area for spreading visuals around the room
- Space for group sharing (circles of chairs)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Place varied pictures printed from the internet around the room
- Give a prompt, such as where do you see yourself with your current state of practical wisdom?
- Example Prompts:
 - What character trait would you use to describe your current state as an educator?
 - How do you feel about your accomplishments at this moment?
 - How are you feeling today?
 - How would you describe yourself in terms of your relationships?
- Participants walk around and select a picture
- Bring back to group to share selection and why (in a circle format)

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Groups can also share the feelings they experienced during activity or how this connected to their character development.
- Participants can share how they might use this in their contexts/roles.

PICTURES

Example images to use:





Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To ensure that all students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness in the school setting

Character Traits Targeted:

Respect, cooperation, kindness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Copies of Connectedness Survey sheet
 - You may also create this as a Google Survey and send it to students to complete online.
- Writing utensil

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Prior to Activity

Prior to giving the survey, complete the following:

1. Use a large piece of butcher paper to write each individual student's name on, leaving a space next to each. Based on the number of students you have, you may choose to do one large sheet per grade level.
2. Hang the above sheet in the staff lounge or somewhere that staff will see it, but out of view of the students.

During the Activity

For K-12 Students

When giving the survey, do the following:

1. Have students write their first and last names on the paper (if possible; if not, last initial will work).
2. Tell the students that we are doing this activity to make sure that they all have adults here at school that they can go to with any good news or when they need help.
3. To get them started, ask the following question/s:
 - a. Tell me three adults at our school who you know care about you. If that doesn't work ask them the next question.
 - b. Who are three adults at school you can go to with good news or problems? If that still doesn't get you an answer, just leave it blank.

Important

- Students can write their own teachers down as one of the three people, but it is not required.
- Students can write as many names down as they want, or have room for.
- Kindergarten and maybe some first graders, teachers may need to assist with the writing.

For PreK (and some kindergarten) students:

When giving the survey, please do the following:

1. Write your students first and last name/initial on the paper.
2. Tell the students that we are doing this activity to make sure that they all have adults here at school that they can go to with any good news or when they need help.
3. To get them started, use the following prompt/s:
 - a. Look at the paper in front of you. Circle/X/whatever the pictures of adults here at school who care about you. If that doesn't work try the next statement.

b. Circle/X/whatever the pictures of adults here at school you can go to with good news or if you need help. If that still doesn't get you an answer, just leave it blank.

If you need more information or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

1. Collect all surveys.
2. Write the initials of the staff members indicated for each individual student next to their name on the large piece of butcher paper.
3. Meet with a team of teachers to review the results. Look for any student who was unable to come up with three adults and brainstorm adults in the building who would be able to build a relationship with that student.
4. Communicate with any adults mentioned in the process above.

Extension

Do this activity at least twice a year, once about a month into the school year and once about a month before school ends for the year. If time, compare the results from the fall survey to the spring survey to identify any major changes in students' choices.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS

[Connectedness Survey Instructions](#)





Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity can be used to build relationships, allow participants to get to know one another, or for content with students. There can be a level of vulnerability needed if questions prompts require personal honesty, reflection, or difficult decisions

Character Traits Targeted:

Honesty, empathy, compassion, kindness, vulnerability

ASSESSMENT

If using as content review with students, this could serve as a formative assessment of their knowledge.

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Prepared prompts/questions
- Tape for the line (optional)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- There is a line made with tape on the ground or there can be an invisible line
- Everyone stands on one side of the line
- Explain that you will conduct a powerful activity called Cross the Line. This activity will allow participants to both acknowledge and address ways they are similar and unique from each other. The activity might make people feel a bit uncomfortable or awkward, so there will be special ground rules to help participants feel more at ease.
- These are the instructions for your participants from you
 - Ask everyone to gather on one side of the room/line and face towards its center. Instructions (you read these to participants) I will call out specific categories/labels/descriptions and ask that all of those to whom this applies, walk to the other side of the room/line. For example, I might request that anyone with glasses please cross the room. If this describes you and you feel comfortable acknowledging it, you would walk to this side of the room/line. Once there, turn and face the crowd you just left. Get in touch with your feelings and think about those people on both sides then return to the side you started from. After a few seconds, I will continue with a new question. Remember, there is no pressure to cross the room/line if you don't feel comfortable doing so. You will need to make that decision. At the conclusion of the activity, we will discuss what we felt and what we learned.
 - Explain that for the Cross the Line activity, the following ground rules apply: Listening – This is a silent activity to allow everyone to experience the activity fully. This means no talking, snickering or giggling throughout. Respect – Each participant deserves to be treated with dignity and respect at all times and particularly during this activity.
 - No Pressure – No one should feel under pressure to reveal anything about themselves that they don't want to.
 - The presenter asks a series of questions and if it applies to the people in the group, they cross the line (For example: "cross the line if you are content with your current position in your career")
 - Used as a means to get to know one another and discussion starters; can also be used as knowledge check

Potential Questions/Prompts:

Cross the line if you:

- Are content with your current position in your career
- You play a sport

- You have traveled to a country that speaks a language other than English
- You have been picked on in school (even back in elementary school)
- You are a leader
- You have ever done the Chicken Dance
- You have grandparents that were born outside of the United States
- You have a step parent
- You have broken someone's heart
- You have caught yourself judging someone before You even met them
- You have been the target of a racist comment
- You like Fruity Pebbles
- You've ever been picked last in games or sports or left out of an activity all together
- You've ever been called a mean name or put down just because You're a girl
- You've ever been judged or teased because of the color of Your skin
- You've been teased because of your religious background
- You've been teased about your accent or Your voice
- You've ever had dinner at the Olive Garden
- You or anyone in your family or a friend has a disability that you cannot see
- You're a boy and you've ever been told you shouldn't cry, show your emotions or be afraid
- You've ever felt alone, unwelcome or afraid
- You have intentionally hurt someone's feelings
- You've ever felt pressure from your friends or an adult to do something you didn't want to do and felt sorry for it afterwards
- You've ever stood by and watched while someone was hurt and said or did nothing because you were too afraid
- People routinely mispronounce your name
- You have ever been the only person of your race/ethnicity in a classroom
- Like mint chocolate chip ice cream
- Your biological parents have divorced, separated or never married
- You were raised by a single parent
- You know someone that has a physical or developmental disability
- You have personally experienced or witnessed a homophobic action or statement
- You feel that homophobia is an issue in this school or community
- You feel there is a double standard or different expectations for guys versus girls
- You would actively support the rights of people who are different from you

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Processing Questions (These are suggested discussion questions for after the activity. It is not necessary to get through all of them.)

- What kind of feelings did you have as you participated?
- How did you feel when there were very few of you on one side of the room?
- What does this activity have to do with leadership?
- Did you find yourself making judgments of others?
- How did the movement of others influence you?
- What did you learn through this activity that can make our environment more welcoming?
- What did you learn through this activity that will make you a better person or leader?
- Through this activity, intentionally or not, did you share your values?
- Through this activity, intentionally or not, do you think that you learned about the values of others?

FINDING COMMON GROUND: PARENT/TEACHER CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Make meaningful connections with student families by finding common ground

Character Traits Targeted:

Friendship, compassion, empathy

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.



- [Common Ground Questions](#)
- Optional: paper
- Optional: writing utensils

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

This can be part of a school event, beginning of year meet and greet or for parent/teacher conferences.

During Activity:

Have the teacher/lead set the tone of the meeting. Let the parent know that this activity is meant for teachers and parents to find common ground and establish a positive relationship. Let them know that if there are answers given that remind them of experiences or ideas they have had before, to share as freely as they wish. Determine how many questions you would like to ask. The teacher and the parents can answer specific parent questions or teacher questions and/or general questions. Answers can be just verbal, written or both.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

If this is in a private parent/teacher meeting, recap what each adult has learned about the other. In larger groups, allow time for participants to discuss things they found in common with the teacher/parent that they were excited about, surprised by or gave them relief.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity is used to build relationships and community

Character Traits Targeted:

Empathy, compassion, honesty, vulnerability, kindness, love

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Large poles
- Yarn or string (colors optional)
- Labels
- Maps of pole positions (optional)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity

 For reference: <https://www.inforum.com/lifestyle/participate-in-global-unity-activity-at-fiber-arts-festival>

- Place poles in a circle with hooks at the top
- Each participant gets a map with the poles as numbers, each number represents something but the participants might respond more honestly if the labels are not provided until the end of the activity. The labels can also be placed on the poles if you choose not to use a map. With the map, participants will be told the numbers for each map are different. There is a legend on the map as well, so participants see the labels and can appropriately participate (Ideas for pole labels: I have children, I have a tattoo, I care for my family, I am kind, I am a bully, etc.)
- Participants can think their map numbers differ but they do not need to
- Participants get yarn and are asked to start at a specific pole and then hook their yarn to each pole they identify with
- At the end, you have a canopy of yarn that represents who the group is
- Place the labels on the poles and allow participants to walk around and see how many others experience the same things as them

CLOSING/EXTENSION

This activity can lead to further discussions about experiences or character

PICTURES : FINISHED PRODUCT





Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Educators will reflect and share about their personal values through creating this I AM poem, with the goal of fostering relationships and celebrating one another

Character Traits Targeted:

Open mindedness, cultural awareness and sensitivity, respect

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Listen to Poem:

I am from marbles
From empanadas cooking in the street
I am from orchids and mango trees
I am from la torta tres leches and ruana
I am from happy and serious
From hard work and sweat
I'm from grit, respect and discipline.
from big family reunions and endless laughs.
I am from houses never locked
from the projects in Brooklyn
and dominoes in the park
I am from salsa and the car horns blaring

 *excerpt from [Where I'm From: A Morning Edition Crowdsourced Poem of Remembering](#)

Let's Discuss:

What resonates for you from this poem?

What connections are you making?

Activity:

Write your own "I am from Poem" I am from... (think of familiar sights, smells, or sounds of growing up)

I am from... (think of familiar foods, consider those associated with holidays)

I am from... (think of familiar expressions in any language)

I am from... (think of your ancestors, your relatives, or legacy)

When you are done, share with a colleague or in a small group.

Share out with the large group the impact and experience of writing and sharing these poems.

POWER OF GOOD NEWS BOOK STUDY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To build relationships with various stakeholders while also focusing on our character work
- To help us realize there is more good news in this world than bad news
- To help spread joy in our community by working to create a positive feel in our community

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness, accountability, ownership, leadership, compassion

Grade Levels:

Parent, Staff, Community Stakeholders

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Power of Good News by Hal Urban
- [Power of Good News outline and documents](#)



PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Please refer to the document linked below

- This book study can be completed on an online platform, or in person
- It is set up to meet 4 times
- There are activities and discussion questions throughout the book study

PRIMED BOOK STUDY; CREATED BY AMY MURPHREE, JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOLS IN ALABAMA

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Builds an understanding of the PRIMED model

Character Traits Targeted:

Intellectual virtues

Grade Level:

Faculty and community stakeholders

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- PRIMED book by Marvin Berkowitz
- PRIMED Powerpoint
- PRIMED Book Study Introduction document
- Sticky notes

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

The purpose of this activity is to act as an introduction to a book study on PRIMED for Character Education by Marvin Berkowitz. This book study can be done with whole faculty, grade levels, community stakeholders, etc...

Use the attached powerpoint and agenda as a guide to conduct a one hour introduction on the book PRIMED. Participants will read portions of the book and have some small group activities during this session. The guide gives an estimated amount of minutes to spend on each section.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Make plans to read the book PRIMED. At the end of each part, there is a worksheet in the book groups can use as a discussion guide to make a school plan. A suggested reading schedule is:

- Part I- pages 1-27
- Part II- pages 31-61
- Part III- pages 77-95
- Parts IV and V- pages 107-131
- Parts VI-VIII- pages 139-168

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS (IF APPLICABLE)



[PRIMED Book Study Introduction.docx](#)



[PRIMED Model Overview- created by Amy Murphree.pptx](#)

STUDENT SELF CHECK-IN

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- A safe place for students to share feelings and check-in with the teacher

Character Traits Targeted:

Belonging

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [K-2 Electronic Check-in](#)



- [3-5 Electronic Check-In](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Use link above to create class check-in
 - The check-in is aligned with Zones of Regulation
 - If your students are not familiar with this, you can teach them or change the check-in form
- Have students complete check-in daily
- Follow-up with students when needed



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- School personnel will understand how students are feeling about their school experience and monitor for growth

Character Traits Targeted:

Belonging, safety, respect or any trait you want to survey about

Grade Level:

Any - Would just have to adapt the form for grade level appropriateness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of character traits your school works with
- Team to create a list of questions around your character work
- Format to put together for the survey (paper/pencil, Google Forms, etc.)
- Time to give survey
- Time to reflect on and plan from survey results

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Work with your school character education team to identify questions you would like to survey students about regarding their feelings around school (some possible questions are listed at the bottom)
- Determine how you want to receive the data (by grade level, class, gender, etc.)
- Create the survey using the method your team desires (Google Form, paper/pencil, other)
- Administer the survey at the end of the 1st quarter
- Review survey results and adjust programming as indicated through data
- Re-administer the survey and reflect on results at the end of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters as you did with the 1st quarter
- As a school, you may look at the end of year results to plan for school-wide adjustments in the fall
- Share data with your advisory teams for input (teachers, students, community & parents)
- Teachers can reflect on individual class results and create a plan to address needs

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS

Example Student Survey:

We want to know how you feel about our school. Please answer the questions in this survey to help us by sharing your honest opinions. We will use this information to help our school be the best place it can be for everyone.

- My teacher makes me feel safe and welcome
- I feel safe from physical harm while at school
- I am comfortable sharing my feelings at school
- I can be myself while at school
- My teacher encourages me to work harder and learn more
- My teacher helps me set goals for learning
- My teacher tells me when I have done a good job
- If I knew about a dangerous problem at school, I would tell an adult
- I have at least one close friend at school

- I feel respected by adults in my school
- I feel respected by other students in my school
- Students in my class treat others with respect
- I am motivated to achieve my goals at school
- Kids at my school show integrity by doing the right thing, even when no one is watching
- I can be a leader and help my school be a positive place
- When things are hard I keep trying (perseverance)
- I feel like I am an important part of my class
- Give an example of a time this year when you or another student showed one of our core values at school (respect, responsibility, integrity, self-control, kindness)
- What could we do to make Oak Brook a great place to learn for everyone
- I have an adult I trust at school who will listen to me when I have something important to talk about



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Objective 1: To build a community of appreciation and love

Character Traits Targeted:

Appreciation, love, trust, gratitude

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

“Thank you” cards
Postage stamps (if mailing the cards)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This activity is simple and straightforward and does not require a lot of preparation or steps to accomplish. The handwritten note has become somewhat of a lost art in the hustle and bustle of emails and virtual meetings. Think of, though, the excitement you feel when you receive a handwritten card in the mail at your home. Who is it from? What does it say? It is even more special when the handwritten note or card is a form of appreciation towards us or note of encouragement for a situation we are facing. There is a reason why mass-marketing agencies use a handwritten font on pre printed mailers. Handwritten stirs an emotion within us.

Preparation

For this activity, your only preparation will be to procure personalized cards, stationary or thank-you cards and time to complete the activity. This will, understandably, take more time for larger schools, so take the additional time into account.

Introduction

Writing handwritten letters for the entire faculty and staff can be time consuming, so it is best to create a template for the notes to help you expedite completion of the activity. A suggested framework may be:

- Introduction: Thank you for such a great start to the school year. I appreciate your hard work and all you have done to help get the school year off the ground.
- Personalized content: This section should be personalized for the teacher or staff member. An example of what it could be like may be: Your organization on the team and service as the team leader has really jump started the team with the school's new goals. We wouldn't be where we are without you.
- Conclusion: Thank you for all you do. This school is great because of you. Let's have a great school year!

The example above is for notes for the start of the school year. Handwritten notes can, of course, be written at any time. An added layer of appreciation for a handwritten note may be sending them through the mail. A handwritten note delivered at home via US mail has an added layer of authenticity and appreciation.

As noted above, handwritten notes can take a lot of time. It is important to allocate enough time in your day to complete these cards in one session. If you are planning to send a card to each member of the faculty and staff, it is important that you send them all at once so there is no lag time between recipients which may foster a sense of favoritism among the faculty and staff.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Ensuring 100% of all students feel connected and have a trusting adult within the school

Character Traits Targeted:

Building relationships, acceptance, belonging

Grade Level:

Any grade level

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Pictures of all staff members
- Google Form

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

*This survey should be completed by students twice a year

- Create this survey using Google Forms.
 - Question 1: First Name
 - Question 2: Last Name
 - Question 3: Do you feel connected to at least 1 adult at insert school name? Connected means: you enjoy talking to that person, look forward to seeing them and/or are excited to share things about yourself with that person. You may also trust them to share about a problem you are having.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Question 4: Look at the pictures of staff members below and check ANY staff member(s) you feel connected to (as described in question 3). You may choose more than one.
- Using the checklist feature, insert names and pictures of all staff members. It is important to include all staff.
- Create one survey per grade level. This allows for easier data collection and analysis.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- After all students have completed the Trusted Adult Survey:
 - Determine if there are any students who feel they do not have a trusted adult
 - Once you have identified those students, develop a plan of action
 - Connect them with adults in the building
 - Provide opportunities for adults to build positive relationships with these students
 - Create a mentor program
- Complete the survey again in the Spring.
 - After analyzing data, determine if more students feel connected to a trusted adult
 - Develop next steps





IMPLEMENT A CHARACTER INITIATIVE ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- As a community, a Character Education Plan will be created to enhance instruction in character for all members of a community

Character Traits Targeted:

Values selected by community

Grade Level:

Any

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Framework to help clarify work
- List of traits to select core values from
- Team of teachers, parents, students & community members
- Data from the school to show areas to focus upon (behavior, climate, etc.)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Assemble a team of community members, teachers, staff, parents and students (if appropriate) to begin studying data from the school (behavior, climate, etc.).
- Identify areas of need from the data.
- Look at a framework to use as a guide to use as you begin developing your core values - Guidelines from Character.org are linked below.
- Review possible core values from the areas listed in the framework document.
- As a committee, select core values your team would be ok with having as your main focus and have the community vote on them to select the core values that will guide your work (there are 4 areas outlined in the CSED guidelines - at least one from each area would serve as a starting point).
- After selecting core values, use the guidelines and 11 Principles Framework to begin setting priorities to develop for your community (it is very important for each of your community members to become familiar with what character education looks like and sounds like in a school).
- Begin developing processes in your school that align with the framework/scoring guide your team selects to follow.
- Assess implementation of what you have begun and then add other components as your staff and community becomes more comfortable with what they are doing around character education. Possible areas to address include (but are not limited to-you may look through examples included in the GCCU Activities developed by practitioners for other ideas):
 - Class meetings
 - Belonging in schools
 - Staff Climate
 - Buddy/multi-age families (cross grade level partnerships)
 - Student Advisories
 - Parent Newsletters
- Continue monitoring assessment through surveys and discussions with staff, students, parents and community members.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



▪ [Character Ed and Social Emotional Development Guidelines](#)



▪ [11 Principles Framework](#)



▪ [11 Principles Scoring Guide](#)





Applicability of the activity:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will work in cross-age groups. Students will participate in character activities to build knowledge and understanding

Character Traits Targeted:

Leadership, cooperation, responsibility, respect, kindness, courage, service

Grade Levels:

Any, but this description is for K-2

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Directions for Creating a Personal Creed (link attached)
- Writing utensils
- Paper
- Sample creeds
- Creating a Personal Creed worksheet

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This activity is more work for the building leaders and secretaries than it is for teachers or students, but it is worth it!

Class Families are cross-age groups that meet monthly together. Each staff member in the building is responsible for a family, including secretaries, custodians, nurses, along with instructional staff. The principal mans the office during the time that Families is taking place.

Students are divided between families so that each family has a mix of kindergarten, first and second grade students.

Second graders are the family “leaders” and have the responsibility of getting the kindergarten and first grade students to the correct place each month.

Once students are in their Families, they participate in predetermined activities based on the building's character words and/or core values.

family meeting times can last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour; we have four 40 minutes to be a good number.

Prior to Meeting

1. The principal will list out all of the staff members in the building who will host a “family” and assign them a meeting space/room.
2. The principal will assign each student to a family Group. See this document for an example.
 - a. Students are listed by their grade level, name and homeroom.
3. Once all students are placed, the principal will assign each second grader either kindergarten or first grade students to lead. These second graders are responsible for picking up their younger friends and delivering them to the designated place.
4. The school secretary will create a necklace made out of index cards and yarns for each second grade family leader to wear. This will help them when picking up their students.

Three Days Before First family Meeting

1. Have second grade students practice picking up their students and taking them to their destination each of the three days before the first family meeting. This helps to ease anxiety in all of the students.
 - a. The first day, second graders go find the rooms, with adult support and meet their new friends. Days two and three they will practice physically getting their friends to their locations.

First Family Meeting

1. A song will be used to signal the time for the second grade leaders to go and get their students. If you have a large student body, you can also dismiss the second grade leaders in shifts in order to cut down on traffic in the hallway.
2. Once everyone is gathered in their family rooms, have the group take a picture of themselves to post outside that room's door.
3. Students will then participate in an activity, led by their adult and the middle or high school helper, if appropriate.

Ending the First Class Meeting

1. Once the class meeting has finished, second grade leaders will perform their duties by returning their students to their homerooms. This can also be done in shifts, if that works better.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

Send out a brief survey or email to staff to elicit feedback on the process. What can be improved? What went well? etc. Make adjustments as needed prior to the next family Meeting.

