Finding Common Ground (Grades K-5)



Overview: Students will explore the benefits of finding common ground with others in their community. This lesson promotes good citizenship.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- experience finding common ground with others.
- discuss how collaboration and community are impacted by citizens finding things in common.
- journal about how they can connect with others in their communities.

Directions:

- Identify an area to play this game. Specify where “out”

will be (to keep group together even though they are out).

- On a signal, have everyone walk around and mingle saying, “mingle, mingle, mingle”—until the leader shouts a number.
- When the number is announced, everyone must get into a group of people of that number. For example, if the leader says “3” then students should be getting in groups of 3.
- Anyone not in a group is “out”. All members of any group having more or less than the specified number are “out”.
- After playing one round, the leader will call out a new number and add the following characteristics as the number is called:
    - People:
        - of the same age
        - in the same grade
        - who live in the same city
        - with the same shoe size
        - with the same eye color
        - who love to eat the same food
        - who like the same kind of ice cream
- Keep playing until you get down to one or two people and then discuss.

Discussion Prompts:

- Ask students:
    - Was harder to find a group after you started grouping by things in addition to than numbers.
    - Did you learn things you have in common?
    - Did you feel more like you belonged when you learned about what you have in common with other students?
    - How did it feel when you couldn’t find something in common and were out of the game?
    - Do you think it is possible to have nothing in

common with someone?
- When working in a group, is it easier when you have something in common?

Journal:

- Encourage students to journal about how they can find common ground with others. Ask students to think how they can find things in common with others in their school, home, teams, clubs, neighborhoods, etc. Ask students to think about questions they could ask if they are having a hard time finding something in common.

Citizenship is one of the Six Pillars of Character. Click here to learn about the Six Pillars of Character.

Fairness and Appearances (Grades 6-12)

This lesson explores injustice based on appearances. The lesson explores a group of children who could not live with the lack of fairness shown to one couple.

Fairness (Grades K-5)

This lesson explores how an unfair situation can lead to frustration or anger and how to resolve it. It also allows students to demonstrate their understanding of fairness by recreating the rules to make a game fair for all participants.

Responsibility Artwork (Grades 6-12)



Overview: Students will create responsibility artwork with a quote.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- research quotes or proverbs about responsibility.
- share their favorite quote on responsibility.
- create a drawing featuring their quote.

Materials:

- Paper
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Access to the Internet to research quotes about

responsibility

Opening Reflection:

- Find a quote about responsibility that speaks to you.

Independent Creative Time:

- Create responsibility artwork of your favorite responsibility quote.
- Examples:





Group:

- Share your drawing. Why you chose this quote about responsibility?
- What does this quote look like in your life?

More Resources:

- Responsibility is one of the Six Pillars of Character. Click here to learn more about the Six Pillars.
- See more posts about responsibility by using the filter on our blog.
- Quotes about responsibility:
    - “There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.” – Beverly Sills
    - “Character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries.” – James Michener
    - “If you think you are too small to make a difference you haven’t spent the night with a mosquito.” – African proverb
    - “If you think you are too small to make a difference you haven’t spent the night with a mosquito.” – Dalai Lama XIV
    - “When we tackle obstacles, we find hidden reserves

of courage and resilience we did not know we had." -A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

- "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." – Arthur Ashe
- "Life isn't perfect, any failures you have are actually learning moments. They teach us how to grow and evolve." – Phillipa Soo

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Working with a Team (Grades K-5)



Overview: This lesson highlights the importance of bringing our best selves when working with a team.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- determine roles for each team member
- practice bringing their best self to a group task through their defined role
- reflect on the effects of roles and responsibilities in a group

Materials needed:

- A deck of cards for each group

Directions:

1. Put students in groups of 2-4. Each group needs to have at least one builder and one supervisor. If you have more than two students in the group, allow the students to decide how many builders and supervisors they want within their group, as long as there is one of each.
2. Give each group a deck of cards.
3. Instruct the group that their task is to build the highest tower of cards they can.
4. Only builders may touch the cards, but cannot talk. Only supervisors may talk, but cannot touch the cards.
5. The team must start over each time the tower falls.
6. Set a time limit. At the end of the time limit, allow students to negotiate more time. For example, let students continue if they can negotiate a trade (if don't use their dominant hand, don't talk etc., then they get one more minute to work).
7. At the end of the time limit, see who has the tallest tower—then let them blow it down!

Discussion Prompts:

- It is possible that they won't be very successful at this activity. If they aren't, ask them what they could have done better or differently.
- Was it hard to only be a builder or only be a supervisor? Why?
- Why does brining your best self and all of your talents

important when you are on a team?

Disagreeing with Respect (Grades 6-12)



Overview:

This lesson focuses on disagreeing with respect.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- review a video about respecting others even when you disagree.
- discuss what it means to respect others through disagreement.
- reflect on their own level of respect during disagreements.

Materials:

- Videos (Choose one)
    - SoulPancake. (2016) Kid President Is Over It! Youtube.com. https://youtu.be/ghk-nDJB3Tk
    - Myahamoment. (2015) Donna and Bob- An Unlikely Firendship. Mutual of Omaha. https://youtu.be/4dMMCVfKP9s

Lesson:

Opening Reflection

- What does this quote teach you about disagreeing with respect? “Do not focus on being right, focus on getting it right. “

Review content (Whole Group)

- SoulPancake. (2016) Kid President Is Over It! Youtube.com. https://youtu.be/ghk-nDJB3Tk
    - Myahamoment. (2015) Donna and Bob- An Unlikely Friendship. Mutual of Omaha. https://youtu.be/4dMMCVfKP9s

Whole Group Discussion

- What was your favorite take away from the video?
- What are the differences between healthy and toxic disagreements?
- How can you show respect even when you disagree?
- What are some hot topics that people around you, on the news, or in the community disagree on?
- What examples have you witnessed of people handling disagreements disrespectfully and respectfully?
    - Compare the outcomes and emotions in those disagreements.