Extension

If you have the ability in your district, you can partner with your middle or high school student leadership groups and have them pair up with a family. They can participate in the monthly meetings with their family.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



- [Family Set Up Example](#)



- [Families Practice for 2nd Grade Leaders](#)



- [2nd Grade Leader Necklace Example](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- A piece of literature (excerpt from a book, picture book, etc.)
- List of school virtues, their definitions and associated words
- Optional: printed copies of school's "Reading Philosophy"
- Optional: list of questions to ask about the story during the activity

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

This activity was originally created for teachers to integrate virtue literacy in every area of reading practice, however, this can be used to help parents learn how to talk about character when they read to their children. If this is the case, it might be beneficial for your school to create a "philosophy" about reading and its moral value. This is a separate activity, but there is a template of a "reading philosophy" provided in this activity if your school decides that a "reading philosophy" is not needed.

During Activity:

Every participant will receive one copy of each material. The guide of the activity will introduce the (optional) "reading philosophy" and/or assign participants to listen to the story and think about the actions and consequences of the characters. Participants will learn to read with character by first listening to a story and engaging in conversation about the character traits they noticed in the story. The guide will lead participants in a conversation about character actions and the virtues/vices that they display in the story. Fairy Tales or folktales can be the easiest stories to start with in this activity since the characters are very clear cut.

Throughout the activity, participants can look at the sheet with character trait definitions and associated words to discuss what words they use in their home and how they can connect the stories they read with virtue language. Participants can also discuss how to connect their life experiences to the feelings, actions and consequences of the characters for the purpose of self-reflection on their own character. Once the discussion on the story ends, ask participants to share what aspects of the activity they want to implement when reading with their children and why.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

End of Activity: Offer to answer any questions. Book recommendations to start "reading with character" might be helpful for parents.

Extension: This activity can be a regular part of a school professional development or parent event schedule.

Note: for more resources, guidance on developing story questions rooted in character, or any other questions, please contact Emilie Rogers at baroque.era93@gmail.com.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Reading Philosophy](#)

STUDENT LED CHARACTER EDUCATION ASSEMBLIES

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create enthusiasm for character education initiative
- Promote student leadership
- Elevate student voice
- Deepen understanding of core values and how they guide school life

Character Traits Targeted:

The school's agreed-upon core values

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Poster board
- Markers, poster paint

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Give students the opportunity to plan grade-level or school-wide assemblies tied to school or district agreed-upon core values/character traits.

- The key goal is to give students the autonomy to use their leadership skills to organize the assembly around a character trait and make the intentional connection to the character trait for the audience.

The structure of the assembly will vary based on the age of your student body.

Ideas to consider:

- Include community organizations such as Conservation Department, YMCA/YWCA, Salvation Army, or local business or organization
- Students plan, direct and perform skits demonstrating a character trait and make connection to the behaviors that demonstrate this trait
- Teacher, staff, or older student provides a summary of the trait and what it looks like to exhibit this trait in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, outside spaces, bus
- Share a book or poem about the character trait (teacher, staff, or older student)
- Show a YouTube video clip teaching the character trait
- Plan and play a game where students demonstrate a character trait or core value. Follow up with a discussion of how students demonstrated the trait and challenges they experienced

*Note: there are different ways to identify the students who will plan the assembly and speak or perform. Faculty are encouraged to think beyond the members of the student council to include students who have leadership potential/interest but are not a part of the council. Consider assigning an assembly to a particular grade level, content areas, or a Character Education Club.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Evaluate the school's touchstone to create short and long term curricular integration plans

Character Traits Targeted:

School's core values

Grade Level:

Teachers

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Document on Touchstone Assessment and Curriculum Integration
- School's Touchstone/Creed

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This lesson assumes the school has a touchstone/creed that has been in use at the school for several months.

1. Have a copy of the school's touchstone and the Touchstone Assessment document included in this lesson handy.
2. In groups of 2-3 people, or individually, score the school's Touchstone on how you perceive the touchstone is being used in the school using the Touchstone Effectiveness Assessment.. Add up your score. The score guide at the bottom of the assessment will provide an indicator as to how well the school is using the touchstone. As a small group, discuss the scores.
3. Once small groups have come to consensus and discussed Touchstone Effectiveness Assessment scores, have a large group discussion to determine areas to focus in the short term and in the long term. Agree on three short term and three long term areas to create plans to help integrate the touchstone into the school and into the curriculum.
4. Select a small group of 5-6 key leadership members to meet at another time to help create action steps for the short term and long term goals within the next three weeks. Complete the goals using the template included in the document.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Three weeks after the initial meeting, have this same group reconvene to review the action steps for the six goals for approval.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Touchstone Effectiveness Assessment and Integration Plan.pdf](#)

STUDENT LED CHARACTER EDUCATION ASSEMBLIES

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create enthusiasm for character education initiative
- Promote student leadership
- Elevate student voice
- Deepen understanding of core values and how they guide school life

Character Traits Targeted:

The school's agreed-upon core values

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Poster board
- Markers, poster paint

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Give students the opportunity to plan grade-level or school-wide assemblies tied to school or district agreed-upon core values/character traits.

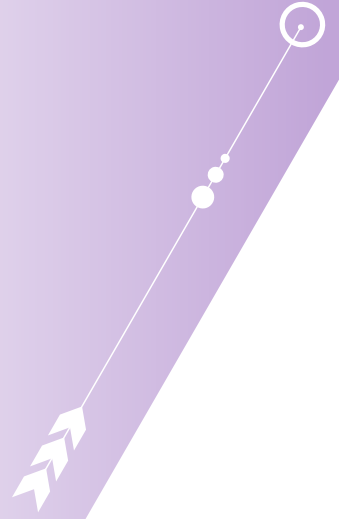
- The key goal is to give students the autonomy to use their leadership skills to organize the assembly around a character trait and make the intentional connection to the character trait for the audience.

The structure of the assembly will vary based on the age of your student body.

Ideas to consider:

- Include community organizations such as Conservation Department, YMCA/YWCA, Salvation Army or local business or organization.
- Students plan, direct and perform skits demonstrating a character trait and make connection to the behaviors that demonstrate this trait.
- Teacher, staff or older student provides a summary of the trait and what it looks like to exhibit this trait in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, outside spaces, bus.
- Share a book or poem about the character trait (teacher, staff or older student).
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- Plan and play a game where students demonstrate a character trait or core value. Follow up with a discussion of how students demonstrated the trait and challenges they experienced.

*Note: there are different ways to identify the students who will plan the assembly and speak or perform. Faculty are encouraged to think beyond the members of the student council to include students who have leadership potential/interest but are not a part of the council. Consider assigning an assembly to a particular grade level, content areas or a Character Education Club.



CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT AND PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

BALLOON WRITING

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- This activity is an engaging way of getting groups to collaborate

Character Traits Targeted:

Teamwork, perspective taking

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Balloons
- Markers

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Place balloons to for the theme of the event around the tables/chairs
- Provide a prompt and participants write on balloons, such as what they believe about the content or what they wonder about the content of the session. This may also relate to character virtues.
- At the end of the presentation, discuss questions in small groups and as a whole group to see if the training/event answered the question or is it still needing to be answered?
- Can pop if desired

UNPACKING STUDENT EMPOWERMENT: A BREAKOUT EDU WORKSHOP

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help teachers understand the concept of student empowerment and explore strategies to foster it in the classroom, using a Breakout EDU box as an engaging activity

Character Traits Targeted:

Empowerment

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- 1. Breakout EDU kit or a customized puzzle/activity.
- 3. Handouts on student empowerment principles.
- 4. Whiteboard, markers and sticky notes.

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Step 1: Introduction to Student Empowerment

- Define student empowerment and its significance in education.
- Share the learning objectives for the session.

Step 2: Group Discussion

- Facilitate a discussion where teachers share their initial thoughts and experiences related to student empowerment.
- Encourage participants to discuss the benefits of empowering students in the learning process.

Step 3: Principles of Student Empowerment

- Discuss key principles and strategies for student empowerment.
- Briefly come to consensus on these principles as a group.

Step 4: Breakout EDU Introduction

- Introduce the Breakout EDU activity and explain that it will serve as a hands-on way to explore student empowerment.
- Share the objectives of the Breakout EDU challenge.

Step 5: Breakout EDU Challenge

- Participants are divided into small groups.
- Provide each group with a Breakout EDU kit or access to a digital Breakout EDU game. (see attached examples)
- Instruct participants to work collaboratively to solve the puzzles, encouraging them to apply problem-solving skills and critical thinking.
- Set a timer and Have FUN!!

Step 6: Debriefing the Breakout EDU Activity

- Reconvene the participants and lead a discussion on their experiences during the Breakout EDU challenge.
- Encourage them to draw connections between the activity and the principles of student empowerment.

Step 7: Breakout EDU Reflection

- Ask participants to individually reflect on how the Breakout EDU activity relates to student empowerment.
- Have them write down their reflections on sticky notes and bring those to a closing group circle.

Step 8: Action Planning Whip

- In the whole group circle, participants pair and share: they turn to a partner and discuss how they plan to implement student empowerment strategies in their classrooms. Encourage them to set specific goals and timelines for incorporating these strategies.
- Invite each participant to share their action plans or sticky note reflection with the larger group. Whip around the circle ensuring everyone has a chance to participate.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Follow-Up:

- Schedule follow-up sessions to allow teachers to share their experiences and successes in implementing student empowerment strategies.
- Continue to provide resources and support for teachers as they work towards creating empowered and engaged classrooms.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



- [Breakout EDU template](#)



- [Breakout Fun Direction Sheet](#)



- [Teacher breakout in action video](#)



- [Teacher reflection on Breakout PD](#)

BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS: A JOURNEY OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The objective of this reflective activity is to encourage individuals to explore and build their character through the lens of relationships and friendships
- By reflecting on their experiences and values, participants will gain insights into their strengths, areas for growth and ways to cultivate healthy and meaningful connections with others

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Journal or notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: other people for discussion

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

*Set aside dedicated time and find a quiet, comfortable space where you can reflect without distractions.

*Have a journal or a notebook and a pen ready to jot down your thoughts, observations and insights during the activity.

Step 1: Exploring Past Relationships

Think about your past relationships and friendships. Consider both positive and negative experiences. Reflect on the following questions and write down your responses:

- a. What are some of the most significant relationships in your life and why are they important to you?
- b. What qualities do you value most in your friends and loved ones?
- c. Have you ever faced challenges or conflicts in your relationships? If so, how did you handle them and what did you learn from those experiences?

Step 2: Identifying Your Personal Values

- Reflect on your core values and beliefs when it comes to relationships and friendships. Consider the following questions:
- What values do you prioritize in your interactions with others? Examples may include trust, honesty, loyalty, empathy or respect.
- How do these values align with your actions and behavior in your relationships?
- Are there any values you wish to cultivate or strengthen in yourself to enhance your relationships?

Step 3: Recognizing Strengths and Areas for Growth

- Think about your strengths and areas where you can further develop your character in relation to relationships and friendships. Consider the following questions:
- What are some of your strengths that contribute positively to your relationships? Examples may include being a good listener, offering support or being reliable.
- In what areas do you feel you could improve or grow? Examples may include better communication, setting healthy boundaries or being more open-minded.

Step 4: Setting Relationship Goals

- Based on your reflections, set specific and realistic goals for your relationships and friendships. Consider the following aspects:
- What kind of relationships do you want to foster or strengthen?
- What actions or changes can you implement to cultivate deeper connections with others?
- How will you hold yourself accountable for achieving these goals?

Step 5: Action Plan

- Develop an action plan based on your goals. Consider the following steps:
- Identify specific actions or behaviors you will engage in to enhance your relationships.
- Break down these actions into smaller, manageable steps.
- Set a timeline for each step, creating a roadmap to guide your progress.

Step 6: Reflect and Revisit

Regularly review and reflect on your progress. Revisit your action plan, assess your growth and make adjustments as needed. Celebrate your successes and learn from any setbacks.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Building meaningful relationships and friendships is a lifelong journey that requires self-awareness, empathy and consistent effort. By engaging in this reflective activity, you have taken a significant step toward building your character and fostering deeper connections with others. Embrace the lessons learned and apply them to your interactions, knowing that the process of growth is ongoing and rewarding.

USING A DEVELOPMENTAL LENS TO BUILD CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Help teachers develop a thoughtful classroom community plan using a developmental and character lens

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

Grade Levels:

PreK-8

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Copies of *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14* by Chip Wood
- Large poster paper, chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers, pens and sticky notes
- Small group seating arrangements
- Classroom Community Plan Template (attached)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

Step 1: Introduction

- Begin by welcoming the participants and explaining the importance of creating a classroom community plan that takes into account the developmental stages of students.
- Explain this is foundational work to use when they have to write out their classroom community plan in the coming few weeks.

Step 2: Familiarize with Yardsticks

- Provide each teacher with a copy of *Yardsticks* by Chip Wood.
- Ask teachers to spend the first 15 minutes individually skimming through the book to get an overview of its content.
- Instruct teachers to focus on their grade level and also read about the grade level below and above theirs, taking notes on key developmental characteristics and challenges.

Step 3: Small Group Discussions

- Divide teachers into small groups, ideally with members who teach the same grade level or adjacent grade levels (e.g., K-2, 3-5, 6-8).
- Encourage participants to discuss the developmental aspects they found in the book and how these relate to their own students.
- Have each group identify common themes, challenges and strategies based on their grade levels.

Step 4: Creating a Group Developmental Poster

- Work on group posters that address what the teacher is specifically going to do in the classroom regarding: Physical development, Social & emotional development, communication/language/literacy, Cognitive capacity, Reading, Writing, Math and Across the curriculum.
- This can be representing in words, pictures, however the group decided to summarize their thoughts and discussion.

Step 5: Groups Present Developmental Poster

- Each group shares out their poster allowing for each voice to be represented during the share out
- Put the posters up in team work centers/teachers lounges etc. so people can continue to see the gallery of ideas their peers came up with centering a character centered classroom.

Step 6: Reflect and Discuss

- Facilitate a reflection session where teachers share their thoughts on the activity and what they've learned about creating a classroom community plan through a developmental lens.
- Discuss the challenges and opportunities of implementing such a plan in their own classrooms.

Step 7: Next Steps

- Ask teachers to individually identify at least one concrete action they will take in their classrooms based on what they've learned during the session.
- Give them a copy of the classroom community plan template. Have each teacher think through their plan and work on it PRIOR to students arriving.
- Set a deadline to have them turn in their plans to a principal or coach for feedback.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Consider scheduling follow-up sessions to discuss the progress of implementing the classroom community plans and to address any challenges that may arise.
- Encourage ongoing collaboration and sharing of best practices among the teachers.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS

Classroom Management and Inclusive Community Plan

Teacher Name: _____

Grade/Subject: _____

1. Classroom Vision and Core Values:

- Describe your vision for the classroom environment you want to create.
- Identify core values that will guide your interactions and expectations within the classroom community.

2. Classroom Expectations:

- List three to five clear and concise expectations you will establish for your students.
- Describe how you will communicate and reinforce these expectations consistently.

3. Behavior Management Plan:

- Describe your approach to addressing challenging behaviors in the classroom.
- Outline steps you will take to support students in self-regulation and conflict resolution.

4. Inclusivity and Diversity:

- Explain how you will promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity in your classroom.
- Describe strategies for creating an environment where all students feel valued, respected and safe.

5. Differentiated Instruction:

- Discuss how you will differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of your students.
- Identify specific strategies or adaptations you will use to support students with varying abilities and learning styles.

6. Parent/Guardian and Community Engagement:

- Explain how you plan to involve parents and guardians in your classroom community.
- Outline strategies for effective communication and collaboration with families.

7. Reflection and Growth:

- Describe how you will regularly reflect on your classroom management and inclusive practices.
- Identify professional development opportunities or resources you will pursue to enhance your skills.

8. Assessment and Monitoring:

- a. Explain how you will assess and monitor the effectiveness of your classroom management and inclusive community plan.
- b. Describe the methods you will use to collect feedback from students, colleagues and parents.

9. Timeline and Action Steps:

- a. Create a timeline with key milestones and action steps for implementing your plan.
- b. Set deadlines and establish a system for tracking progress.

Remember, this plan is meant to be a flexible guide that you can adapt and refine throughout the school year. Regularly revisit and revise your plan based on your own observations and the needs of your students. Collaborate with colleagues and seek support from your school community to ensure the success of your classroom management and inclusive community efforts.

Yardsticks Activity

Developmental

LENS IS FUNDAMENTAL

STEP 1

Read and Reflect

- Read your grade level as well as the grade above and below your grade level to understand the developmental lens.

STEP 2

what are you specifically going to do in your room

- Physical development
- Social & emotional development
- communication/language/literacy
- Cognitive capacity

STEP 3

Create a poster and prepare to share

- Reading
- Writing
- Math
- Across the curriculum

UNPACKING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help teachers understand and apply emotional intelligence concepts in their classrooms, creating a more emotionally supportive and responsive learning environment

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

Grade Levels:

2nd-8th

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

1. Handouts or access to resources on emotional intelligence
2. Emotional intelligence scavenger hunt materials (already prepared)
3. Writing materials (pens, sticky notes, markers)
4. Flipchart paper and markers
5. Timer or stopwatch

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

Step 1: Introduction

- Begin by welcoming the participants and explaining the importance of emotional intelligence in the classroom.
- Share the objectives for the session.

Step 2: Understanding Emotional Intelligence

- Provide teachers with handouts or access to resources that define emotional intelligence and its components (self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and motivation).
- Facilitate a brief discussion to ensure everyone understands the concept.

Step 3: Small Group EI Activities (PDF presentation attached)

- Break into small groups and have one facilitator in each
- Each facilitator briefly explains the emotional intelligence activity deck they will be engaging in during the next 30-45 minutes.
- Explain that the activity will involve finding and identifying emotional intelligence-related examples by completing a set of missions.
- Set a timer and begin the missions.

Step 4: Sharing and Discussion

- Bring everyone back together and ask each group to share their findings.
- Specifically discuss how the items or situations they found explored relate to the components of emotional intelligence and character education.
- Encourage participants to reflect on how these examples can be applied in their classrooms.

Step 5: Classroom Application

- Provide teachers with sticky notes and markers.
- Ask each participant to write down one specific idea or strategy related to emotional intelligence that they plan to implement in their classroom.
- Have them place their notes on a flipchart paper labeled “Classroom Application Ideas.”

Step 6: Group Brainstorming

- Facilitate a group brainstorming session to generate additional ideas and strategies for integrating emotional intelligence into the classroom.
- Record these ideas and add to the flipchart paper.

Step 7: Action Planning

- Ask participants to individually reflect on their learning and identify one actionable step they will take in their classrooms to enhance emotional intelligence.
- Provide time for participants to write down their action plans.
- Have each person take a picture of the chart paper filled with ideas so they can use it as a resource throughout the year.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Follow-Up:

- Encourage teachers to implement their action plans and schedule a follow-up session to discuss their experiences and share successes and challenges.
- Consider providing ongoing support and resources to help teachers continue to develop their understanding and practice of emotional intelligence in the classroom.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Emotional Intelligence workshop](#)

FRAME AND RE-FRAME

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Help adults take a student perspective when problem solving classroom community issues

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Copy of the Frame and Reframe Protocol
- Chart paper & markers

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

1. Go over the directions for the Reframe Reflection Protocol (linked below).
2. Break into small groups and move through the protocol.
3. Come back together and share out solutions.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



[Reframe Reflection Protocol](#)

HOW MUCH: JUSTICE-CENTERED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Establish justice as a part of workplace culture/establish positive professional relationships and awareness of role's influence in the workplace

Character Traits Targeted:

Justice, fairness, equity

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Justice Conversation Questionnaire](#)
- Writing utensils

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

This is an activity that is meant to be used during professional development that specifically involves individual professional development or conversations that involve roles, expectations and their relationships to one another. This can be done with a supervisor/employee, a professional team, or as a part of onboarding/training for new employees.

During the Activity:

Start the conversation with the definition of justice/fairness/equity that is best suitable (this can be the official school-used definition or an agreed definition can be agreed upon during the activity. If neither of these will work, a simple definition you can use is "giving what is due to others". Have participants answer the justice questionnaire. Once they have finished the questionnaire, have them share their answers. On the questionnaire, participants can discuss each person they work closely with or groups of people that are affected by their role to help categorize. There may be a need for clarification questions. After sharing answers, discuss how you can fulfill what is owed to everyone and how those actions/goals should shape individual professional goals and development.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

These justice centered conversations can be used to open every team meeting, performance evaluation, or supervisor/employee meeting. To keep justice as a central part of workplace culture, it will be crucial to come back to the questionnaire answers and conversation regularly. It may be necessary to adapt prioritization of tasks and conflict resolution based on this activity.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help teachers learn and reflect on the layers of empowerment both within the classroom and within themselves

Character Traits Targeted:

Empowerment

Grade Levels:

Any

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

1. Poster paper or whiteboard
2. Markers
3. Sticky notes
4. List of 20 questions related to student empowerment (see below for examples)
5. Podcast clips (attached)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Activity 1:

1. Create a list of 20 questions related to student empowerment in the classroom. Here are some sample questions:
 - What is the role of choice and autonomy in student empowerment?
 - How can teachers encourage student voice in decision-making?
 - What strategies promote a growth mindset among students?
 - How can classrooms be inclusive of diverse perspectives?
 - What are the benefits of fostering student leadership roles?
 - How can students be involved in setting classroom rules and expectations?
 - What role does reflection play in student empowerment?
 - How can technology be used to empower students in their learning?
2. Gather the participants in a classroom or virtual meeting room.
3. Explain the rules of the game: You will ask a series of 20 questions related to student empowerment and participants will have a limited time to respond. Choose one participant to be the “Responder” for each question. This person has 20 seconds to respond.
4. Display each question on the whiteboard or screen one by one and start a timer for 20 seconds.
5. The Responder must provide a brief response to the question within the time limit. Responses should be concise and focused. After 20 seconds, reveal the answer or a brief explanation of the question to provide context.
6. Repeat this process for all 20 questions, with a different participant being the Responder for each question.

Activity 2:

1. Explain that every teacher possesses unique teaching strengths, or “superpowers,” that make them exceptional educators. Invite each participant to reflect on and list their individual strengths, qualities and skills that make them effective teachers.

(Encourage them to think about moments when they felt particularly successful in their teaching).

2. Provide each participant with a sheet of poster paper or access to a virtual whiteboard. Instruct them to create a visual representation of their teaching superpowers. They can use images, drawings, words, or a combination of these.

3. After they finish, invite each participant to present their “Superpower Showcase” to the group, explaining their chosen superpowers and sharing anecdotes or examples of when they’ve used them effectively.

Activity 3:

1. Use the podcast clips to link ideas about their “super power” and empowerment in the classroom.

2. Journal ideas as they listen

3. Facilitate a reflective discussion with the group:

- What did you discover about yourself during this activity?
- How can you leverage your teaching superpowers to enhance your teaching practice?

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



▪ [Empowerment podcast clip 1](#)



▪ [Empowerment podcast clip 2](#)

WHAT DOES EMPOWERMENT LOOK LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM?

As we listen to some podcast clips fill out your Journal page with what pops out to you! Be ready to share!

EMPOWERMENT

What are 3 words that come to mind when you hear the word *empowerment*?

Take a few min and get the words ready in your mind.

Use your pen tool to write the 3 words on the “whiteboard” when it shows up!



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Objective one: To build a community of appreciation and love
- Objective two: To foster gratitude and humility in the school community

Character Traits Targeted:

Love, hope, appreciation and gratitude

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Cardstock for Tag cards (cut-out tag cards)
- Yarn or string
- Pens
- Music playlist
- Speakers
- Optional: Decorations to set the mood or tone in the room

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

This activity is especially impactful for those moments of the school year when things seem “heavy”. These are the moments during the school year when the school leader senses that a break from business may be needed. The power of appreciation and gratitude is a formidable force in fostering a caring community in the school.

Preparation

Using the cardstock, cut out a shape that resembles a large sales tag that you may see on a large item for sale at a store. An eight by five sized tag should be OK. Use a hole punch to punch a hole at the top of the tag and run string or yarn through the hole. Make a loop with the yarn/string and hang it low enough that the tag can be worn around the neck like a lanyard. Select a soft song to play in the background during this activity. If possible, arrange an area in the room where everyone can sit in a circle at the conclusion of the activity.

Introduction

It is best to use this activity as a surprise during a faculty meeting. It would not be effective to call a meeting just to complete this activity. Set up the activity by talking about gratitude and appreciation and model this by sharing statements of gratitude for individuals in the room. Distribute the tags to each person in the room and play the soft song that you selected for the activity.

Delivery

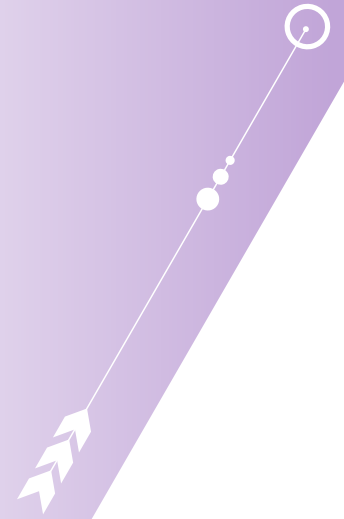
The activity should take 10-20 minutes, depending on the size of the faculty. Tell the faculty to turn their tags around so that the tag is on their back. As the music is playing, faculty should move around the room without talking and write notes, statements, or phrases about other faculty to show appreciation and gratitude for each other and write words or phrases that describe the faculty member. The notes should be written anonymously and there should be no talking during the activity.

Reflection

At the end of the activity, provide a time for faculty to quietly read the notes on their cards. Have the faculty move to the seating circle that was prepared before the meeting. Lead the faculty in a debrief activity to share how the activity made them feel. Invite faculty to read aloud some of the comments and share personal reflections of the comments. Invite faculty to make connections to their classroom practice and how such an activity could be used in their classroom to foster appreciation and gratitude among their students.



BROOKLYN DASH



CONTINUE TO EVALUATE THE INITIATIVE TO DRIVE GROWTH



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Objective 1: To build a strong community with mutual accountability
- Objective 2: To model humility, transparency and appreciation for the faculty and staff

Character Traits Targeted:

Humility, teamwork, honesty and bravery

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Scheduling system (such as Signup Genius or Calendly)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Ending the school year is usually an extremely busy time of the year for everyone in the school community. Use this time to gather actionable data for the next school year.

Preparation

School leaders, typically, have to conduct some kind of year-end review or summative evaluation meeting for all faculty and staff. This activity can be conducted during these year-end meetings. Note that you will need 15 minutes to complete the activity. If you do not have to conduct year-end meetings or would like to do this activity separate from the year-end meeting, you will need to set up an automated calendar or meeting invitation system for this activity. There are many free options available such as Signup Genius or Calendly. Create 15-minute slots throughout the day for as many days as it will take to meet, individually, with every faculty and staff member.

Introduction

It is important that everyone in the school community (faculty and staff) have an opportunity to participate in this activity. Send an email to inform the faculty and staff that you would like to discuss the school year with them during the end-of-year conferences or request them to sign up for a time to meet with you if you intend to do this outside of the year-end conference. Tell them that you will ask them four questions about the school year to help plan for next year. Usually, it is a good idea to include the question to remove unnecessary anxiety from the meeting, but for this activity it is important that they provide on-the-spot answers as the answers that come to the surface in those situations are usually the most honest and heaviest on their minds.

Implementation

The four questions that you will ask them are as follows:

1. What did we accomplish this school year?
2. What needs to be stronger/better for next school year?
3. What needs to be removed/deleted next school year?
4. How can I improve as a school leader?

Question four will surprise them and it may be uncomfortable for you to ask the question. While questions 1-3 will provide actionable information that can be used to plan for the next school year, question four will model deep humility, honesty and transparency. This is the same kind of transparency we have as of teachers during professional learning communities. It will be difficult to ask the question and may be even more difficult to hear the answers, but this one question is vitally important to the success of this activity and to the implementation and model of humility, teamwork, honesty and bravery

Reflection

After the final meeting, take time to categorize or theme the responses for each question and code them for frequency. This frequency data will provide you with actionable information that can be used when planning for the new school year. Each year brings new ideas and initiatives and combining those plans with the teachers' own words and thoughts from the year-end meetings will strengthen the ownership of the action items for the new school year among the faculty and staff.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Faculty/staff to determine assessments for implementation, climate and character outcomes

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Comprehensive Assessment Plan of Character document
- Implementing and Assessing Character Education article by Marvin Berkowitz
- Highlighter/pen
- Computer with internet

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

This activity is designed for professional development training for schools looking for ways to assess the implementation, climate and character outcomes of a character education program in their school.

1. Individually read Implementing and Assessing Character Education article by Marvin Berkowitz. Participants are encouraged to highlight and take notes as they read. (15 minutes)
2. Depending on the size of the training, place participants in groups of 5-6 people. Assign each group either implementation, climate, or character outcomes as a focus. There can be more than one small group with each topic.
3. The groups will spend time completing the assigned section of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan for Character Education document by either researching assessments for their assigned topic or creating an assessment. The goal of the group is to find or create an assessment for implementation, one for climate and one for character outcomes. If there are two or more groups with the same topic, put them together after 20 minutes so they can compare notes and come to consensus on an assessment. (30 minutes)

**Times are suggested for planning purposes. This activity may take longer and can occur over several sessions depending on where the school is in the process of reviewing assessments.*

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing for 15 minutes: Ask each group to briefly share, three minutes or less, the assessment for each of the three areas.

Administration or an assigned ad hoc group can make plans for distributing the assessments at the appropriate times and devising a plan for analyzing the data.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



- [Comprehensive Assessment Plan for Character](#)



- [Implementing and Assessing Character Education Article](#)

CONTINUOUS EVALUATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To provide those in the school community the opportunity to be part of the evaluation and evolution of the building's character education program

Grade Level:

All

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Surveys for each grade level.
- Writing utensil or electronic mode of completing the form.

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

Prior to Activity

1. Create surveys for each grade level grouping.
2. Communicate to everyone what the data will be used for and how it will be shared.

During the Activity

3. Share the surveys with each student, staff member and any other school community member you would like to complete one.
4. Provide time for people to complete the forms; for students, this can be completed in class. A specific window of time can be set up for others to complete the survey.

If you need more information, or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

1. Collect all surveys.
2. Analyze the data and create easy to understand representations, or presentations, to share with the different groups. This can take the form of graphs, charts, or even a conversation about the findings.
3. After providing the results to your stakeholders, work together to determine how you want to move forward.

Extension

Ideally, you would follow the school improvement cycle to utilize the results of your surveys. You can find more information regarding this at

 [Continuous School Improvement](#).



PICTURES/ HANDOUTS



- [K-2 Sample Survey](#)



- [Grades 9-12 Sample Survey](#)



- [Grades 3-5 Sample Survey](#)



- [Staff Sample Survey](#)

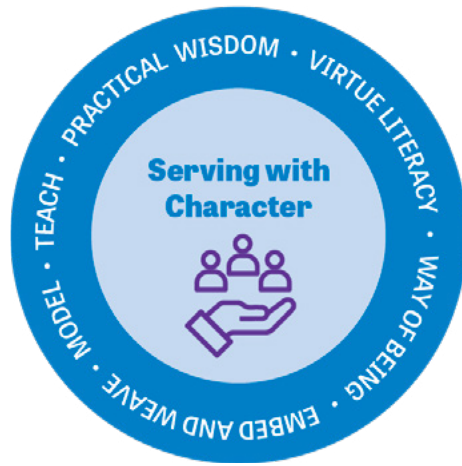


- [Grades 6-8 Sample Survey](#)

Section 3

SERVING WITH CHARACTER

Serving with character involves answering a vocational calling, modeling and teaching character that fosters human and societal flourishing by supporting virtue formation and the application of practical wisdom. By embedding character education in all facets of the community, it enhances the empowerment for individuals to seek character formation. Character can be taught implicitly and explicitly. Serving with Character activities can be used by leaders, leadership teams, teachers and staff.



As you navigate this book, please refer to the legend that is associated with each section. Each activity page will also align to that section's icon. These five icons come from the actions of each domain in the framework.



Cultivate character and virtue formation through modeling with character and practical wisdom (caught character)



Promote taught and sought character by developing and providing lessons centered on virtue literacy and practical wisdom



Embed and weave character education initiatives and core values throughout the content areas to promote character and virtue formation



Pursue and encourage virtuous action and high expectation



Deepen shared understanding of character and cultivate active citizenship through creating and participating in service opportunities by serving the wider community (sought character)



**CULTIVATE CHARACTER AND VIRTUE FORMATION THROUGH
MODELING WITH CHARACTER AND PRACTICAL WISDOM
(CAUGHT CHARACTER)**

CONVERSATION STARTER CALENDARS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will participate in brief, daily conversations around specific character traits

Character Traits Targeted:

All/any trait as determined by the school and/or teacher

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Conversation Calendars

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

Prior to Activity

Before this activity can be implemented, create your conversation starters calendars, or use the samples that are provided. Share these with all staff members who will be using these questions during class discussions.

During the Activity

Each day, or as the teacher deems appropriate, students will participate in a brief conversation in reference to the question on the calendar. Some days may also have things for students to do, so in lieu of having a discussion, students can complete the suggested task. Teachers may then choose to have a discussion about the task.

If you need more examples, or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Extension:

For older grade levels, teachers may have students edit the calendar and create their own questions around a specific character word, or topic.

Another way to utilize these calendars is by sending them home with students each month and encouraging their families to use the calendars as a discussion guide.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES

Sample Conversation Starters Calendars



- [September Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [October Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [November Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [December Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [January Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [February Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [March Conversation Starters Calendar](#)



- [April Conversation Starters Calendar](#)

GET TO KNOW THE FACULTY/STAFF

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will build relationships with faculty and staff

Character Traits Targeted:

All/any trait as determined by the school and/or teacher

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Interview Questions
- Morning Broadcast or intercom

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

The purpose of this activity is to help students form meaningful and respectful relationships with faculty and staff by getting to know them. Once a week (or more often depending on the size of the faculty/staff), use the morning broadcast or intercom announcements to interview faculty/staff. This allows students to get to know those in the building in order to build relationships. The interview questions should include questions about things faculty/staff do outside of school as students may have some of those same passions or hobbies. Questions can be adapted based on the level of the students. When the students see faculty/staff in the hallways, they now have something to connect with them about on a personal level.

Set-up a routine schedule so students know which day the interviews are expected and a calendar that faculty/staff can sign-up for or can be assigned.

Sample Questions:

1. Name, grade/subject you teach, how long teaching?
2. What is your favorite thing about teaching? This school?
3. What do you like to do outside of school?
4. What is a personal goal you have this year?
5. What is a character strength you have? Character trait to improve?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

This can also be done at a Pep Rally or other school and community events.

KINDNESS IN CHALK

Activity also applicable in:



Other: Cultivate character throughout the community

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Spread kindness to the community

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Sidewalk Chalk

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

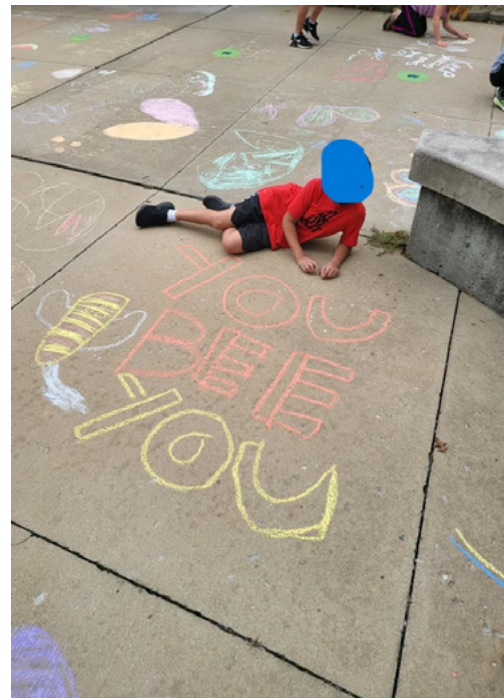
Prior to the activity:

- Send out communication to parents and staff.
- Choose a date and time (before school starts) to do the activity.
- Reach out to local businesses to see if the school can write messages of kindness on their sidewalks/parking lots.
- Gather volunteers to meet families and students at the local businesses (be a point of contact).

Activity:

Students, parents and staff come together in the morning to draw encouraging messages in chalk on school sidewalks/local businesses

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



POSITIVE OFFICE REFERRAL

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students and Staff will recognize each other for displaying positive core values

Character Traits Targeted:

School or organizations selected values

Grade Levels:

K-5 but may be adapted

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of Core Values with behavior expectations.
- Positive Office Referral Form.
- Way to celebrate those who earn the recognition.

PROCEDURES

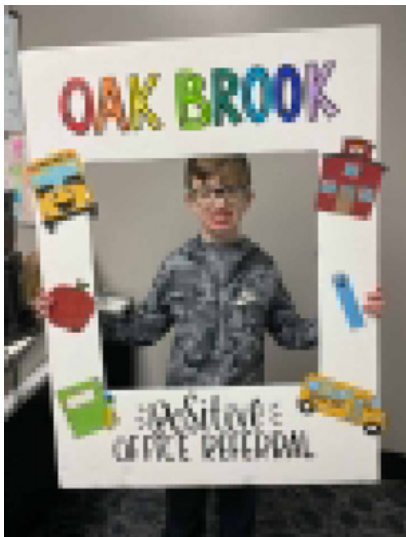
Steps for the Activity::

- Look at your school's identified core values and create a behavior expectations matrix from them (see below).
- Teach students the expectations using a shared language- these can be explicit or embedded in content (in literature, social studies, the arts, etc.).
- Share the positive office referral with students and staff.
- Have students and staff fill them out for each other (anyone may be recognized with a referral including: parent volunteers, students, community members and teachers/staff).
- Share the recognition on the school's social media outlets.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



[Behavior Expectations](#)



RESPECT ◊ INTEGRITY ◊ RESPONSIBILITY ◊ SELF-CONTROL ◊ KINDNESS

POSITIVE OFFICE REFERRAL

_____ is receiving this positive office referral because _____

Keep up the great work!

Dr. Shuly _____
PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL TEACHER DATE

Mr. Neelman _____

RESPECT ◊ INTEGRITY ◊ RESPONSIBILITY ◊ SELF-CONTROL ◊ KINDNESS



**PROMOTE TAUGHT AND SOUGHT CHARACTER BY DEVELOPING
AND PROVIDING LESSONS CENTERED ON VIRTUE LITERACY AND
PRACTICAL WISDOM**

KINDNESS KIDS | PK-2

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will understand practical ways to show kindness to people

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness

Grade Levels:

PK-2

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::



Watch the video:

[Sesame Street: The Kindness Kid Street Story](#)

Let's Discuss:

- Who can be a "kindness" kid?
- What are the many ways you can show kindness?
- What examples do you see in the video?

Activity:

Let's catch each other being Kind this week. We will have a special 'K' that we pass around when we see each other being kind.



Let's dance to some songs about being Kind:

[Sesame Street: Songs about Kindness Compilation with Elmo, Tori Kelly and more!](#)

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share videos with families so that you can have a common language.

UNDERSTANDING MY EMOTIONS | PK-2

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will reflect on when they have different emotions and consider safe ways to manage them

Character Traits Targeted:

Self-reflection, self-awareness, self-control, compassion

Grade Levels:

PK-2

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::



Listen to the video:

["Emotions" - StoryBots Super Songs Episode 8 | Netflix Jr](#)

Let's Discuss:

- What makes you happy?
- What makes you sad?
- What makes you grumpy?

Activity:

Make a list of things that can help you get happy again after you feel sad or grumpy.

EXTENSION

Share video and activity with families so that they can follow up with their child and offer support for how to manage feelings.

DEVELOPING PRACTICAL WISDOM AND VIRTUE LITERACY | GRADES 3-6

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

Activity also applicable in:



ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will learn about practical wisdom and its role in making decisions that promote the common good
- Students will explore and practice decision-making scenarios that benefit the community

Character Traits Targeted:

This is an assignment focused on practical wisdom. Therefore, many character traits may emerge from this activity

Grade Levels:

3-6

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Chart paper
- Printed handouts with decision-making scenarios

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity::

Introduction (10 minutes):

1. Begin by asking students what they think “practical wisdom” means. Write their responses on the whiteboard.
2. Explain that practical wisdom involves making thoughtful and wise decisions that benefit not only oneself but also the community or the “common good.”

Common Good Brainstorm (15 minutes):

1. Engage students in a discussion about what they believe the term “common good” means. Encourage them to share their thoughts and ideas.
2. Write down their responses on the whiteboard.
3. Discuss how decisions made for the common good can positively impact a community.

Decision-Making Scenarios (15 minutes):

1. Provide students with printed handouts containing various decision-making scenarios (e.g., sharing resources, helping a friend in need, finding something that doesn't belong to you, etc.).
2. In pairs or small groups, have students read, discuss and make decisions on how to respond to the scenario, considering what would be best for the common good.
3. Encourage students to explain their reasoning behind their choices.
4. Have students identify character traits that may be addressed in their decision.

An example of a scenario that may be used for this activity is listed below:

Money on the ground

Last weekend, you were with your parents at the store and they let you walk through the toy aisle to look around. You asked for a toy that cost \$5, but your parents told you that they would not buy it because they had just bought you a toy last week and that they didn't have

money to spend on another toy. The next day at school, you overheard someone in the hallway crying because they had lost the money their parents' gave them for the upcoming field trip. You also heard them mention it was \$5. You continue walking to class and see a \$5 bill folded up and pushed aside under the lockers in the hallway. This is just the exact amount of money you needed for the toy. It's also the amount of money the student in the hallways lost, but how can we be sure this \$5 belonged to her? What do you do?

Group share (15 minutes):

1. Student pairs or groups should prepare to share their findings with the class.
2. Students should read the scenario to the class, summarize the key issue in the case, present their solution for what to do and explain how their decision supports the common good.
3. As an additional step, students could also share how relying on one single virtue (such as a performance virtue) could have led them to a wrong decision that would not have promoted the common good. This is an advanced step and should be carefully moderated by the teacher in younger elementary classrooms. The objective of this step is to help students understand that decisions are complex and need time for reflection to ensure we are making decisions for the common good.

Reflection

1. Students may write in their reflection journal about a time someone helped them when they were in need or a time when someone helped them when they were not expecting it and how it made them feel.
2. Additionally, this can be extended to literacy activities in the classroom as students analyze characters from a story or book and how that character did or did not act with the common good in mind.

"I CAN DO THIS!!" | GRADES 3-6

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will understand the growth mindset and apply it to a goal

Character Traits Targeted:

Growth mindset, resilience

Grade Levels:

3-6

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Watch the video.



[The Mindset of a Champion | Carson Byblow | TEDxYouth@AASSofia](#)

Let's Discuss:

- What is a growth mindset?
- What is the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset?
- How did the 5th grader speaking in the video, use a growth mindset in reading?
- How can you have the mindset of a champion?
- What can you do when things are hard for you?

Activity:

Choose something you can't do very well YET and you want to get better at. Think about ways you can have a growth mindset about this activity. Write down 3 things that you can do to practice and grow in this area.

*Share video and activity with families so that they can follow up with their child and offer support for having a growth mindset.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - FORGIVENESS | GRADES 3-6

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

Activity also applicable in:



ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To help elementary children develop the character trait of forgiveness by exploring the concept of forgiveness and its importance in building positive relationships

Character Traits Targeted:

Forgiveness

Grade Levels:

3-6

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Smooth river rocks or stones (one per child)
- Paints and paintbrushes
- Water cups
- Paper towels
- Markers
- Small containers for paint mixing
- Protective aprons or old t-shirts
- Large poster board or chart paper
- Colored markers
- Book about forgiveness (optional)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Forgiveness is a powerful trait. We sometimes equate forgiveness with making whatever someone did OK. For instance, this person stole money from me and put me in a financial bind and if I forgive them, then it makes what they did OK. That is the wrong way to think about forgiveness. When someone wrongs you or does something to hurt you physically or emotionally, that hurt, that anger, can have a hold on you. Sometimes, the anger we harbor is almost worse than the sting of the initial actions. Anger and toxicity in our hearts is a destructive force that consumes us. The source of the anger and the hurt is the actions that someone committed against us. Forgiving them doesn't make their actions OK. What forgiveness does is release the hurt that they caused in your heart. Saying to yourself, "I forgive you for what you did and you can't hurt me emotionally anymore. But it does not make your actions right. There will still be consequences for those actions" is a powerful force to release the hold someone has over you and helps you to move to a place of reconciliation. Forgiveness combined with love and empathy is a path to a reconciliatory culture where we can make mistakes, because we are human, but not allow those mistakes to define us as a person or community. Forgiveness is hard for adults to practice and it is even harder for young children. It takes time and practice and the activity below may be a place to start with your students.