Reflection

- Think about the last disagreement you had and consider ways you showed respect or ways you could have modeled respect better. What is a strategy discussed today that you can try to remember for the next time you have a disagreement?

More

- Respect is one of the Six Pillars of Character. Learn more about the Pillars.
- For more lessons on respect, use the filter tool to find lessons by value and age range.

Respect and Teamwork (Grades K-5)



Overview:

Students will practice the skills necessary to show respect and teamwork through a group project to build a structure. Students will practice teamwork, giving helpful feedback, and patience.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- practice patience while being limited in their abilities during the challenge.
- demonstrate effective teamwork by completing the structure together.
- reflect on how feedback can change the outcome of the project.

Materials:

- Materials to build a structure: pieces of wood, cardboard blocks, etc.
- Sample structure should be built ahead of time and piles of exact same building materials laid out for each group.

Lesson:

1. Divide students in groups of 2-4.
2. Facilitator shows group the structure. Allow them to look at it for at least one minute.
3. Give the instruction that each person will take a piece or pieces and must not touch any other pieces other than their own or the group will have to start over.
4. Each person in the group takes a piece or pieces of building material.
5. The group now duplicates the structure like the original.
6. Give the group a set amount of time. If they need more time, negotiate for what they are willing to give up (talking, one arm behind back, etc).
7. If groups are having trouble, take a time out and have them discuss how they are going to do it, then have them try again.

Discussion:

- Discuss the process they used either by plan or by default.
- Discuss what they heard while they were working, were people being encouraging or critical? How did that make them feel? Did they do anything to change the atmosphere?
- Discuss patience. Is it hard or easy for them?
- How does this activity reflect other things they have to do as a group or team?

More:

- Respect is one of the Six Pillars of Character. Learn more about the Pillars.
- For more lessons on respect, use the filter tool to find lessons by value and age range.

Trust and Safety (Grades 6-12)



Overview: Students will reflect on their responsibility for trust and safety.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- Read essays on trust and safety.
- Reflect on how they keep themselves safe.
- Consider ways they could protect themselves better.

- Essays:
    - Tucker, A. 2011. It’s Yours. Own It. Stage of Life.
    - Kestep. 2011. Defending Yourself Against Social Media. Stage of Life.
    - art paper/markers or polling/word cloud technology tool

Opening Reflection:

- How do you keep yourself safe in today’s world?
    - Utilize chart paper and markers or a polling/word cloud online tool to record responses.

Small Groups:

- Read two different essays (above) by teens about trust and safety.
- Highlight ways these teens suggest you must learn to trust yourself for your own safety.

Whole Group:

- Why do you need to trust yourself?
    - Who is to blame when you make a mistake?
    - Why is it challenging to keep yourself safe in this world?
    - How can teens learn to trust themselves to be safe physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually? (Consider online and physical location)

Reflection (5 mins):

- Reflect on your own ability to trust yourself to keep you safe.
    - What are some ways you already protect yourself?
    - Where or how could you improve?

More:

- For more lessons, use the filter tool to find lessons by value and age range.

Trustworthiness (Grades K-5)



Overview: Students will participate in an activity where they will have to rely on the trustworthiness of their peers.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- Consider how it feels to rely on the trustworthiness of others.
- Discuss how trustworthiness is related to caring and respect.

Materials needed:

Directions:

1.)
2.
3.
4.
5.

Discussion Prompts:

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Digital Citizenship (Grades 6-12)



Overview:

Teaching students to think about their digital citizenship through the lens of integrity is important in this digital world. This lesson will give students an opportunity to discuss ways to engage an active conscience to model integrity as digital citizens.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- explore their digital footprint.
- discuss why it is important to protect your identity and reputation online and offline.
- utilize Rules of an Active Conscience to determine what to post on social media.

Materials:

- Rules of an Active Conscience tool
- Social Media: To Post or Not To Post handout

Lesson:

Journal: (5 mins)

- Google yourself.
- Write down what you noticed about your digital footprint.

Whole Group Discussion (15 mins)

- Share what you noticed about your digital footprint.
- Why is it so important to be a good digital citizen in today's world?
- Share headlines of digital footprints impacting citizens:
    - Harvard rescinded 10 offers of enrollment for students who posted explicit and racist pictures on social media.
    - Woman tweeted a racist post about her trip to Africa when she boarded the plane. She was fired by her boss before the plane landed.
    - Students photoshopped an unflattering picture of a teacher and posted it on the Internet. They students involved were suspended, legal charges were filed, and the students faced five years in jail and a $10,000 fine.
    - A woman posted a picture of herself dressed like a Boston Marathon Bombing victim to Instagram for Halloween. She was fired because of the insensitive nature of the post.
    - Students posted a meme making light of gun violence at school and they were arrested. Students who liked the post were suspended.
- What you share on social media matters. It can impact you today and in your future plans and career. Your

digital footprint exists and can be used against you when you least expect it. Something you find funny or impulsively post can get you fired, arrested, or fined.

- Discuss in small groups how the Rules of An Active Conscience can help you decide what to post on social media.

Small Group Discussion (15 mins)

- Read each Social media post on the To Post or Not To Post Handout and determine which of the Rules of Active Conscience it breaks.
- Share your findings with the teacher.

Exit Ticket:

- Generate a social media post that meets the Rules of Active Conscience.
    - Use the following site to create a fake account post: https://zeoob.com/ if students do not have one they can use.