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin by discussing the concept of forgiveness with the children. Use age-appropriate language and examples to explain what forgiveness means. You can also read a short story or use a picture book that illustrates forgiveness to make the concept more relatable.

Circle Time Discussion (10 minutes)

- Sit in a circle and ask the children to share their thoughts on forgiveness.
- Encourage them to talk about times when they forgave someone or were forgiven by someone else.
- Discuss why forgiveness is important in maintaining good relationships and reducing conflict.

Forgiveness Rocks Preparation (10 minutes)

- Distribute smooth river rocks or stones to each child. Provide aprons or old t-shirts to protect their clothing.
- Explain that they will be decorating these rocks to symbolize forgiveness. This is an abstract activity, so you may need to explain a bit more here that they can use different colors, shapes, patterns, or pictures to express what forgiveness means to them.

Decorating the Forgiveness Rocks (20 minutes)

- Instruct the children to paint their rocks with colorful designs and patterns that represent forgiveness. They can use words like “forgive,” “peace,” “kindness,” and “friendship” to decorate the rocks.
- Encourage creativity and self-expression.
- This is an important part of the activity because forgiveness looks different for all of us and we express it in different ways. Forgiveness can be a challenging trait to practice as described above. Providing children the freedom to paint the rock according to what forgiveness means to them opens the door during discussion time to talk through the different ways we can forgive.

Sharing Circle (15 minutes)

- Gather the children in a circle once again. Ask each child to share their decorated forgiveness rock and explain what it represents to them. Encourage them to express why forgiveness is important in their own words.

Forgiveness Pledge (10 minutes)

- Create a large poster board or chart paper with a forgiveness pledge that the children can recite together. For example: “I pledge to forgive others when they make mistakes. Forgiveness helps us build strong and happy relationships.”

RESPONSIBILITY AND CITIZENSHIP | GRADES 3-6

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

Activity also applicable in:



ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To deeper understanding of character and citizenship by identifying key character traits and discussing the importance of being a responsible and respectful citizen

Character Traits Targeted:

Citizenship, respect, integrity

Grade Levels:

Grades 3-6

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Whiteboard and markers or a chalkboard and chalk
- Character trait cards (prepared in advance- perhaps school core values- traits such as honesty, respect, responsibility, kindness, fairness, etc.)
- Storybook with characters displaying various character traits (e.g., “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss also review the Curriculum Resources list at the end of this book provided by Canyon Center for Character Education for more examples based on grade level)
- Copies of the school citizenship pledge or promise (or a sample one if the school does not have one)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Introduction

- Begin by discussing the concepts of character and citizenship with the students.
- Ask students to share their thoughts on what it means to have good character and be a responsible citizen.
- Write key points on the board to create a list of their ideas.

Delivery

Character Trait Exploration:

- Distribute the character trait cards to the students.
- Instruct each student to choose a card without revealing it to others.
- Ask students to read their character traits silently and think about a time when they or someone they know demonstrated that trait.
- In pairs or small groups, have students connect these traits and their stories to the common good. A guiding question may be: “How might these traits serve the common good? How might they help us to make our community better?”
- This portion of the activity may take 10–15 minutes. After time is up, have each group share one trait and story and how their responses support the idea of the common good.

Literacy Connection (15 minutes)

- Read a storybook (e.g., “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss) that features characters with varying character traits.
- As you read, pause to discuss the characters’ actions and how they reflect their character traits.
- Ask students to identify characters from the story who displayed positive character traits and those who didn’t.
- Discuss the consequences of characters’ actions and how they relate to citizenship.

Character Pledge (10 minutes)

- Distribute copies of the school character/citizenship pledge. If there is no school-wide pledge, you can use a sample pledge. This may also be an opportunity for a service project for the class to develop a citizenship pledge for the school to present to the administration for adoption.
- Discuss the meaning of the pledge and why it's important for citizens to make such commitments.
- As groups to discuss how the pledge connects to their responses about citizenship and the common good. How can we model the pledge each day to promote the common good for others?

Writing Activity/Assessment

- Ask students to write a short paragraph about how they plan to demonstrate good character and citizenship in their everyday lives.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

You can use the writing activity responses about how they plan to demonstrate good character and citizenship in their everyday lives as catalysts for service learning opportunities.

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE: LESSON 1 – WHAT IS GRATITUDE

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will define gratitude and practice gratitude

Character Traits Targeted:

Gratitude

Grade Levels:

2nd -4th

Standards:

Common core ELA “comprehension and collaboration; presentation of knowledge and ideas

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Teacher has this message on the board whenever this lesson will be done. Preferably first thing in the morning, or after kids return from being outside the classroom. The message can be any variation of the following example.

Dear Class,

My heart is filled with such gratitude today because I get to be your teacher! I really appreciate how hard you all work to learn all that I am teaching you! I am so thankful to have a great bunch of boys and girls to work with! I am so proud of you and I am so grateful to be your teacher!

Love, _____

2. Have students read this on their own, have one child read it aloud, or teacher can read it aloud.

Questions and Discussions:

Let's define gratitude:

- Can you find the meaning of gratitude looking at the context clues in my message?
- What are all the words in the message that mean thankful?
- How does someone who has an attitude of gratitude feel?

3. Turn and talk to your partner about the things that you feel grateful for?

4. How do you feel after sharing all that you are grateful for?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

If there is time, kids can write a letter of gratitude like the one you modeled!

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE: LESSON 2 – GRATITUDE VS INGRATITUDE

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will be able to differentiate between attitudes of ingratitude and attitudes of gratitude

Character Traits Targeted:

Gratitude

Grade Levels:

1st-4th

Standards:

Common core ELA standards; “comprehension and collaboration: presentation of knowledge and ideas”

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Offer the kids the following scenarios, can you determine which one shows gratitude and which shows in gratitude?

Scenario:

Ms. Julie was not able to give extra recess because the weather was bad outside but she gave students a chance to color instead.

Response 1: Coloring is so boring, I want extra recess. Ms. C is the worst!

Response 2: Thank you Ms. C for giving us the option to color.

Scenario 2:

Mom and dad bought you new sneakers and they are not the exact ones you wanted.

Response 1: Thanks mom and dad for getting me sneakers, they are not the exact ones that I wanted but I am glad you got me shoes.

Response 2: I can't believe you got these, they are so ugly. I wanted the pink Jordans.

2. Discuss the scenarios and have students describe which response shows ingratitude and which response shows gratitude.

Highlight that you can be honest about not liking something and still be grateful.

Highlight that you can be disappointed about something and still be grateful.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Students can come up with more scenarios and decide how they can show gratitude instead of ingratitude.

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE: LESSON 3 – GIVING THANKS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will create and add to a gratitude journal

Character Traits Targeted:

Gratitude

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Students come into the classroom to a message written on the board:

Hey Kids,

Check out all the things I am feeling thankful for today!

I am thankful for my family and friends.

I am thankful that I am healthy and woke up today.

I am thankful for the cup of coffee my husband made me.

I am thankful that Ms. Belle smiled at me and said “hello” when I walked into school this morning.

Let's Discuss:

- What is something that we can sometimes forget to be grateful for? Turn and talk with a partner then we will share.
- Why do you think we might forget to be grateful for those things?

We are going to decorate these special journals. We will call them our gratitude journals, we will keep them in our desks and at the end of everyday, you can think of one thing you are grateful for, so we don't forget!

Students can be given permission to take home journals on the weekends as well.

CHARACTER TRAITS STUDENT GOAL SETTING ACTIVITY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will self-reflect on core values (specific character traits) and determine a goal

Character Traits Targeted:

School or organization core values or specific character traits

Grade Levels:

Kindergarten - 5th Grade

*Samples are for elementary education, however this activity can be adjusted to all grade levels

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Self-assessment/reflection sheets
- Goal setting sheets
- Set of core values (or specific character traits)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Determine what character traits you would like your students to self-reflect on.
 - These could include your school/organization core values or specific character traits.
- Your students should understand the importance of “living the character traits.” For example: are your students demonstrating character traits or core values, beyond the school setting? The goal of core values is to encourage students to “live” these values whether they are in the school setting or outside of the school setting (soccer game, on the bus, etc).
- Have students complete the self-reflection monthly.
- Students will set an individual goal that is focused on one character trait that is identified as an area of growth for them.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Have students share their individual character goal for the month and share how they plan on achieving that goal
 - What is your goal?
 - How did you determine your goal?
 - What is your plan to achieve this goal within the next month?
- Have students bring these home to discuss with their parents/guardians.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

Examples of reflection sheets and goal setting:



- [Kindergarten Self-Assessment/Reflection](#)



- [Elementary Self-Assessment/Reflections](#)

DEVELOPING VIRTUE LITERACY WITH COMPASSION

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The objective of this activity is to enhance virtue literacy, specifically focusing on the virtue of compassion
- Engage in interactive exercises and reflection to deepen understanding of compassion and its practical application in daily life

Character Traits Targeted:

Compassion

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Journal or notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: other people for discussion

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Compassion is the virtue of empathy, kindness and understanding towards others. Compassion is vital in building strong relationships, fostering a caring community and making positive contributions to society.

*Choose one or more of the activities listed below to complete.

Reflection and Visualization:

- Using a journal or in discussion with someone you'd like to try this exercise with, share their initial thoughts or experiences related to compassion.
- Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful setting, such as a serene garden or a beautiful natural landscape.
- Envision a situation where someone you know is experiencing a challenging or difficult time. Try to feel a sense of empathy and compassion towards this person.
- After a few moments, slowly open your eyes and reflect on your experience. Reflect on your thoughts and emotions, which you may wish to add to your journal.

Compassion Journaling:

- Write down a recent situation where you felt genuine compassion towards someone.
- Describe the situation, your feelings and the actions you took or would like to take to express your compassion.

Compassion Scenario Discussion:

- Review these hypothetical scenarios that require compassionate responses:
 - a friend going through a tough breakup
 - a stranger in need of help
 - a close friend who has recently experienced a significant loss, such as the death of a loved one
 - a colleague is overwhelmed by work-related stress
 - your partner is struggling with anxiety or depression
 - conflicts among colleagues or within a team

- Reflect and come up with compassionate solutions or actions you would take in the given scenario.
- Review potentially different approaches and perspectives for action in the given scenarios on the next page and then return to reflect. Reflect on whether they compare or are different from your own. Do any of them resonate with you?

Reflection and Action Plan:

- Identify specific actions they can take to practice compassion in your daily life.
- Summarize the importance of cultivating compassion and its potential impact on personal well-being and the community as a whole.

Compassionate Actions to Consider

Scenario 1:

- **Personal Lives - Supporting a Grieving Friend** In a personal life scenario, imagine a close friend who has recently experienced a significant loss, such as the death of a loved one. A compassionate response would involve actively listening to their feelings, offering a shoulder to lean on and providing emotional support. It may also include practical help, like assisting with funeral arrangements or taking care of daily tasks while they grieve. Offering empathy, understanding and patience throughout their healing process is essential to show compassion in this situation.

Scenario 2:

- **Professional Roles - Assisting a Stressed Colleague** In a professional setting, you may encounter a scenario where a colleague is overwhelmed by work-related stress. A compassionate response would involve acknowledging their feelings and validating their experience. Providing a supportive ear and offering help in managing their workload can make a significant difference. Compassion in this scenario also means promoting work-life balance, suggesting stress management techniques, or advocating for their well-being within the organization.

Scenario 3:

- **Personal Lives - Supporting a Partner with Mental Health Challenges** In personal relationships, it's common for individuals to face mental health challenges at some point. Suppose your partner is struggling with anxiety or depression, for instance. A compassionate response would involve educating yourself about their condition, practicing active listening without judgment and encouraging them to seek professional help if needed. Offering emotional support, helping them establish healthy coping mechanisms and being patient as they navigate their journey toward recovery are crucial aspects of showing compassion in this scenario.

Scenario 4:

- **Professional Roles - Addressing a Conflict in the Workplace** In a professional role, conflicts may arise among colleagues or within a team. A compassionate response in such a scenario would involve actively listening to each party involved, seeking to understand their perspectives and promoting open and respectful communication. It also entails mediating the conflict with fairness, empathy and a focus on finding mutually beneficial solutions. Compassion in this context requires creating a safe space for all individuals involved, encouraging collaboration and fostering a supportive work environment that values everyone's needs and well-being.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share your growth in compassion by modeling for others.

EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Identify aspects of empathy and compassion in order to cultivate those characteristics personally

Character Traits Targeted:

Empathy, compassion

Grade Levels:

1st- adult

MATERIALS

Materials needed for the activity.



- YouTube Video [\(1\) Inside Out Sadness comforts Bing Bong - YouTube](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Share with your class:

We are going to look at a clip, when you are watching the clip, consider what stands out for you in the interactions between the characters.

2. Watch: [\(1\) Inside Out Sadness comforts Bing Bong - YouTube](#)

3. Discuss the clip. Ask students:

- a. What resonates for you?
- b. What sticks out to you?
- c. How are empathy and compassion modeled?
- d. What is one thing you can do to show empathy and compassion?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

The movie Inside Out can be used for further discussion on a variety of character traits.

ENEMIES OR FRIENDS

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will reflect on ways they can be a good friend

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness, compassion, friendship

Grade Levels:

1-5

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:



Listen to the story:

['Enemy Pie' read by Camryn Manheim](#)

Discuss:

- Why does the main character put his new neighbor Jeremy Ross on his enemy list?
- How did the main character change as he spent his day with his neighbor, Jeremy?
- Have you ever felt that someone was your enemy?
- What can you learn from this story?

Activity:

- Instead of an enemy pie, let's make a friendship pie!
- Draw a big circle on a piece of paper and divide it into sections like a pizza pie. Write one way you can be a good friend in each section.

*Share video and activity with families so that they can follow up with their child and offer support on being a good friend.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will understand what happens in their brain when they “flip their lid” have a big emotion and what to do to help them not to flip their lids

Character Traits Targeted:

Self-control, problem solving, kindness

Grade Levels:

3rd -6th/7th grade

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:



Watch the video:

[Why Do We Lose Control of Our Emotions?](#)

Let's Discuss:

What big emotions might cause you to flip your lid?

What do you feel in your body when you have a big emotion?

Activity:

Have a plan for when you think you are going to “flip your lid”

Think who is one safe adult you can speak to when you are about to flip your lid?

Complete this sentence IF I feel like I am going to flip my lid.... THEN I will_____

Extension: Share video with families so that you can have common language.

HAVE A CUP OF KINDNESS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will understand the importance of sharing kind words with others. Students will also self-reflect on how they can apply this practice to daily life

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness, self-reflection

Grade Levels:

Kindergarten - 5th Grade

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



[Kid President Video](#)

“Cup of Kindness” Sheet

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Have a Cup of Kindness Activity
- Begin the lesson by watching this Kid President Video
- Discussion questions
 - What was your favorite line? Why?
 - Why do we sometimes need a pep talk?
 - Where do you go when you need a pep talk?
 - Are there people in your life that may need a pep talk more often than others? Why do you think that is?
 - What's something that could help make the world more awesome?
 - Who do you know that could use a little pep talk? What would you say to them?
- Explain that sometimes pep talks are also ways to share kindness
- Have each student cut out their “Cup of Kindness”
- Finish the writing prompt on the cup:
 - I will be kind by _____

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- Discussion questions:
 - Is there a time when you have given someone a pep talk?
 - Is there a time when you needed a pep talk or to hear something kind?
 - Reflect on your own character: How does it feel to share kind words to others? How does it feel to hear kind words about yourself?
- Set a goal to share kind words.



HEROES, VICTIMS, FOOLS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The goal of this activity is to engage participants in perspective taking and open-mindedness about who they are and what has influenced them to get to that point, as well as how that differs in others

Character Traits Targeted:

Curiosity, perspective taking, open-mindedness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- A series of images

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Display a picture of a recognizable person
- Either the whole group or smaller breakout/table groups discuss and determine how the person is a hero, victim and fool (Examples- Queen Elizabeth, Johnny Depp, Marilyn Monroe, etc.)
- The group discusses why they came to those conclusions. One person per group shares perspectives of choice.
 - Alternate activity would be to have individuals decide if the person in the image is a hero, victim or fool. Then have them move around the room based on their decision (i.e. those who believe the person is a fool all meet together) and as a group, they discuss and share out why they made that decision.
- The facilitators pose questions to build perspective amongst groups.
- Repeat for 2-3 times.
- Potential whole group discussion questions to provide deeper meaning:
 1. What are my values? How did they influence my decision?
 2. What are my biases? Are they connected to my values?
 3. Why do different perspectives exist?
 4. Am I doing enough to consider other perspectives in my decision making?
 5. What can I do to learn more about perspectives within my community?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Discuss with the group how their values and experiences altered their thoughts and opinions and how that of others differed for the same reasons.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The goal of this exercise is to promote self-awareness, mindfulness and connection to self. Additionally, the activity can provoke perspective taking and open-mindedness

Character Traits Targeted:

Self-awareness, honesty, vulnerability, perspective taking, open-mindedness, empathy, compassion

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Post-it notes
- Pens/pencils
- Optimal if completed outside

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Silent portion for building self-awareness, vulnerability, honesty and mindfulness:
 - Each participant would receive two post-it notes and sit anywhere in the room (not prescribed table groups).
 - Participants write one thing they are proud of about themselves, place that post-it on their chest and sit with that for a moment to become aware of their feelings.
 - Participants then write one thing they wish they could change or dislike about themselves on another post-it and focus on that for a moment.
 - Participants can share how they felt when they focused on their internal feelings each time they were tasked with writing about themselves.
- Interactive portion for perspective taking, compassion, empathy and open-mindedness:
 - Participants then take their shoes off and place their second post-it in their shoes, walk away as they take a moment to connect with nature and consider their feelings at that moment and then come back to another person's shoes.
 - They read that person's post-it and can respond to it, then walk around again to become connected with themselves.
 - They then return to their shoes to read the response from someone else and consider the different perspectives.
 - The activity should be used to build understanding of others, the need to take time to consider different views and how oneself and others impact well-being. They may feel compassion for others in their vulnerability, empathy in their feelings and perspective taking or open-mindedness when they read how others respond to the negative feelings they feel strongly about.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Participants can discuss the targeted virtues and if they experienced any shift in mindset and/or what they may have learned about themselves in the activity. This could also be used with middle school or high school students as an activity to demonstrate how labels can affect others. In this example, use labels on the post-its (EX: slacker, weirdo, etc).

JUST IN TIME CHARACTER LESSONS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will be presented lessons based on observed behaviors by staff members

Character Traits Targeted:

This can target any value observed by staff that needs reinforcement

Grade Level (if applicable):

K-5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of core values for the school
- Behavior matrix for what character “looks like” around the school
- Reflections from teachers about lessons needed for grade levels or classes
- Time for specialists to research lessons

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Use a matrix, like the one below, to teach expectations for the school through the use of your identified core values.
- Ask teachers and staff to submit areas/ideas/strategies to reinforce for classes and/or grade levels.
- Have specialists create lessons to reinforce behavior expectations through instruction around the core values (they could use lessons they create, videos, etc.).
- Specialists should share with staff what they have taught each group.
- Ensure staff are also modeling these behaviors. They may work together to reflect on their own representation of these values and how they model them in various ways. You might have a staff expectation rubric as well, such as in the break room, office, in class, in meetings, etc.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

This could be used in place of a specials class (P.E., music, art, etc.) on a character education focused day.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Behavior Expectations](#)

LEADERS WITH CHARACTER LIVING WAX MUSEUM

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will research an individual and create a presentation to share with their peers

Character Traits Targeted:

Leadership, cooperation, responsibility

Grade Levels:

K-5

Standards:

Research, oral presentation, note-taking

MATERIALS

- Materials needed to complete the activity:
- List of people that students can choose to research
- Graphic organizer for students to use to organize their research
- Research resources (computers, trade books, etc.)
- Index or note cards
- Construction paper, for creating a “button” for the wax museum
- Parent letter (if including families)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Prior to Activity

1. Create a list of people, both living and deceased, that students can choose to study for this assignment. Students may also choose someone who is not on the list, pending your approval.

During the Activity

1. Give students this handout with the directions for the project.
2. Go over the directions and provide the students with a timeline for the activity.
3. Emphasize that you want the focus to be on how each person positively impacted the world and the legacy left behind.

Presentations

1. Have each student present to the class prior to the living wax museum. Allow students to give only positive feedback.
2. Have students tweak their presentations as needed.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

1. After students have presented to their guests, take time to discuss and reflect with them about the process. Take their feedback to adjust the activity for the next groups of students.

Extension

1. You may choose to involve families in this by having a night performance. Parents can come to school to visit the Living Wax Museum and see all of the students' speeches.
2. You may also have students work together on this project and focus more on groups of people of historical significance.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



▪ [Leaders with Character-Living Wax Museum Project Instructions](#)



▪ [Leaders with Character Graphic Organizer](#)



▪ [Leaders with Character Scoring Guide](#)

PIXAR PITCH PROMPTS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To reflect and write using a series of prompts

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Paper
- Writing tool

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

The participants tell a story, like a Pixar pitch, about themselves by completing the following prompts. The idea is to reflect, be honest, be creative and write about anything the participants feel appropriate.

- Once upon a time
- Every day
- Then one day
- Because of that (repeat)

Can share out as a group.

SPREADING KINDNESS

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will reflect on ways they can spread kindness in the world

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness, compassion

Grade Levels:

Pre-K, 5th grade

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Listen to the story:



[Color Your World With Kindness](#)

Let's Discuss:

- What do you see happening in the video?
- What is happening to add color?
- How can you color the world around you?

Activity:

- How can you “color the world” by spreading kindness? Can you think of 3 ways that you did not see in the video?

Closing:

- Share video and activity with families so that they can follow up with their child on acts of kindness



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will problem solve conflict in a communal effort

Character Traits Targeted:

Any

Grade Level:

1 - 5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of values (school, classroom, etc.)
- List of classroom rules and expectations
- Optional: timer

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

This activity will require covering basic expectations and “court conduct”. Before introducing this, consider what expectations you have for the classroom when someone presents a conflict and how the group can problem solve and find a resolution. This may include discussing specific character traits/virtues that should be displayed, such as empathy, kindness, respect, etc. and what that looks like or sounds like in action. Role play and modeling are excellent ways to set the expectations. Also think about how students submit a conflict (conflict box, calling a “meeting”, etc.)

During Activity:

When a conflict has been submitted, the entire classroom comes together. This can be during morning meetings, or you can set a time during the day/week where students can submit a conflict and have a classroom meeting. Students will come together and listen to the different sides of the conflict. As the teacher, you can guide the conversation, especially for younger students, but you can also give students the freedom to discuss the conflict with as little intervention as possible. All students will be encouraged to offer resolutions to those who are in conflict. Once the discussion ends or time runs out, “court” ends when students vote on a proposed resolution if appropriate, or if the students in the conflict hear a resolution they both agree on.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing:

If conflict resolution cannot be achieved in the allotted time, students can opt to have a second session.

Option:

This activity can be something you integrate into your regular schedule, a time when students can bring up conflict or problems that they want to talk about without stopping the entire classroom in an activity.

STUDENT GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will cultivate practical wisdom and discipline with different life skills

Character Traits Targeted:

Practical wisdom, prudence, discipline, self-control

Grade Levels:

1 - 8

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.



- List of school virtues/values
- [Goal Achievement Sheet](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

Discuss what skills students need to work on. Make sure that the goals are tangible goals where different virtues are involved (completing homework log every night, cleaning room when asked, playing outside before electronics, etc.) Also discuss whether the chosen goal is the right challenge for the student. If you can, get student families involved so that they can help.

During Activity:

Each student will record when they successfully/unsuccessfully completed their goal. The student will record their practice every day for each school quarter. Students will show teachers every week to two weeks their progress. Teachers will discuss what has helped them practice every day or what has stopped them from practicing every day, what motivates them, etc.

After Activity:

This could be an ongoing activity for the entire school year. Consider keeping each student's logs to show them the progress they made over the school year. Also consider keeping parents updated, showing them progress and keeping them a part of the goal setting as much as they are able.

THE WILL LESSON

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will participate in a lesson where they discuss making wise choices
- Students discuss how their choices affect who they are and the state of their communities

Character Traits Targeted:

Any/practical wisdom/discernment

Grade Levels:

Pre-K - 8

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Dry erase marker or chalk

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity: Internalize the lesson first. Highlight or map out the questions you want to ask, or write your own. If you have questions please contact Emilie Rogers at: baroque.era93@gmail.com

Part 1: Defining the Will

Write this on your board:

Will- The ability to choose/the ability to make decisions

Important things to cover:

- Every person has a will
- Your will can be used for good and bad decisions
- (for older students) Your will can be used to make all kinds of decisions, some decisions are better than others and some decisions are the best decision

Some questions to ask:

- How do your decisions affect you?
- How do your decisions affect your classroom?
- How do your decisions affect your family?
- How do your decisions affect your friends?

For older students: Who do your decisions affect? When you make decisions, who are you thinking about?

When asking these questions, write bullet points of student answers on the board.

Part 2: Examples

Ask students for examples when their decisions affect them or people around them. Write the decision, the consequence and who it affected on the board.

Important to cover:

- Challenge students who struggle to see consequences outside of themselves (Were you the only person who was affected by _____?)
- Spend as much time as you can on this section to get them thinking critically about past decisions
- For students who are mature and emotionally ready, the discussion can go into how their actions affect who they are becoming (What you do helps determine what type of person you will be in the future)

Part 3: Expectation

Leave room or erase what you need, then write this question (as is or in your own words) on the board: How can we use this knowledge about ourselves in our classroom?

Other questions that you can ask:

- What decisions do we have to make in our classroom?
- What are some choices you have made that made your day at school great/horrible?
- Why should we practice making wise/thoughtful/appropriate decisions?

Important things to cover:

- We are in control of our choices and responses
- Our classroom community is a place where our choices are felt by everyone
- We are here to practice making wise decisions

To conclude the lesson, have the class make a “community expectation” on making decisions. They get to practice making a decision on what they expect of themselves. If this is too difficult of a task for your classroom, they can write (or draw) their own expectation about making good choices. Optionally, they can also decide the best place to hang up their expectation in the room.

At the end of the lesson, write the expectation that students agree on on a piece of paper. If time permits, let students make it their own. They can sign their name on the expectation paper or decorate it to make it their own.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Extension: For older students, they could write individual expectations on wise decision making or write goals (choosing healthier options, choosing earlier bedtime, etc.) that they can work on during the year.

Optionally, they can use the [goal achievement sheet](#) to help reach their goal and track their progress.





**EMBED AND WEAVE CHARACTER EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND
CORE VALUES THROUGHOUT THE CONTENT AREAS TO PROMOTE
CHARACTER AND VIRTUE FORMATION**



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will learn what the word “hero” means, choose character traits that make someone a hero and then write about that person, using those traits

Character Traits Targeted:

Various

Grade Levels:

2nd+, but this is directed at 2nd grade

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.



- [What Makes a Hero sheet](#)
- Writing utensils

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Begin the lesson by asking students for examples of heroes. Write the list on the board. Have students brainstorm words that they associate with heroes.
2. Tell students that they will choose someone who they consider to be a hero to write about. You can either conclude the first part of the lesson here to give students more time to think of a hero, or continue on to Step 3.
3. Show students the What Makes a Hero sheet. Together, use one of the heroes the students named to do a practice writing.
4. Have students choose the character words that they think best describe this person. Follow the directions on the worksheet and complete as a whole class.
 - a. As a variation on this, you can put students in small groups with the lists of character traits and task each group to collectively decide on three that they believe the hero embodies.
 - b. Students then come back together as a whole group and explain the traits they chose and the reasoning behind their choices.
 - c. Then, as a class, students must choose the character traits that they all feel are most prevalent in this person.
5. Have students complete the worksheet independently. The second page of the worksheet is for an illustration or picture of their hero and the lines below are for their final copy. Again, you may choose to do this on a separate day, or spread this over multiple days.

If you need more information, or have questions, contact Denise Funston at dfunston@windsorc1.com.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing

When students have completed their writing, give them the opportunity to share what they wrote with their classmates.

Extension

For older students, you can choose to identify more character traits and/or use a longer writing, such as three paragraphs for the body of the writing, one each to describe a character word that was chosen to describe their hero.

Another extension is to include letter writing in this activity. If possible, have students write a letter to their heroes, telling them about this assignment. Have students address an envelope and mail the letter, with a copy of their assignment, to the hero.

Students can also do this as a group, where they decide on either a single person, or a group that they believe are heroes.

MEDALS FOR HEROES

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Learn about service to our country and honor military members (current and veterans) with a handmade medal

Character Traits Targeted:

Respect, service

Grade Levels:

3rd-5th

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Ribbon
- Sharpies
- Tooling metal for medals
- Metal working tools
- Hot Glue (or other craft glue)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Talk with students about what service to our country looks like and what our military has sacrificed for our nation. Information from the “About Veterans Day” article may be helpful during this conversation.
- You can allow students to share their prior knowledge
- Include partner talk and conversation starters
- Provide each student with a piece of tooling metal to cut out into a circle and design with the tools
- Students may draw their design directly on the metal
- Color their designs with sharpies
- Glue the ribbon on to the medal
- Present medals to Veterans in the area

CLOSING/EXTENSION

These medals could be presented to military members at a Veterans Day (VA) ceremony at school or in a VA home or mailed to family members.

Have students reflect on why it is important to honor those who have served our nation in the military and why was this project important (Reflection sheet example below).

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



- [Reflection Sheet](#)



- [About Veterans Day](#)

EXPLORING THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will understand the concept of forgiveness, its emotional and psychological benefits practice forgiveness through various activities and discussions

Character Traits Targeted:

Forgiveness

Grade Levels:

6th-8th

Assessment:

Assess student participation in discussions, the content of their forgiveness letters and the creativity and effort put into their forgiveness art.

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Chart paper and colored markers
- Art supplies (paper, markers, colored pencils, etc.)
- A short video clip or a story on forgiveness (included below)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Introduction (15 minutes):

1. Begin by asking students to think about a time when someone apologized to them or when they apologized to someone else. Discuss their feelings and experiences briefly.
2. Introduce the concept of forgiveness by defining it: "Forgiveness is the act of letting go of anger, resentment, or the desire for revenge towards someone who has harmed you."
3. Share the lesson objective: "Today, we will explore the power of forgiveness and how it can positively impact our lives."

Discussion (15 minutes):

4. Engage students in a discussion about the benefits of forgiveness. Ask questions like:
 - What do you think happens when we hold onto anger and resentment?
 - How might forgiveness affect our mental and emotional well-being?
 - Can you think of a situation where forgiveness might be challenging but ultimately beneficial?

Story or Video Clip (Optional - 10 minutes):

- Share a short video clip or a story that illustrates the concept of forgiveness. Discuss the characters' feelings and the outcomes of forgiveness in the clip.

Activity 1: Forgiveness Letter

- Instruct students to write a forgiveness letter to someone who may have hurt or wronged them in the past. They don't need to send the letter; it's for their personal reflection.
- Emphasize that the letter should focus on expressing feelings, understanding and letting go, rather than blaming or seeking an apology.

Activity 2: Forgiveness Art

- Provide art supplies and instruct students to create artwork that represents forgiveness. They can choose their medium (drawing, painting, collage, etc.).
- Encourage them to express their feelings about forgiveness through their art.

Group Sharing (10 minutes):

- Invite students to voluntarily share their forgiveness letters or artwork with the class, if they feel comfortable.
- After each sharing, discuss the emotions and thoughts associated with forgiveness.

Closing and Reflection (10 minutes):

- Summarize the key points of the lesson on forgiveness.
- Ask students to reflect on how forgiveness might benefit them personally and in their relationships with others.
- Encourage them to consider practicing forgiveness when appropriate in their lives.

Homework (Optional):

- As homework, students can research and write a short paragraph about a famous person or public figure who has demonstrated the power of forgiveness in their life.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Extension Activities (Optional):

- Invite a guest speaker or counselor to discuss the psychological aspects of forgiveness.
- Explore forgiveness in different cultures and religions through research and presentations.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



■ [Cultivating Forgiveness \(Kids\)](#)



■ [The Power of Forgiveness \(Adults\)](#)

Why Forgiveness Matters...

A great video (for later)

[I forgive you](#)

Let's Forgive someone

1. Close your eyes and think about a person you are holding a grudge against
2. Think about the situation and why you got to this point, what upset you or angered you, what happened?
3. Now take a few min and let go...write a quick letter to the person saying what you need to in order to truly forgive and move on
4. Consider sending this to the person after our session today!



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will understand the ethical implications of business practices
- Students will identify accounting practices that promote honesty and accountability

Character Traits Targeted:

Honesty, trustworthiness, integrity

Grade Levels:

High School Accounting, Business and Marketing Classes

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Using the following scenarios, lead students through a discussion of the critical importance of honesty in various business-related practices. *These are possible scenarios; please feel free to adapt or create a scenario that supports your curriculum.*

Accounting Scenario:

You have just started your job as an entry-level accountant at a medium-sized accounting firm. Your supervisor assigns you to work on a client's financial statements. As you review the documents, you notice some irregularities in the company's financial records. It appears that the client has intentionally overstated their revenues and understated their expenses to make their financial performance look better than it actually is. Your supervisor tells you to ignore these discrepancies and proceed with the financial statements as they are.

What ethical dilemmas do you face in this situation and how would you respond? Discuss the potential consequences of your actions, both if you comply with your supervisor's instructions and if you choose to address the irregularities honestly. How do these decisions relate to ethical principles in the field of accounting?

This scenario can stimulate a conversation about integrity, professional responsibility and the importance of ethical behavior in the accounting profession.

Business Scenario:

You and a close friend are both interested in starting a small online business. You have access to a unique and innovative product idea that you believe will be very successful. However, your friend is not aware of the full potential of this idea and suggests launching a similar but less effective product.

You face an ethical dilemma: Do you share your innovative idea with your friend, potentially making the business venture more successful but also risking that they might take the idea and use it without you? Or do you keep the idea to yourself and pursue it independently, possibly damaging your friendship?

Discuss the ethical considerations involved in this situation, such as honesty, fairness and the impact of your decision on both the business venture and your friendship. What factors would you weigh when making your choice and why?

This scenario can prompt students to explore the complexities of ethical decision-making in business relationships, highlighting the importance of trust and open communication.

Marketing Scenario:

Imagine you are a marketing manager at a small local company that sells organic skincare products. Your boss approaches you with a proposal to create a false online review for one of your products. The product is good, but not as miraculous as the review would claim it to be. Your boss argues that this glowing review will boost sales significantly, helping the company grow. What would you do in this situation and why? Discuss the ethical implications of your decision in the context of marketing and business practices.

This scenario can spark a discussion on honesty, integrity and the long-term consequences of unethical marketing practices in the business world.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Students turn in a one-page reflection on the experience of discussion scenarios and include recommendations for a fictitious company handbook.



BLACK OUT POETRY

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To express oneself through word selection, a reflection activity

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Copies of various reading materials (book pages, newspapers, poetry, etc)
- Sharpies

PROCEDURES:

Steps for the Activity:

- Participants select a piece of text (book pages, newspaper, poems, etc) and have it copied on paper.
- Participants read through and select words they appreciate, connect with, like, that tell their story, etc.
- Participants can box those words, underline them or mark them for keeping.
- Participants use a Sharpie marker to black out the other words, leaving only their selected words as visible. They can simply mark over the other words or creatively create an image of their choice by coloring with various sharpie colors and creating the image.
- The final product is a poem created by the words they chose to keep, reflecting the participants in some way.
- Participants can share as a group or pairs.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Blackout Poetry Video](#)

[Example of the final product](#)



BUDDY INTERVIEWS

Activity also applicable in:



Deepen an understanding of problem solving strategies that align to character education

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create a deeper connection to peers/buddy

Character Traits Targeted:

Connectedness

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Buddy Interview Worksheet](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

*This activity can be done with other grade level peers, but the idea for it is to be completed with another school buddy.

- Why do we have buddies?
- Make new connections
- Help each other
- Have someone at school who is there for you
- Give all students one copy of the Buddy Interview Worksheet
- Have buddies take their time to interview each other

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Optional:

- Have students pretend be doing a radio, podcast or television interview with their buddies
- At the end of the activity, have students share one new thing they learned about their buddy



INTENDED ACTIVITY AUDIENCE

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students learn about character traits through a field trip

Character Traits Targeted

All/any trait as determined by the school and/or teacher

Grade Levels:

3rd-12th (Adapt for Grade Level)

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Field Trip Guide](#)
- Pen/pencil
- Field trip location

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Field trips expose students to a wide variety of people and places. Use field trips as opportunities to incorporate the content as well as character education.

1. Before the field trip, provide each student with a copy of the Field Trip Guide.
2. Discuss the school's core values and examples of them.
3. During the field trip, have students complete the Field Trip Guide in which they write down examples of where they see, hear or experience the school's core values.
4. Upon completion of the field trip, have students write a short reflection of the ways they saw, heard or experienced the school's core values on the field trip.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

This lesson plan and Field Trip Guide can be used with virtual fields. It can also be used around the school if a field trip outside of the school grounds is not possible. The guide can be used around the school prior to the field trip to help students understand how to use the guide.

STOP, LOOK AND THANK: PEER-TO-PEER VIRTUE REFLECTION

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will participate in a writing activity that requires they think about the character traits of their peers

Character Traits Targeted:

Gratitude, any traits that are central to schools ethos

Grade Levels:

1-5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Strips of construction paper or thank you cards
- Pencils
- Optional: markers, crayons or pencils to decorate handmade cards
- List of school character traits

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

If you are doing this activity with younger students who are still practicing writing skills, consider making some pre-written sentence strips for them to copy from. They could say, "I noticed that you did _____" or "Thank you for showing _____". Consider your schedule and determine how many times a year that your classroom can participate in the activity, or if you want to have students write notes whenever they would like.

During Activity:

Students in the classroom will be asked to think about one of their classmates and a time when they showed character. You can limit the number of character traits they can write about to help them make a more efficient decision, or you can focus on one character trait every time you do this activity. Students will then write "thank you notes" to a classmate for showing a particular character trait during the school day. Encourage students to write about a specific time they saw that classmate acting with character.

If you prefer strips of construction paper instead of thank you notes, you can have the students make a paper chain to hang up in the classroom. This can be the "Character Chain" that can be added to any time.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Closing:

When they are finished writing and/or decorating, students will give their note to the classmate. If you opted for the construction paper, have the recipient of the note staple and add their links to the "Character Chain".

Things to Consider: Some students might not receive a "thank you note" or receive too many notes. If this is a possibility in your classroom, you can "assign" students to each other as "character buddies" during the activity. If you decide to give students the opportunity to write notes anytime they like, character buddies might not be needed.

STUDENT ADVOCACY LETTER ACTIVITY

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Practice civic virtue by having students write advocacy letters to local/state/national officials on new policies and laws

Character Traits Targeted:

Justice, community awareness, citizenship

Grade Levels:

1st-12th

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Letter template or paper
- Writing utensils
- For older students: advocacy letter example
- Newspaper or list of upcoming decisions for local/state/national governments
- Names and mailing addresses of local/state/national representatives
- Envelopes
- Postage

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Have students choose who they want to write to and what issue they want to write about. Make sure that the issue they want to advocate for/against is manageable for their age/grade level.
2. Depending on grade level, you can have students use the fill-in template, or you can use an example letter as guidance.
3. Have students address and stamp envelopes. Drop letters off at a local post office.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Extension: For schools that primarily use computers, sending advocacy emails is also a great option.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS RESOURCES



[Advocacy Letter Template](#)



[Advocacy Letter Example](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- The importance of thinking before you speak

Character Traits Targeted:

Kindness, integrity, respect

Grade Levels:

K-5th

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

Before you speak: THINK (poster included below)

Chrysanthemum Book (or online story)

Paper hearts

Words Matter PDF (linked below)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Think Before You Speak Activity

- Participants will discuss how saying unkind words can hurt others and that it is important to say the kind things.

- Think

- T: Is it true?
- H: Is it helpful?
- I: Is it inspiring?
- N: Is it necessary?
- K: Is it kind?

- Each student gets a heart



- As you watch the read aloud of [Chrysanthemum](#),

- Everytime someone says something unkind (mean, rude) to her, or about her, wrinkle the heart

- At the end of story, students will see that their heart is wrinkled and even if you try to “make it right”, it still doesn’t leave the heart perfect like it started

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Discussion questions:

- How do you think Chrysanthemum felt?
- Why is it important to “Think Before you Speak”?
- Has there been a time when someone has said unkind words to you? How did you feel?
- What can we do to make sure we don’t wrinkle someone’s heart?

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



[Words Matter Powerpoint](#)

Before you speak:

T H I N K

T = Is it True?

H = Is it Helpful?

I = Is it Inspiring?

N = Is it Necessary?

K = Is it Kind?





**PURSUE AND ENCOURAGE VIRTUOUS ACTION AND
HIGH EXPECTATION**

IDENTIFYING HOT SPOTS AND SAFE SPOTS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students identify areas of the building where they feel unsafe and bullying happens. Students also identify “safe” spots in the building where they can go if they need support

Character Traits Targeted:

Respect, kindness, empathy

Grade Levels:

6th-12th

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Diagram of layout of school building and grounds

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Discuss the idea that bullying can happen out of the eye sight of teachers and staff
2. Distribute individual copies of a diagram of the school building and grounds
3. Ask each student to identify with an “X” any areas they consider to be “hot spots” for bullying
4. Ask each student to identify with a “smiling face” areas of the school where they feel they can go for support
5. Facilitate sharing of diagrams in partners or small groups
6. Lead a whole class discussion of identified “hot spots” and “safe spots”
7. Develop talking points for a discussion or recommendations for addressing “hot spots” with school leadership team
8. Share talking points with school leadership
9. Students can write emails or notes thanking the leadership team for listening to their concerns
10. Develop a plan of action to increase feelings of safety on campus by addressing hot spots and increasing awareness of safe spots

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Share findings with student leadership groups, administration and students through an awareness campaign. Include opportunities for the student body to participate in solution based discussions and initiatives.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create a sense of belonging for new students and all staff-new and old
- Establish a sense of community for incoming freshmen students
- Develop shared understanding of high school expectations for behavior, academics and after school activities

Character Traits Targeted:

Respect, responsibility, teamwork, cooperation, kindness

Grade Level:

Grade 9

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Freshmen NET is a high school orientation program your teachers and staff design for incoming 9th graders. The program goals include welcoming students to their new school and helping them feel comfortable with their transition to high school. These transition activities will help students understand not only the academic curriculum, but also the hidden curriculum, which is so important in helping students start off the school year on the right foot.

Your program will be unique to your school and can be delivered as a transition day(s) in the summer before school begins or during the first day(s) of the school year.

Use this time to teach expectations, educate freshmen about their surroundings, familiarize them with the building and staff and show them where they can find resources.

This is the time to intentionally teach your school character traits, school mission and school motto. It is also the time to help build community and student sense of belonging through team building activities. You may also consider using upperclassmen as leaders of this program and continue mentorship throughout the year with check ins and relationship building time. You could additionally invite staff members to be involved as a “family unit” throughout the year.

The concept of “net” may be helpful in your design: nurture, educate and train.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

A closing celebration/assembly is a great way to bring this experience to a close for freshmen. Consider inviting upper classmen or key staff members who have not been involved up to this point to help expand the safety net and social networks.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES REFLECTION

Activity also applicable in:



Deepen an understanding of problem solving strategies that align to character education

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Self-reflection on character

Character Traits Targeted:

School's core values, self-reflection

Grade Levels:

K-5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [K-2 Restorative Reflection Sheet](#)



- [3-5 Restorative Reflection Sheet](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- This reflection sheet should be utilized when behavior needs to be addressed.
- This allows students to self-reflect on individual character, in addition to how their actions impact others.
- Teachers and/or administrators should discuss responses with students to gain deeper understanding and connect to the school's core values
- Potential questions:
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking of at the time?
 - What have you thought about since?
 - Who has been affected by what happened? In what ways?
 - What do you think you need to do to make things right?
- Considerations:
 - Ensure you are using the discipline as an opportunity to teach.
 - Provide respect and space for students
 - Allow them to talk

ARE YOU GRITTY?

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on your level of grit and how you can grow in your grittiness

Character Traits Targeted

Courage, Passion, Conscientiousness, Resilience, Perseverance

Grade Levels:

5th-12th

MATERIALS



- [Grit Video](#)



- [Grit Survey](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Read the following definition of grit by Angela Duckworth

“Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals. One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn’t.

Grit isn’t talent. Grit isn’t luck. Grit isn’t how intensely, for the moment, you want something.

Instead, grit is about having what some researchers call an “ultimate concern”—a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow.

Talent and luck matter to success. But talent and luck are no guarantee of grit. And in the very long run, I think grit may matter at least as much, if not more.”



- [Watch his video to understand GRIT better.](#)



- [Take the grit survey below to reflect on your personal level of grit.](#)

3. Reflect on the results from your survey. In what areas can you grow in your grit?

4. Why do you think grit is important for your life?

5. Who can help you to be more gritty? How can they help?

CLOSING/EXTENSION

These reflections can be used to develop SMART goals for moving forward. The reflections can be shared in groups or pairs to discuss strategies for improvement.

Watch these clips to understand Grit more.



[What is Grit? | Angela Duckworth](#)



[Why Effort Matters More Than Talent | Angela Duckworth](#)



BUILDING STUDENT-LED CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Creating easily accessible and sustainable rules and expectations for students in the classroom

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Poster Paper or Poster Board
- Crayons, Markers, Colored Pencils
- List of school virtues/values
- Any other decorating materials

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before Activity:

Set up classroom with a work station. For larger classrooms, the workstations can be for small groups or individuals that take turns writing rules/decorating paper. You can have each student write and decorate their own paper that they keep to remind them of the rules or have a large poster paper that everyone can help decorate and hang up in the classroom. Determine beforehand how many rules you think would be needed/appropriate for your students to choose. You could make rules that you have and then let the students set a few of their own so that they have a model of what a rule looks like.

During Activity:

Get students settled and let them know that you will be discussing the classroom rules and expectations. Start the discussion by asking the students what makes a classroom peaceful/productive/fun. Once they discuss their answers, lead the conversation into what it takes to make that type of classroom possible. This is where you can guide them into the purpose of rules/expectations. If time allows, you could also discuss the school virtues and why they are important for their classroom during this time.

Once you have finished this discussion, ask your students what rules would help you achieve the goal of a peaceful classroom and also help cultivate the virtues discussed at school. Depending on how engaged your students are in the discussion, it might be necessary for you to have the final say of how the rules will be written. Allow students to combine school virtues together into one rule or pick which virtues to focus on for the school year.

Before moving on, let students know that by choosing these rules, they are agreeing that these rules are ones that they are to follow. If you are making a rule poster to hang up, consider having each student sign their name at the bottom like a contract and discuss the importance of contract signing and what it means.

Once the allotted number of rules have been chosen and written out clearly on a board or on poster paper, direct students to their work stations. Have students/student groups take turns decorating and/or signing their name. If each student is decorating their own rule paper to keep, have them determine the best place to keep it.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

End of Activity:

Help students hang up the poster or pick a spot for their individual rule paper. Close the activity by having them help clean up the work stations if appropriate.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To understand the influence of a role model on your character formation

Character Traits Targeted:

Varies

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Paper
- Writing tool

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Think about a role model or moral influence in your life. Write down some ways you'd describe this person.

Think about the virtues they may demonstrate.

- For example, are they kind, compassionate, humble, or demonstrate moral decisions?
- Maybe they are resilient or embody grit and high performance.
- It may be that they contribute to service in the community through volunteering or promoting social justice.

Now, write a letter to this personal influence expressing your gratitude for who they are and/or what they've done. If comfortable, share this letter with this person!

You may also consider this approach regarding a person you do not admire and do not want to be like.



Adapted from:

McLoughlin, S., Pendrous, R., Henderson, E. and Kristjansson, K. (2023). Building Your Best Life: A Workbook for Character and Career Development. Retrieved from:

http://pure-oai.bham.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/211341874/Character_Workbook106.pdf

CLOSING/EXTENSION

This can be used for role models, moral exemplars, moral influences in one's life or someone you wish not to emulate as you do not admire them.

In place of writing a letter, you may write a summary in a reflective journal.



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Deepen an understanding of problem solving strategies that align to character education

Character Traits Targeted:

Collaboration, problem-solving, empathy, self-advocacy, conflict resolution

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Video: [Understanding Conflict Resolution Video](#)
- Obee Choices

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

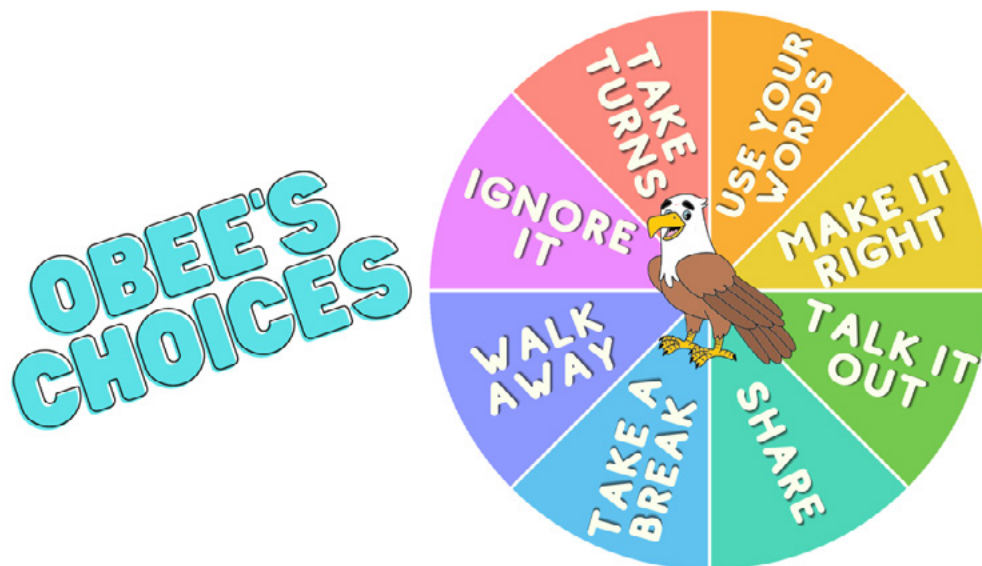
Please note: You can change the name of this to fit the need of your school

- Begin the lesson with the Understanding Conflict Resolution video
- Big problem vs. little problem
 - Teach students the differences between big problems and little/small problems
 - Create an anchor chart with the class outlining big vs. little problems
- If it is a small problem, then they need to use one or more of Obee's Choices to solve it, but if it is a big problem they need to find and tell a trusted adult.
- What do Obee's Choices look like? Talk through each choice on the circle of choices.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

- If times allows, you can give students scenarios on how to use Obee's Choices

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Activity also
applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students set expectations on how to treat others and how they want to be treated

Character Traits Targeted:

All/any trait as determined by the school and/or teacher

Grade Levels:

K-4 (adapt for grade level)

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- Circles All Around Us by Brad Montague; Can use the [read aloud](#)
- Big sticky note/project/whiteboard
- marker

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

1. Read Circles All Around Us by Brad Montague to the class. The book shows how we can make a difference in those around us by the way we treat them.
2. Have students share how they want to be treated. Record student responses on a big sticky note/projector/board. Give the opportunity to all students to share how they want to be treated. If a similar response is given, place a check by the recorded response. The discussion is very important.
3. Next, have students share “How they plan to treat others.” Record student responses on a big sticky note/projector/board. Give the opportunity to all students to share how they will treat others. If a similar response is given, place a check by the recorded response.
4. Based on how students want to be treated, as a class, have students create expectations.
5. Then, based on how they plan to treat others, add to the list of expectations. There will probably be four to six expectations on this list depending on the grade level.
6. The list of final, student made, expectations should be posted in the room to be used as a reference throughout the year.
7. OPTIONAL: Have students sign the poster of expectations signaling a commitment to uphold high expectations.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

1. Host a commitment signing ceremony with a fancy pen and dress clothes.
2. Frame the expectation poster.
3. Include expectations for academics.

VETERANS DAY ASSEMBLY

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Learn about how to honor our military veterans while planning for and presenting an assembly in their honor

Character Traits Targeted:

Service, cooperation, kindness, respect

Grade Levels:

K-12

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Invitation for Veterans to attend the ceremony
- Students speeches to select a speaker
- Red, white and blue decorations
- Breakfast/treats (optional)
- Musical selections from choir or band/orchestra
- Military branch songs
- Memento of some type for each veteran (could be purchased or student created (see example below))

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Preparation

- Create a Google Form or other way for community members to submit names of Veterans to invite to the Veterans Day ceremony
- Students or staff create an invitation to send to identified Veterans
- Have students submit essays to serve as speeches
- focus the topic around the need to serve or what service does for our country
- Have the schools musical ensemble(s) prepare patriotic music for the assembly
- Order refreshments if you are serving them

Day Before

- Decorate the gym or cafeteria with patriotic decorations
- Send reminder to the community about the celebration

Day of

- Welcome guests of honor into your school
- Have their family members/friends join them for the assembly
- Present the ceremony could include the following
 - Presentation of colors
 - Pledge/National Anthem
 - Welcoming remarks
 - Song selections
 - Guest speaker or student speaker
 - Recognition of branches with music (have Veterans stand when their branches song plays)
 - Presentation of token of appreciation
- End with Parade of Heroes as Veterans walk out have them greeted by students in a parade with signs and cheering

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Have students reflect on why it is important to honor those who serve our country, write letters of appreciation and/or propose acts of kindness for veterans.

PICTURES/ HANDOUTS /RESOURCES



[Military Branch Songs](#)



[Medals for Heroes](#)





**DEEPEN SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CHARACTER AND CULTIVATE
ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP THROUGH CREATING AND PARTICIPATING IN
SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES BY SERVING THE WIDER COMMUNITY
(SOUGHT CHARACTER)**



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- 100% of students participate in a service learning activity

Character Traits Targeted:

Serving others, empathy

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

Service Learning Action Plan

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This activity can be completed with a class/grade level/school family

Background information on Service Learning:

What is Service Learning

- Learning that happens through action and reflection as students help the community in some way as they develop understanding and skills
- Service learning has different approaches
 - **Direct Service:** Directly affects people, animals or places we are serving
 - Volunteering or cleaning up a park
 - **Indirect Service:** Provides help to a community
 - Fundraising or collections
 - **Advocacy:** Create awareness of or promote action on a topic
 - Use our voices to help make a difference
 - **Research:** Find, gather and report on information of interest to help inform or demand action
 - Collecting scientific data or surveying a group

Ways to accomplish service learning

There are 5 steps to complete a service learning project

- **1. Investigation**
 - a. Work with your team to learn about issues in the community
 - b. Identify a need to address
- **2. Preparation**
 - a. Find out what has been done before
 - b. Do you need help from others to accomplish this project?
 - c. Collect materials and resources
 - d. Create a plan
- **3. Action**
 - a. Carry out your plan
 - b. Continue developing your knowledge and resources
- **4. Reflection**
 - a. How did your work help others?
 - b. What did you learn during this project?
 - c. What might be the next steps to continue?
 - d. Does this tie into anything we have learned?
- **5. Demonstration**
 - a. Share with others what you have learned

After you have reviewed the background information on service learning, use the Service Learning Action Plan to plan out the project

Complete the projects or present information on the projects on one day during the year.

GRATITUDE PARTY WITH SERVICE

Activity also applicable in:



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will learn about gratitude and give back with a service learning project

Character Traits Targeted:

Gratitude, compassion, service

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Information to teach about gratitude (see links below)
- Time to reflect on possible service learning projects related to curriculum or a community need
- Materials to complete project

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- During the month of November, spend time talking with students about the importance of gratitude. You may use your own materials and/or the links to videos below.
- Talk with kids about how when we show gratitude, we sometimes give back to those in need.
- Spend time talking about needs in the community or something you learned about in the curriculum (we have had art projects for nursing homes, giving candy to soldiers - sacrifice learned in KDG, made dry soup for food banks - measurement in math)
- Complete the service learning project with the final day being a gratitude party the last day in school before Thanksgiving.
- Complete the reflection about service learning (linked below)

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Kid President's 25 Reasons To Be Thankful!](#)



[What Does it Mean to Be Thankful? \(For Kids!\)](#)



[Thankfulness: Benny's Wake-Up Surprise](#)



[Gratitude|Teaching Kids to be Thankful|Sunday School Lesson](#)



[Pass It On](#)



[Service Learning Reflection](#)

MULTI-AGE FAMILY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Multi-age families will create and implement a Service Learning project

Character Traits Targeted:

Service, respect, responsibility, caring, kindness

Grade Levels:

K-12

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Service Learning presentation
- Students are divided into multi-age families, advisories, etc.
- Items for completion of projects (won't have until after they plan the project)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

- Divide students into multi-age families and/or advisory groups
- Explain that as a family/group we are going to start talking about what we can do to help our community
- Ask if anyone has ever done anything to help the school or larger community or has volunteered before
- Use a slide show like the one below to teach about service learning projects and how they may be accomplished
- You may choose to have teachers or administrators create a video to teach everyone about service learning (example below)
- Watch video about fifth-grade students trying to make a difference
- As a family, start brainstorming your ideas on what you would like to do for a service project
- You may choose to have the teams fill out a planning sheet with guiding questions like the one below
- After the end of the project, have the students fill out a reflection sheet adapted to your grade level and community (see below)

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Teachers could reflect and link their projects to curriculum

Students could reflect on the project and how it relates to something they have learned

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

What is service learning?



[Service Learning Video](#)



[Example of a Student Project](#)

What is service learning?

- Learning that happens through action and reflection as students help the community in some way as they develop understanding and skills
- Service learning has different approaches
 - Direct Service - directly affects people, animals or places we are serving
 - Volunteering or cleaning up a park
 - Indirect Service - Provides help to a community
 - Fundraising or collections
 - Advocacy - Create awareness of or promote action on a topic
 - Use our voices to help make a difference
 - Research- Find, gather and report on information of interest to help inform or demand action
 - Collecting scientific data or surveying a group

How do we accomplish service learning?

There are 5 steps to complete a service learning project

1. Investigation
 - a. Work with your team to learn about issues in the community
 - b. Identify a need to address
2. Preparation
 - a. Find out what has been done before
 - b. Do you need help from others to accomplish this project?
 - c. Collect materials and resources
 - d. Create a plan
3. Action
 - a. Carry out your plan
 - b. Continue developing your knowledge and resources

How do we accomplish service learning?

There are 5 steps to complete a service learning project

4. Reflection
 - a. How did your work help others?
 - b. What did you learn during this project?
 - c. What might be next steps to continue?
 - d. Does this tie into anything we have learned?
5. Demonstration
 - a. Share with others what you have learned

Possible Planning Sheet Questions

Describe your service learning project or activity.

- What needs did your family identify in our community?
- What kind of project will it be (direct service, indirect service, advocacy, research)
- What prompted your family to choose this?
- What do members of your family know about this problem/concern?
- How does thinking about this make you feel?
- What can your family do about this problem/concern?
- How will that action help?
- What might you learn along the way?



[Example of Reflection](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Students will learn what a veteran is
- Students will create a plan to purchase items to support a veteran's home
- Students will perform acts of service in their school to earn currency to purchase selected items

Character Traits Targeted:

- Service, leadership, responsibility, cooperation, respect

Grade Levels:

- K-5

Standards:

- Money, basic subtraction, graphing, data analysis

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- List of items needed from a local veterans organization
- List of ways students can earn currency to purchase items
- Way of keeping track of money earned

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Before the Activity:

1. Prior to the activity, get in contact with a local veterans organization and explain that you are doing a service learning project, with the goal of providing needed items for the organization.
2. Request that the contact, or someone else in the organization, be willing to come to your assembly and briefly describe what the organization does. At this assembly, the students will also present the organization with all of the purchased items.
3. Copy the list of items that the organization has requested with prices and pictures for each. Distribute this list to each teacher.
4. As a building, your team will need to decide the following:
 - a. The amount of money that each classroom can earn. For example, our school used \$20/class as a maximum.
 - b. The length of time students will have to earn their money.

Explanation of Project:

1. Discuss the veterans organization with students and why your school chose to support them. Their goal is to practice cooperation in order to provide a service to someone else.
2. Explain to students that they will work as a class to go "above and beyond" in the school setting to earn money. They will use this money to purchase items for the veterans organization.
 - a. With your class, brainstorm examples of what going "above and beyond" looks like.
 - b. Determine a way to keep track of the amount of money your class earns, through a tally chart, bar graph, etc.
3. Show students the list of items that they can purchase items from. Tell them to get an idea in their minds of the type of things they would like to purchase.

During the Project:

1. Tell the students the time frame they have to work with.
2. You and other staff members, will look for students going above and beyond everywhere in the school. Each time a student, or group of students, is found to be doing this, the class earns \$1 towards their total.
3. At the end of each day, or every couple of days, briefly discuss the class' progress towards their goal. This is a good way to bring in basic subtraction skills.
4. At the end of the earning time period, have your classroom total the amount of money they have earned.
5. They will use that total to decide as a class which items they want to purchase. They are NOT allowed to go over their budget; they have to work together to decide what they want to get.
6. Once the students have decided what to purchase, you will circle the items on the sheet that was provided with the list of items and return it to your principal.
7. The principal will purchase the items for the assembly. Once the items are purchased, the principal will select students to help organize the items in the gym or wherever you will have your assembly.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

After the assembly, have students reflect:

1. How did it feel to do something for someone else?
2. How did you feel getting to choose how you would help?
3. How was it to work with your class to choose something? Was this difficult? Why or why not? How did you make your decision?
4. What did you like best about this project?
5. What would you change in the future?

Extensions

For younger students, you can incorporate your older students into the project, where each high school student teams with an elementary classroom for the project.

You may also allow classes to be combined to give them a greater total amount of money for big-ticket items.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES



[Sample Item Sign Up for Veterans Organization](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity
- Individual Leadership Practice

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- To develop character and cultivate citizenship in elementary students by engaging them in a service project that benefits their community

Character Traits Targeted:

- Empathy, kindness, citizenship, gratitude

Grade Levels:

- Elementary grades (can be scaled up or down for younger or older students)

Assessment:

- Reflection journal

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:

- Poster board or large paper sheets
- Markers, crayons and colored pencils
- Scissors and glue
- Art supplies for creating posters (optional)
- List of potential service projects

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

Introduction (30 minutes):

Begin by discussing the concepts of character and citizenship with the students. Explain that citizenship means being a responsible and contributing member of one's community. Related traits such as kindness, responsibility and empathy may be linked to pursuit of citizenship. Discuss examples of how empathy helps us understand the needs of others to help us develop citizenship and the common good. You can also integrate a read aloud (check the Curriculum Resources document at the end of this book provided by Canyon Center for Character Education).

Brainstorm Service Ideas (15 minutes):

As a class, brainstorm a list of possible service projects in which students may participate. If this is a lower elementary grade level, it may be best to select one service project for the entire class. Upper elementary or middle school classrooms may select individual projects. Projects could include organizing a food drive, cleaning up a local park, creating care packages for the elderly or fundraising for a charitable cause. Encourage students to think about their community's needs and interests.

Choose a Service Project (15 minutes):

Have the students vote on the service project they would like to undertake as a class. Discuss the feasibility of each idea, taking into account available resources and time constraints. Discuss the character traits that may be addressed or modeled in each project.

Planning (30 minutes):

Divide the class into small groups, with each group responsible for planning a specific aspect of the service project. This could include creating posters, designing flyers, contacting local organizations or setting up a fundraising goal. An important aspect of this stage is to connect the students' action to the service so that students can see the impact of their work to the common good. Reflection

and discussion is key for this. A fundraising campaign may be the easiest way to implement a service project but also may be the most disconnected from service as the students may not experience or see the impact of their service if the funds are merely raised and then given to the organization.

Action (varies):

Depending on the chosen service project, allocate time for students to carry out the project. This may involve collecting donations, organizing events or volunteering their time. Encourage students to take ownership of their roles within the project.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Reflection (30 minutes):

After completing the service project, gather the students to reflect on their experiences. If the classroom has established routines for journaling, particularly a gratitude journal, this may be an appropriate journal entry. Discuss the following questions:

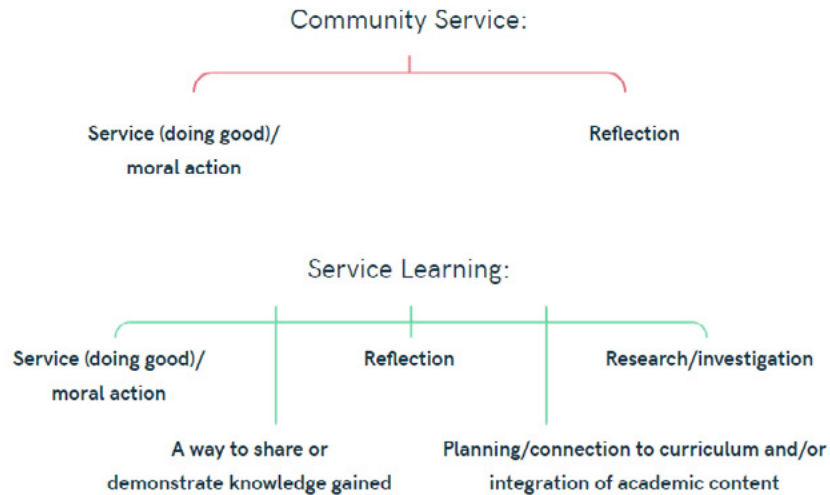
- How did it feel to help others in the community?
- What did you learn about character and citizenship through this project?
- Did you face any challenges and how did you overcome them?
- How can you continue to be caring citizens in the future?

Thank You Cards (15 minutes):

Have students create thank you cards for any individuals or organizations that supported their service project. This helps reinforce the values of gratitude and appreciation.

PICTURES/HANDOUTS/RESOURCES

Consider the following provided by Character.org



Resources to consider:



[Science Literacy: Sparking Curiosity and Solving Real-World Problems](#)



[Youth Ethics in Service](#)



[What is Service Learning or Community Engagement?](#)



[The Impacts of Service Learning on Youth, Schools and Communities:](#)



Intended Activity Audience:

- Professional Development Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Create a year long plan for professional development activities for service learning

Character Traits Targeted:

- Empathy, volunteering, civility, service, humility

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity.



- [Service Learning Professional Development Plan Template.pdf](#)



- [Started in Service Learning – National Youth Leadership Council \(NYLC\)](#)

- Chart paper and markers (or electronic document)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

This plan assumes schools have very limited exposure to service learning and want to plan professional development opportunities to help faculty learn more about service learning. A group of 6-8 people would be a good size to participate in this activity.

1. Prior to meeting, those involved spend about an hour reading over the [Getting Started with Service Learning booklet](#) produced by NYLC. The purpose of reading the document is to familiarize yourself with service learning, its purpose and explore the toolkit of resources.
2. At the meeting, begin by having the group list important things they learned or resources in the Getting Started booklet they feel are important to share with the faculty. List thoughts on chart paper or on an electronic document projected for others to see.
3. Prioritize the list of service learning information to be shared in professional development sessions.
4. Use the [Professional Development Plan template](#) to create six professional development sessions and in between session activities for faculty on service learning that last over the course of an academic year.

CLOSING/EXTENSION

The goal is to complete a general plan of professional development on service learning. The team will need to divide up creating the sessions at a later date, assigning different people to create the sessions based on the plan's topics for each session.

SERVICE LEARNING REFLECTION

Intended Activity Audience:

- Character Education Student Activity

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Goal/Outcome/Objective(s):

- Reflect on service learning

Character Traits Targeted:

- Service learning

Grade Levels:

- K-5

MATERIALS

Materials needed to complete the activity:



- [Service Learning Reflection Sheet](#)



- [Service Learning Reflection Sheet \(Less Writing\)](#)

PROCEDURES

Steps for the Activity:

After students participate in a Service Learning project, have them engage in this activity:

- After you have completed a service learning activity, it is important to take time to reflect
- As a whole group, talk about these questions:
 - How did our work help others?
 - What did you learn during this project?
 - What might be the next steps to continue with this project?
- Depending on students/grade level, have them complete the Service Learning Reflection

CLOSING/EXTENSION

Have students share their reflections with the class





CANYON CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM RESOURCES

This Canyon Center for Character Education (CCCE) Curriculum Resources document encompasses many character education resources and supports. However, it should not be considered an exhaustive list of character education resources, curricula or guides. Instead, this list will constantly change with the growing research in the field. There is no set path to character education; thus, this list can be used as a reference. In addition, readers may develop their own resource lists through individual contexts.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

To search for a book pertaining to a specific character virtue, value or asset, either **Control+F** for the virtue or the grade level (early childhood PreK-K, elementary first

through fifth, middle sixth through eighth or secondary ninth through 12th). Within grade levels, books are organized by moral, civic, intellectual, performance and other virtues. Some titles are listed more than once as they can be used to teach more than one virtue. Most titles have additional details for specific virtues, values, assets and grades after the title and author.

MORAL VIRTUES

A person with strong moral virtue will have a well-formed character that enables them to act ethically in all situations. Examples include compassion, courage, gratitude, honesty, humility, integrity, justice and respect among others. (Arthur and Kristjansson, 2022).

CIVIC VIRTUES

Character traits that are necessary for engaged responsible citizenship and contributing to the common good (Arthur and Kristjansson, 2022). Civic virtue describes abilities, dispositions and a deep commitment to engaged citizenship, civility, community awareness, neighborliness, service and volunteering aimed at contributing to human flourishing and the common good.

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES

Character traits necessary for discernment, right action and the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding (Arthur and Kristjansson, 2022). It is expressed as virtues such as curiosity, critical thinking, judgment, discernment, reasoning, reflection and resourcefulness.

PERFORMANCE VIRTUES

Character traits that effectively equip and enable people to manage their lives, focusing on the instrumental value of enabling the intellectual, moral and civic virtues. Examples include confidence, determination, motivation, perseverance, resilience, teamwork and more. (Arthur and Kristjansson, 2022).

Resources

- [Character Education Teaching Resources, Talking with Trees](#): Resources include worksheets, quotes to share, presentations, definitions, posters, lesson plans, books, coloring, songs, videos and activities.
- [GoodCharacter.com, Character Education and Social Emotional Learning \(SEL\)](#): Curriculum, lesson plans, activities, programs and resources.
- [Knightly Virtues, The Jubilee Centre](#): Curriculum designed to develop virtue literacy through the use of specific stories.
- [LearningToGive.org](#): Centered around the importance of voluntary action in democratic societies, in pursuit of the common good. Includes lesson plans, literature, film and video guides.
- [Read Grow Go, The Jubilee Centre](#): Curriculum for kindergarten to second grade, focused on compassion, honesty, curiosity, independence, teamwork, perseverance, community awareness and service.
- [Teaching Character Through Subjects, The Jubilee Centre](#): Materials created by teachers for teachers in a variety of grade levels and organized by subject area.
- [National Guidelines, Character.org](#): Framework that provides national guidelines for character and social-emotional development (CSED) to fuse together character and social-emotional development.

Websites for Books

- HealthyChildren.org/english/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/building-resilience/pages/books-to-build-character-teach-important-values.aspx
- scholastic.com/teachers/teaching-tools/book-lists/100-books-that-buildcharacter.html
- the-best-childrens-books.org/character-education-books.html
- goodreads.com/shelf/show/character-education
- ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/partx2.html

LITERATURE TITLES

Early Childhood (PreK-K) Moral Virtues

- *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* by Dr. Seuss (Gratitude, Grades K-4)
- *It Could Always be Worse: A Yiddish Folk Tale* by Margot Zemach (Gratitude, Grades PreK-3)
- *Sam Tells Stories* by Thierry Robberecht (Honesty, Grades PreK-2)
- *The Thing Lou Couldn't Do* by Ashley Spires (Courage, Resilience, Compassion, Friendship, Grades K-3)
- *A Bad Case of the Stripes* by David Shannon (Courage to Be Who You Are, Grades K-5)
- *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Andersen (Honesty, Grades K-2)
- *Mr. Bow Tie* by Karen Barbour (Compassion, Grades K-2)
- *I Like Myself!* by Karen Beaumont, Illustrated by David Catrow (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK- 2)
- *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae, Illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Courage, Grades PreK-2)

- [Strictly No Elephants](#) by Lisa Mantchev, Illustrated by Taeun Yoo (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [Two Speckled Eggs](#) by Jennifer K. Mann (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [Willow](#) by Denise Brennan-Nelson and Rosemarie Brennan, Illustrated by Cyd Moore (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *I'm in Charge of Celebrations* by Byrd Baylor (Respect for Others)
- *The Year My Father was Ten* by Pat Brisson (Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *Jeremy's Decision* by Ardyth Brott (Self Respect, Good Judgment, Courage)
- *The Journey of Charles Lindberg* by Bib Burleigh (Self Respect, Good Judgment, Courage)
- *Katy and the Big Snow* by Virginia Burton (Courage, Responsibility)
- *The Empty Pot* by Demi (Honesty)
- *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros (Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza (available in English and Spanish) (Responsibility)
- *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox (Compassion, Responsibility)
- *Brothers: A Hebrew Legend* by Florence B. Freedman (Compassion, Responsibility)
- *The Christmas Train* by Ivan Gantschev (Courage)
- *Granddaddy's Place* by Helen V. Griffith (Responsibility, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)
- *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Various Editions) Look for the following tales in particular:
 - "The Brave Little Tailor" (Courage)
 - "The Bremen Town Musicians" (Courage, Compassion)
 - "The Elves and the Shoemaker" (Compassion, Responsibility)
 - "The Fisherman and His Wife" (Compassion, Good Judgment)
- *Even if I Did Something Awful?* by Barbara Shook Hazen (Honesty)
- *In Coal Country* by Judith Hendershot (Responsibility)
- *H Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss (Responsibility, Compassion, Integrity, Faithfulness, Grades PreK-2)
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (Courage, Self Respect, Grades K-3)
- *And to Think That We Thought That We'd Never Be Friends* by Mary Ann Hoberman (Compassion, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)
- *Saint Jorge and the Dragon* by Margaret Hodges (Courage, Responsibility)
- *The Hole in the Dike* (Various Editions) (Courage, Responsibility, Citizenship)
- *Susanna of the Alamo: A True Story* by John Jakes (Courage, Citizenship)
- [Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler](#) by Margery Cuyler, Illustrated by Sachiko Yoshikawa (Kindness)
- [What Does It Mean To Be Kind?](#) by Rana DiOrio, Illustrated by Stephane Jorsch (Kindness)
- [Each Kindness](#) by Jacqueline Woodson, Illustrated by E. B. Lewis (Kindness)
- [Stand in My Shoes: Kids Learning About Empathy](#) by Bob Sornson
- *Frog and Toad are Friends* by Arnold Lobel (Friendship, Grades PreK-1)
- *Who Will You Be* by Andrea Pippens (Love, Grades PreK-K)
- *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey* by Maria Kalman (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)

- *Yo Tenia Un Hipopótamo* (Spanish) by Hector Viveros Lee (Respect for Others, Compassion)
- *A Color of His Own* by Leio Lionni (Kindness, Self Respect, Good Judgment)
- *Three Good Blankets* by Ida Luttrell (Compassion, Respect for Others)
- *Knots on a Counting Rope* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault (available in Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility)
- *The Honest-to-Goodness Truth* by Patricia C. McKissack (Honesty)
- *Annie and Co* by David McPhail (Respect for Others)
- *Annie and the Old One* by Miska Miles (Responsibility, Respect for Others)
- *Tikki Tembo* by Arlene Mosel (Responsibility)
- *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter* by Arielle N. Olson (Courage, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *New York's Bravest* by Mary Pope Osborne (Courage)
- *All By Herself: 14 Girls Who Made a Difference* by Ann Whitford Paul (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco (Responsibility)
- *La Llamam América/America is Her Name* by Luis J. Rodriguez (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South* by Robert D. San Souci (Courage, Compassion)
- *Who Are You?* by John Schindel (Responsibility, Respect for Others)
- *Why Noah Chose the Dove* by Isaac Bashevis Singer (available in Spanish) (Responsibility)
- *Brave Irene* by William Steig (available in Spanish) (Responsibility, Courage, Good Judgment)
- *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe (Compassion, Respect for Others)
- *Cherries and Cherry Pits* by Vera B. Williams (Responsibility, Compassion, Respect for Others)
- *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima (Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow (Compassion, Respect for Others)

Civic Virtues

- *The Juice Box Bully: Empowering Kids to Stand Up for Others* by Bob Sornson and Maria Dismondy (Justice, Empowerment, Grades K-2)
- [*I Like Myself!*](#) by Karen Beaumont, Illustrated by David Catrow (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Red: A Crayon's Story*](#) by Michael Hall (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK- 2)
- [*Giraffes Can't Dance*](#) by Giles Andreae, Illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Courage, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Strictly No Elephants*](#) by Lisa Mantchev, Illustrated by Taeun Yoo (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Two Speckled Eggs*](#) by Jennifer K. Mann (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Willow*](#) by Denise Brennan-Nelson and Rosemarie Brennan, Illustrated by Cyd Moore (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Grace for President*](#) by Kelly DiPucchio, Illustrated by LeUyen Pham (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)

- [*A Chair for My Mother*](#) by Vera B. Williams (Civic Engagement, Resilience, Grades PreK-4)
- [*Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation*](#) by Edwidge Danticat, Illustrated by Leslie Staub (Civic Engagement and Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- [*House Mouse, Senate Mouse*](#) by Peter W. Barnes and Cheryl Shaw Barnes (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- [*Being Me*](#) by Rosemary McCarney, Illustrated by Yvonne Cathcart (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- *The Year My Father was Ten* by Pat Brisson (Responsibility and Good Judgment)
- *Jeremy's Decision* by Ardyth Brott (Self Respect, Good Judgment, Courage)
- *The Journey of Charles Lindberg* by Bib Burleigh (Self Respect, Good Judgment, Courage)
- *We the Kids* by David Catrow (Citizenship)
- *America: A Patriotic Primer* by Lynne Cheney (Citizenship)
- *The Hole in the Dike* (Various Editions) (Courage, Responsibility, Citizenship)
- *Susanna of the Alamo: A True Story* by John Jakes (Courage, Citizenship)
- *Coming to America* by Betsy Maestro (Citizenship)

Intellectual Virtues

- *The Bad Seed* by Jory John (Reflection, Grades K-2)
- *Bug in a Vacuum* by Melanie Watt (Reflection, Grades K-3)
- *Big Bear Hug* by Nicholas Oldland (Reflection, Grades PreK-3)
- *I Wonder* by K. A. Holt (Curiosity, Grades PreK-2)
- *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter* by Arielle N. Olson (Courage, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *Brave Irene* by William Steig (available in Spanish) (Responsibility, Courage, Good Judgment)

Performance Virtues

- *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper (Determination, Grades PreK-K)
- *The Thing Lou Couldn't Do* by Ashley Spires (Courage, Resilience, Compassion, Friendship, Grades K-3)
- *Jeremy's Decision* by Ardyth Brott (Self Respect, Good Judgment, Courage)
- *The Journey of Charles Lindberg* by Bib Burleigh (Self Respect, Good Judgment, Courage)
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (Courage, Self Respect, Grades K-3)
- *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel (Determination, Grades PreK-1)
- *Swimming* by Leo Lionni (Resilience, Creativity, Grades PreK-2)
- [*A Chair for My Mother*](#) by Vera B. Williams (Civic Engagement, Resilience, Grades PreK-4)
- *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey* by Maria Kalman (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *A Color of His Own* by Leo Lionni (Kindness, Self Respect, Good Judgment)
- *All By Herself: 14 Girls Who Made a Difference* by Ann Whitford Paul (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *La Llamaman América/America is Her Name* by Luis J. Rodriguez (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima (Responsibility, Self Discipline)

Various Virtues

- [*Those Shoes*](#) by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones
- [*Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed*](#) by Emily Pearson, illustrated by Fumi Kosaka
- [*The Invisible Boy*](#) by Trudy Ludwig, illustrated by Patrice Barton
- [*Heartprints*](#) by P. K. Hallinan
- [*The Hundred Dresses*](#) by Eleanor Estes, Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin
- [*Edwardo: The Horriblest Boy in the Whole Wide World*](#) by John Burningham
- [*Say Something*](#) by Peggy Moss, Illustrated by Lea Lyon
- [*Babymouse: Queen of the World*](#) by Jennifer Holm and Matthew Holm
- [*Bully B.E.A.N.S.*](#) by Julia Cook, Illustrated by Anita DuFalla
- [*Confessions of a Former Bully*](#) by Trudy Ludwig, Illustrated by Beth Adams
- [*When Sophie's Feelings Are Really, Really Hurt*](#) by Molly Bang
- [*I'm the Best*](#) by Lucy Cousins
- [*Chocolate Milk, Por Favor*](#) by Maria Dismondy, Illustrated by Donna Farrell
- [*The Sandwich Swap*](#) by Queen Rania of Jordan and Kelly DiPucchio, Illustrated by Tricia Tusa
- [*Junkyard Wonders*](#) by Patricia Polacco
- [*The Conquerers*](#) by David McKee

Elementary (Grades 1-5) Moral Virtues

- *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* by Dr. Seuss (Gratitude, Grades K-4)
- *It Could Always be Worse: A Yiddish Folk Tale* by Margot Zemach (Gratitude, Grades PreK-3)
- *Sam Tells Stories* by Thierry Robberecht (Honesty, Grades PreK-2)
- *The Thing Lou Couldn't Do* by Ashley Spires (Courage, Resilience, Compassion, Friendship, Grades K-3)
- *A Bad Case of the Stripes* by David Shannon (Courage to Be Who You Are, Grades K-5)
- *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Andersen (Honesty, Grades K-2)
- *Mr. Bow Tie* by Karen Barbour (Compassion, Grades K-2)
- [*I Like Myself!*](#) by Karen Beaumont, Illustrated by David Catrow (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Red: A Crayon's Story*](#) by Michael Hall (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Giraffes Can't Dance*](#) by Giles Andreae, Illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Courage, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Strictly No Elephants*](#) by Lisa Mantchev, Illustrated by Taeun Yoo (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Two Speckled Eggs*](#) by Jennifer K. Mann (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Willow*](#) by Denise Brennan-Nelson and Rosemarie Brennan, Illustrated by Cyd Moore (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *Courage Under Fire* by John Simpson (Courage, Grades 3-7)
- *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* by Connie Roop (Responsibility, Dependability, Bravery, Endurance, Grades 1-3)
- *The Friendship* by Mildred Taylor (Friendship, Grades 4-6)

- *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio (Kindness, Friendship, Grades 3-5)
- [*Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Giff](#) (Empathy, Friendship, Grades 5-8)
- [*Prisoner B-3087* by Alan Gratz](#) (Humanity, Gratitude, Perseverance, Courage, Integrity, Grades 5-8)
- [*The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo](#) (Bravery, Grades 1-4)
- [*Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes* by Jonathan Auxier](#) (Ingenuity, Friendship, Courage, Grades 4-6)
- [*Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges](#) (Courage, Hope, Forgiveness, Grades 3-6)
- *The Empty Pot* by Demi (Honesty, Grades 1-3)
- *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss (Responsibility, Compassion, Integrity, Faithfulness, Grades PreK-2)
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (Courage, Self Respect, Grades K-3)
- [*Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents* by Sarah Conover and Valerie Wahl](#) (Kindness, Grades PreK-3)
- *She Persisted* by Chelsea Clinton (Determination, Courage, Grades 1-5)
- *Frog and Toad are Friends* by Arnold Lobel (Friendship, Grades PreK-1)
- *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold (Love, Creativity, Curiosity, Grades 1-5)
- *We Came to America* by Faith Ringgold (Respect, Grades 1-2)
- [*Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, illustrated by Garth Williams](#) (Compassion, Responsibility, Respect for Others)
- *El Chino* by Allen Say (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *The Pilgrims of Plymouth* by Marcia Sewall (Courage, Citizenship, Compassion, Respect for Others)
- *A Big Fat Enormous Lie* by Marjorie W. Shamat, Illustrated by David M. McPhail (Honesty, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (available in Spanish) (Compassion)
- *A Penny's Worth of Character* by Jesse Stuart (Honesty, Courage)
- *Tales of the Arabian Nights* (Various Editions) (Courage, Respect for Others, Self Discipline)
- *Plato's Journey* by Linda Talley, Illustrated by Itoko Maeno (Honesty)
- *Little House* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder, Illustrated by Garth Williams (Various Editions) (Responsibility, Courage, Honesty)
- *A Pair of Red Clogs* by N. Matsuno (Honesty, Courage, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *Buddy: The First Seeing Eye Dog* by Eva Moore (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Now is Your Time! The African-American Struggle for Freedom* by Walter D. Myers, (Courage)
- *Aekyung's Dream* by Min Paek (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls (Courage, Responsibility)
- *Nessa's Fish* by Nancy Luenn (Compassion, Courage)
- *The Princess and the Goblin* (Various Editions) by George MacDonald (Compassion, Courage)
- *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (Courage, Respect for Others, Honesty, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *Stepping on the Cracks* by Mary D. Hahn (Citizenship, Compassion, Courage)
- *I'm Not Going to Chase the Cat Today* by Jessica Harper, Illustrated by Lindsay Harper DuPont (Compassion, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)

- *Misty of Chincoteague* by Marguerite Henry, Illustrated by Wesley Dennis (Respect for Others, Courage)
- *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman. Illustrated by Caroline Binch (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *Tales from Shakespeare* (Various Editions) by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb (Compassion, Courage, Citizenship)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia Series* (Various Editions) by C. S. Lewis (Respect for Others, Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Pedro and the Padre: A Tale from Jalisco, Mexico* by Verna Aardema (available in Spanish) (Honesty)
- *Aesop's Fables* (Various Editions) (Responsibility, Compassion)
- *Fairy Tales* (Various Editions) by Hans Christian Andersen (Courage, Compassion, Responsibility)
- *Mr. Popper's Penguins* by Richard Atwater and Florence Atwater (Compassion)
- *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt (Self Respect, Responsibility)
- *The Children's Book of America* by William J. Bennett (Citizenship, Responsibility)
- *Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal, 1830-32* by Joan W. Blos (Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol R. Brink, Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (Responsibility, Respect for Others)
- *The Chalk Box Kid* by Clyde Robert Bulla, Illustrated by Thomas B. Allen (Courage, Good Judgment)
- *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (available in English and Spanish) (Compassion, Courage)
- *The Incredible Journey* by Sheila Burnford, Illustrated by Carl Burger (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *Abuela's Weave* by Omar S. Castaneda, Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *Exodus* by Miriam Chaikin, Illustrated by Charles Mikolaycak (Courage, Good Judgment)
- *China's Bravest Girl: The Legend of Hua Mu Lan* by Charlie Chin, Illustrated by Tomie Arai (available in English and Chinese) (Courage, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy* by Padraic Colum (Ed.), Illustrated by Willy Pagany (Responsibility, Respect for Others)
- *My Big Lie* by Bill Cosby, Illustrated by Varnette P. Honeywood (Honesty, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *Big Moon Tortilla* by Joy Cowley, Illustrated by Dyanne Strongbow (Compassion, Self Discipline)
- *Bright Star* by Gary Crew, Illustrated by Anne Spudvilas (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh, Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard (Courage, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)
- *The House of Sixty Fathers* by Meindert DeJong, Illustrated by Maurice Sendak (Compassion, Courage, Responsibility)
- *Now One Foot, Now the Other* by Tomie dePaola, (Responsibility, Compassion, Respect for Others)
- *The Twenty-One Balloons* by William P. Du Bois (Courage)
- *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin (Courage, Good Judgment)
- *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean C. George (Self Discipline, Courage)

Civic Virtues

- *The Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle (Charity, Grades 3-8)
- *Anita and the Dragons* by Hannah Carmona (Self-Awareness, Grade 2)

- *First Come the Zebra* by Lynne Barasch (Self-Awareness, Grades 1-3)
- *Rosa Parks: My Story* by Rosa Parks (Justice, Grade 5)
- *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* by Connie Roop (Responsibility, Dependability, Bravery, Endurance, Grades 1-3)
- *The Friendship* by Mildred Taylor (Friendship Grades 4-6)
- *The Juice Box Bully: Empowering Kids to Stand Up for Others* by [Bob Sornson](#) and [Maria Dismondy](#) (Justice, Empowerment, Grades K-2)
- *I Like Myself!*, by Karen Beaumont, Illustrated by David Catrow (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK- 2)
- *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae, Illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Courage, Grades PreK-2)
- *Strictly No Elephants* by Lisa Mantchev, Illustrated by Taeun Yoo (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *Two Speckled Eggs* by Jennifer K. Mann (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *Willow* by Denise Brennan-Nelson and Rosemarie Brennan, Illustrated by Cyd Moore (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades PreK-2)
- *Grace for President* by Kelly DiPucchio, Illustrated by LeUyen Pham (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams (Civic Engagement, Resilience, Grades PreK-4)
- *Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation* by Edwidge Danticat, Illustrated by Leslie Staub (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- *House Mouse, Senate Mouse* by Peter W. Barnes and Cheryl Shaw Barnes (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- *Being Me* by Rosemary McCarney, Illustrated by Yvonne Cathcart (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades PreK-4)
- *Zero Tolerance* by Claudia Mills (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- *Paper Things* by Jennifer Richard Jacobson (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- *The Kid's Guide to Social Action* by Barbara A. Lewis (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- *The Children's Book of America* by William J. Bennett (Citizenship, Responsibility)
- *This Land Is Your Land* by Woody Guthrie, Illustrated by Kathy Jacobsen (Citizenship)
- *Stepping on the Cracks* by Mary D. Hahn (Citizenship, Compassion, Courage)
- *Tales from Shakespeare* (Various Editions) by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb (Compassion, Courage, Citizenship)
- *We Live Here Too! Kids Talk about Good Citizenship* by Nancy Loewen, Illustrated by Brandon Reibeling (Citizenship)
- *A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution* by Betsy Maestro and Giulio Maestro (Citizenship)
- *The Flag We Love* by Pam M. Ryan, Illustrated by Ralph Masiello (Citizenship)
- *The Pilgrims of Plymouth* by Marcia Sewall (Courage, Citizenship, Compassion, Respect for Others)

Intellectual Virtues

- *The Bad Seed* by Jory John (Reflection, Grades K-2)
- *Bug in a Vacuum* by Melanie Watt (Reflection, Grades K-3)
- *The Cow Who Climbed the Tree* by Gemma Merino (Curiosity, Grades 1-3)
- *Big Bear Hug* by Nicholas Oldland (Reflection, Grades PreK-3)
- *I Wonder* by K. A. Holt (Curiosity, Grades PreK-2)
- [*Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes* by Jonathan Auxier](#) (Ingenuity, Friendship, Courage, Grades 4-6)
- *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki (Determination, Strength, Open-Mindedness, Grades 2-5)
- *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold (Love, Creativity, Curiosity, Grades 1-5)
- *The Chalk Box Kid* by Clyde Robert Bulla, Illustrated by Thomas B. Allen (Courage, Good Judgment)
- *Exodus* by Miriam Chaikin, Illustrated by Charles Mikolaycak (Courage, Good Judgment)
- *China's Bravest Girl: The Legend of Hua Mu Lan* by Charlie Chin, Illustrated by Tomie Arai (available in English and Chinese) (Courage, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *My Big Lie* by Bill Cosby, Illustrated by Varnette P. Honeywood (Honesty, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh, Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard (Courage, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)
- *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin (Courage, Good Judgment)
- *I'm Not Going to Chase the Cat Today* by Jessica Harper, Illustrated by Lindsay Harper DuPont (Compassion, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)
- *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (Courage, Respect for Others, Honesty, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *A Pair of Red Clogs* by M. Matsuno (Honesty, Courage, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *A Big Fat Enormous Lie* by Marjorie W. Shamat, Illustrated by David M. McPhail (Honesty, Responsibility, Good Judgment)

Performance Virtues

- *Emmy Noether: The Most Important Mathematician You've Never Heard of* by Helaine Becker (Focus, Grades 3-5)
- *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson (Resilience, Grades 4-8)
- *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* by Connie Roop (Responsibility, Dependability, Bravery, Endurance, Grades 1-3)
- *The Thing Lou Couldn't Do* by Ashley Spires (Courage, Resilience, Compassion, Friendship, Grades K-3)
- [*Prisoner B-3087* by Alan Gratz](#) (Humanity, Gratitude, Perseverance, Courage, Integrity, Grades 5-8)
- [*Gifted Hands: YA Edition* by Ben Carson](#) (Perseverance, Grades 3-6)
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (Courage, Self Respect, Grades K-3)
- *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel (Determination, Grades PreK-1)
- *She Persisted* by Chelsea Clinton (Determination, Courage, Grades 1-5)
- *Swimming* by Leo Lionni (Resilience, Creativity, Grades PreK-2)
- *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki (Determination, Strength, Open-Mindedness, Grades 2-5)
- [*A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams](#) (Civic Engagement, Resilience, Grades PreK-4)

- *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt (Self Respect, Responsibility)
- *Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal, 1830-32* by Joan W. Blos, (Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Incredible Journey* by Sheila Burnford, Illustrated by Carl Burger (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *Abuela's Weave* by Omar S. Castaneda, Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *China's Bravest Girl: The Legend of Hua Mu Lan* by Charlie Chin, Illustrated by Tomie Arai (available in English and Chinese) (Courage, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *Big Moon Tortilla* by Joy Cowley, Illustrated by Dyanne Strongbow (Compassion, Self Discipline)
- *Bright Star* by Gary Crew, Illustrated by Anne Spudvilas (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean C. George (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, Illustrated by Caroline Binch (Self Discipline, Courage)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia Series* (Various Editions) by Lewis, C. S. (Respect for Others, Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (Courage, Respect for Others, Honesty, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *A Pair of Red Clogs* by M. Matsuno (Honesty, Courage, Self Discipline, Good Judgment)
- *Buddy: The First Seeing Eye Dog* by Eva Moore (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Aekyung's Dream* by Min Paek (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *El Chino* by Allen Say (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Tales of the Arabian Nights* (Various Editions) (Courage, Respect for Others, Self Discipline)

Various Virtues

- [Stitches](#) by Glen Huser
- [To This Day: For the Bullied and the Beautiful](#) by Shane Koyczan
- [Understanding Buddy](#) by Marc Kornblatt
- [Loser](#) by Jerry Spinelli
- [Veronica Ganz](#) by Marilyn Sachs
- [Blubber](#) by Judy Blume
- *They Did What? 50 Impressive Kids and Their Amazing Stories* by Sandra Mitchell (Grades 5-9, All Virtues)
- *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri D'Aulaire (Grades 4-12, All Virtues)
- *The Children's Book of Virtues* by William J. Bennett, Illustrated by Michael Hague (Honesty, Responsibility, Compassion, Respect for Others, Self Respect, Good Judgment, All Virtues)

Middle School (Grades 6-8) Moral Virtues

- [Number the Stars](#) by Lois Lowry (Hope, Courage, Grades 6-8)
- [I Am David](#) by Anne Holm (Bravery, Grades 6-8)
- [Projekt 1065](#) by Alan Gratz (Self-Sacrifice, Integrity, Grades 6-8)
- [Prisoner B-3087](#) by Alan Gratz (Humanity, Gratitude, Perseverance, Courage, Integrity, Grades 5-8)
- [Pictures of Hollis Woods](#) by Patricia Reilly Giff (Empathy, Friendship, Grades 5-8)
- [Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes](#) by Jonathan Auxier (Ingenuity, Friendship, Courage, Grades 4-6)

- [Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges](#) (Courage, Hope, Forgiveness, Grades 3-6)
- *Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare (Gratitude, Grades 7-12)
- *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Anne Frank (Humility, Determination, Resilience, Grades 7-12)
- [Freak the Mighty](#) by Rodman Philbrick (Kindness, Grades 7-12)
- [Rules](#) by Cynthia Lord (Kindness, Grades 7-12)
- [Out of My Mind](#) by Sharon M. Draper (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [Inside Out and Back Again](#) by Thanhha Lai (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [The Ordinary Princess](#) by M. M. Kaye (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- *The Unexpected Everything* by Morgan Matson (Humility, Friendship, Grades 7-12)
- *Children of Flight Pedro Pan* by Maria Armengol Acierno (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Children of the Settlement Houses* by Caroline Arnold (Compassion, Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Nothing but the Truth* by Avi (Self Discipline, Responsibility, Citizenship)
- *On My Honor* by Marion D. Bauer (Responsibility, Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *The Moves Make the Man* by Bruce Brooks (Honesty, Courage, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *Leroy and the Old Man* by William Butterworth (Respect for Others, Self Respect)
- *Emilio* by Julia Mercedes Castilla (available in English and Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Notes from a Liar and Her Dog* by Gennifer Choldenko (Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring* by Lucille Clifton (available in Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Story of Thomas Alva Edison* by Margaret Cousins (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The Little Prince* (Various Editions) by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *David Copperfield* (Various Editions) by Charles Dickens (Compassion, Self Discipline)
- *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* (Various Editions) by Mary M. Dodge (Courage, Self Discipline, Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (Compassion, Courage)
- *One-Eyed Cat* by Paula Fox (Responsibility, Honesty)
- *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Various Editions) by Benjamin Franklin (Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The House of Dies Drear* by Virginia Hamilton (Courage, Compassion)
- *Stories* (Various Editions) by O. Henry (Compassion, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Laughing Out Loud, I Fly: A Carcajadas Yo Vuelo* (poetry) by Juan Felipe Herrera, Illustrated by Karen Barbour (available in Spanish and English) (Courage, Respect for Others, Responsibility)
- *Kon-Tiki* (Various Editions) by Thor Heyerdahl (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey* by Jamake Highwater, Illustrated by Fritz Scholder (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Clay Marble* by Minfong Ho (Compassion, Courage, Responsibility)
- *Hot and Cold Winter* by Johanne Hurwitz (Honesty, Responsibility)
- *Story of My Life* (Various Editions) by Helen Keller (Courage, Self Discipline)

- *Captains Courageous* by Rudyard Kipling (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Gettysburg Address* (Various Editions) by Abraham Lincoln (Courage, Citizenship, Responsibility)
- *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord, Illustrated by Marc Simont (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Marching to Freedom: The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* by Joyce Milton (Courage, Citizenship, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The New York Times: A Nation Challenged, Young Reader's Edition* by New York Times Staff (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Sing Down the Moon* by Scott O'Dell (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Various Editions) by Emmuska Orczy (Responsibility, Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, Illustrated by Donna Diamond (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The Skirt* by Gary Soto, Illustrated by Eric Velesquez (available in Spanish) (Honesty, Responsibility, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)
- *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth G. Speare (Respect for Others, Compassion, Self Discipline)
- *A Free Black Girl before the Civil War: The Diary of Charlotte Forten, 1854* by Christy Steele, Suzanne L. Bunkers and Kerry Graves (Eds.). (Courage, Responsibility)
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Various Editions) by Mildred D. Taylor (available in Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women* by Catherine Thimmesh (Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Journey to Topaz* by Yoshika Uchida, Illustrated by Donald Carrick (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *The Trumpet of the Swan* (Various Editions) by E. B. White (Compassion)

Civic Virtues

- *The Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle (Charity, Grades 3-8)
- *The Friendship* by Mildred Taylor (Friendship Grades 4-6)
- [Projekt 1065 by Alan Gratz](#) (Self-Sacrifice, Integrity, Grades 6-8)
- [The Mighty Miss Malone by Christopher Paul Curtis](#) (Justice, Grades 6-8)
- [Zero Tolerance](#) by Claudia Mills (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- [Paper Things](#) by Jennifer Richard Jacobson (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- [The Kid's Guide to Social Action](#) by Barbara A. Lewis (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- [Hoot](#) by Carl Hiaasen (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- [The Chocolate War](#) by Robert Cormier (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 5-8)
- *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain (Service, Grades 7-12)
- [Out of My Mind](#) by Sharon M. Draper (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [Inside Out and Back Again](#) by Thanhha Lai (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [The Ordinary Princess](#) by M. M. Kaye (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- *You are Mighty: A Guide to Changing the World* by Caroline Paul (Citizenship, Grades 5-8)
- *The Constitution of the United States of America* (Various Editions) (Citizenship)

- *Nothing but the Truth* by Avi (Self Discipline, Responsibility, Citizenship)
- *The Gettysburg Address* (Various Editions) by Abraham Lincoln (Courage, Citizenship, Responsibility)
- *Marching to Freedom: The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* by Joyce Milton (Courage, Citizenship, Self Discipline, Responsibility)

Intellectual Virtues

- [*Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes* by Jonathan Auxier](#) (Ingenuity, Friendship, Courage, Grades 4-6)
- *On My Honor* by Marion D. Bauer (Responsibility, Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *The Moves Make the Man* by Bruce Brooks (Honesty, Courage, Responsibility, Good Judgment)
- *Notes from a Liar and Her Dog* by Gennifer Choldenko (Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* (Various Editions) by Mary M. Dodge (Courage, Self Discipline, Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *The Skirt* by Gary Soto, Illustrated by Eric Velesquez (available in Spanish) (Honesty, Responsibility, Respect for Others, Good Judgment)

Performance Virtues

- *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson (Resilience, Grades 4-8)
- *Under the Mesquite* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall (Perseverance, Grades 6-8)
- [*Prisoner B-3087* by Alan Gratz](#) (Humanity, Gratitude, Perseverance, Courage, Integrity, Grades 5-8)
- [*Gifted Hands: YA Edition* by Ben Carson](#) (Perseverance, Grades 3-6)
- [*Unbroken: Young Adult Edition* by Laura Hillenbrand](#) (Resilience, Redemption And Forgiveness, Grades 6-8)
- *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Anne Frank (Humility, Determination, Resilience, Grades 7-12)
- *Robinson Crusoe* (Various Editions) by Daniel Defoe (Self Discipline)
- *Children of Flight Pedro Pan* by Maria Armengol Acierno (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Children of the Settlement Houses* by Caroline Arnold (Compassion, Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Nothing but the Truth* by Avi (Self Discipline, Responsibility, Citizenship)
- *Leroy and the Old Man* by William Butterworth (Respect for Others, Self Respect)
- *Emilio* by Julia Mercedes Castilla (available in English and Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring* by Lucille Castilla (available in Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *The Story of Thomas Alva Edison* by Margaret Cousins (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The Little Prince* (Various Editions) by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *David Copperfield* (Various Editions) by Charles Dickens (Compassion, Self Discipline)
- *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* (Various Editions) by Mary M. Dodge (Courage, Self Discipline, Honesty, Good Judgment)
- *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Various Editions) by Benjamin Franklin (Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Stories* (Various Editions) by O. Henry (Compassion, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Kon-Tiki* (Various Editions) by Thor Heyerdahl (Courage, Self Discipline)

- *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey* by Jamake Highwater, Illustrated by Fritz Scholder (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Story of My Life* (Various Editions) by Helen Keller (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Captains Courageous* by Rudyard Kipling (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord, Illustrated by Marc Simont (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Marching to Freedom: The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* by Joyce Milton (Courage, Citizenship, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Eddie, Incorporated* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Illustrated by Blanche Sims (Self Discipline)
- *The New York Times: A Nation Challenged, Young Reader's Edition* by New York Times Staff (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Sing Down the Moon* by Scott O'Dell (Courage, Self Discipline)
- *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Various Editions) by Emmuska Orczy (Responsibility, Courage, Self Discipline)
- *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, Illustrated by Donna Diamond (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (Courage, Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth G. Speare (Respect for Others, Compassion, Self Discipline)
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Various Editions) by Mildred D. Taylor (available in Spanish) (Courage, Responsibility, Self Discipline)
- *Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women* by Catherine Thimmesh (Self Discipline, Responsibility)
- *Journey to Topaz* by Yoshika Uchida, Illustrated by Donald Carrick (Courage, Self Discipline)

Various Virtues

- [Dear Bully: Seventy Authors Tell Their Stories](#) by Megan Kelley Hall and Carrie Jones
- [Speak](#) by Laurie Halse Anderson
- [Freak Show](#) by James St. James
- [Stargirl](#) by Jerry Spinelli
- [7 Days at the Hot Corner](#) by Terry Trueman
- [The Cat at the Wall](#) by Deborah Ellis
- [The Three Questions](#) by Jon Muth
- *They Did What? 50 Impressive Kids and Their Amazing Stories* by Sandra Mitchell (Grades 5-9, All Virtues)
- *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri D'Aulaire (Grades 4-12, All Virtues)

Secondary (Grades 9-12) Moral Virtues

- *Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare (Gratitude, Grades 7-12)
- *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Anne Frank (Humility, Determination, Resilience, Grades 7-12)
- *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes (Love, Grade 12)
- [Freak the Mighty](#) by Rodman Philbrick (Kindness, Grades 7-12)
- [Rules](#) by Cynthia Lord (Kindness, Grades 7-12)
- [Out of My Mind](#) by Sharon M. Draper (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)

- [Inside Out and Back Again](#) by Thanhha Lai (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [The Ordinary Princess](#) by M. M. Kaye (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- *The Unexpected Everything* by Morgan Matson (Humility, Friendship, Grades 7-12)
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (Compassion, Friendship, Grades 9-12)
- *Drowned City* by Don Brown (Courage, Heroism, Selflessness, Grades 9-12)
- *Children of the Settlement Houses* by Caroline Arnold (Compassion, Courage, Self Discipline, Grades 9-12)
- *The Dark Road* by Ma Jian and Flora Drew (Resistance, Courage, Justice, Grades 9-12)
- *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston (Courage, Resilience, Grades 9-12)
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Various Editions) by Mark Twain (Self Discipline, Responsibility, Compassion, Determination, Love, Moral Choices, Grades 9-12)

Civic Virtues

- *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain (Service, Grades 7-12)
- *March: Book One* by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin (Citizenship, Grades 9-12)
- *Samir and Yonatan* by Daniella Carmi (Neighborliness, Grades 9-12)
- [Out of My Mind](#) by Sharon M. Draper (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [Inside Out and Back Again](#) by Thanhha Lai (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [The Ordinary Princess](#) by M. M. Kaye (Citizenship, Respect for Others, Grades 7-12)
- [The Great Greene Heist](#) by Varian Johnson (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 9-12)
- [The Grapes of Wrath](#) by John Steinbeck (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 9-12)
- [The Plain Janes](#) by Cecil Castellucci and Jim Rugg (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 9-12)
- [Samir and Yonatan](#) by Daniella Carmi (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 9-12)
- [The Lions of Little Rock](#) by Kristin Levine (Civic Engagement, Social Change, Grades 9-12)
- *Highly Illogical Behavior* by John Corey Whaley (Friendship, Grades 9-12)
- *Drowned City* by Don Brown (Courage, Heroism, Selflessness, Grades 9-12)
- *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone (Justice, Grades 9-12)
- *The Dark Road* by Ma Jian and Flora Drew (Resistance, Courage, Justice, Grades 9-12)

Intellectual Virtues

- *A Step Toward Falling* by Cammie McGovern (Prudence, Ownership, Grades 9-12)
- *Girl in Translation* by Jean Kwok (Curiosity, Integrity, Grades 9-12)

Performance Virtues

- *Screaming Quietly* by Evan Jacobs (Resilience, Grades 9-12)
- *Every Falling Star* by Sungju Lee and Susan Elizabeth McClelland (Resilience, Determination, Grades 9-12)
- *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (Responsibility, Self Discipline, Grades 9-12)
- *Children of the Settlement Houses* by Caroline Arnold (Compassion, Courage, Self Discipline, Grades 9-12)
- *The Dark Road* by Ma Jian and Flora Drew (Resistance, Courage, Justice, Grades 9-12)

- *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston (Courage, Resilience, Grades 9-12)
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Various Editions) by Mark Twain (Self Discipline, Responsibility, Compassion, Determination, Love, Moral Choices, Grades 9-12)
- *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Anne Frank (Humility, Determination, Resilience, Grades 7-12)

Various Virtues

- [*This Side of Home*](#) by Renee Watson
- *They Did What? 50 Impressive Kids and Their Amazing Stories* by Sandra Mitchell (Grades 5-9, All Virtues)
- *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri D'Aulaire (Grades 4-12, All Virtues)

All Grades

- *Americans Who Tell the Truth* by Robert Shetterly (All Virtues)

References

Arthur, J. and Kristjansson, K. (2022) Framework for Character Education in Schools.
Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/?character-education=-_trashed-2



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