

# Caring (Grades K-5)

Reflecting on your own character is important to grow and stay accountable. This lesson is designed for students to reflect on the character trait of caring and the ways they display it to others. It also allows students time to discuss on how they can continue to show care towards others and how they can make changes to become even more caring.

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## Tips for Educators: An Introduction to Caring

Teachers care about the relational aspect of teaching. They take time to establish a trusting and caring connection with students, who in turn become more receptive to what's being taught. Caring is at the heart of our character and will help in creating a positive school climate. Here are our tips for educators: an introduction to caring:

### Questions to ask:

- What are your thoughts on teaching caring, kindness and empathy in the classroom?
- In what way are our students already upholding the Pillar of caring?
- Are there examples of where we could improve in words or actions on the part of students toward the Pillar of caring? How about as a staff?
- What can we do to teach students to be more caring and kind to others?

### Activities to do:

1. Write 3 classroom key beliefs around the Pillar of caring that you would like to instill in your students.
2. Write 2 key beliefs you would like to instill in students throughout the school, hallways, lunchroom, etc.
3. What instructional strategies or classroom management techniques could you use to be intentional and explicit in instilling these beliefs?
  - Positive Sticky Notes – Leave sticky notes with positive messages
  - Thank You Letter – Write (and send!) an anonymous letter to someone you respect in your school, workplace, or other community space.
  - Caring Bulletin Board – Create a bulletin board in your school and provide plenty of paper in fun shapes or designs where adults and students can write down the acts of kindness they have received or benefitted from.

### **Project to explore:**

One of the effective ways to implement CHARACTER COUNTS! in a school is the creation of a school-wide project. As this lesson is on the Pillar of caring, a school could consider as a project a Campaign of Kindness. As a staff, brainstorm the following:

- Slogan for the campaign
- Agree upon at least four action items that would help to implement the Culture of Kindness campaign
- Assign responsibilities for staff, students and parents
- Establish a timeline with a specific target date for the Kindness project

For additional ideas, a great resource is Random Acts of Kindness – <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org>

**Join our CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition to have access to more**

**videos like this!**

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## **Goal Setting (Grades 6-12)**

Setting and reaching goals is an important skill every student needs to develop to become a more productive citizen. However, students do not always understand the difference in goal setting and goal achievement, nor do they grasp the steps it requires to achieve their goals. So, this lesson will walk students through the steps and supports needed to set and attain their goals

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## **Digital Citizenship (Grades K-5)**

Our citizenship does not stop at the physical space we occupy. Citizenship has expanded to the communities we have created online. Being a digital citizen is important for students as they complete school work and socialize in the digital space. This lesson is designed to give students tips on being a safe digital citizen.

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# **Seven ways to build strong character and integrity in children**

Wondering what can you do to help your kids counter negative influences and stand up for what they know is right? The answer is to nurture a solid moral core that will guide them to stand up for their beliefs and act right without us. And the best news is that we can teach kids the core virtues and skills of strong character and moral courage and can begin when they are toddlers.

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## **Perspectives (Grades K-5)**

Fairness is hearing all sides to a story, even when it's hard to see there is another side. This lesson is designed for students to stretch their ability to see the view of others in stories that feel like there is a good and a bad side. Students will be encouraged to think about how a story that they thought they knew looks different when you see the perspective of others.

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## **Embracing Diversity (Grades**

# 6-12)

Learning about other traditions and holidays is important to promote acceptance not just tolerance of other viewpoints, religions, belief systems, and perspectives. This lesson will discuss having integrity with a focus on fairness to promote a classroom that embraces diversity.

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## Six Pillar Coloring Pages

Download these PDFs and get started coloring!

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

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## Recognizing, Addressing, and Preventing Cyberbullying



*From guest contributor, Pamela Zuber*

COVID-19 has changed so much about our daily lives. If we're lucky, we're able to use technology to continue to work, stay informed, and keep in touch with our family and friends.

But technology can be a double-edged sword for some children and young people. While using computers, phones, and other devices allows them to attend school remotely and spend time online with their friends, it can also expose them to cyberbullying.

### **What is cyberbullying?**

In cyberbullying, people post hurtful things about other people online. They might post these messages through

- Email
- Messaging apps, text messaging, direct messaging, or instant messaging
- Social media apps such as Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook
- Online chats, gaming communities, message boards, chat rooms, or forums

Since social media and internet sites are social, others could see these messages, which could magnify the victim's shame, embarrassment, and fear. In addition, it's often difficult to remove some of these posts, so the messages can continue to harass a person long after a bully posted them.

Cyberbullying is particularly insidious because a bully can attack a person from anywhere or anytime. In the past, if a student threatened another student in school, the confrontation may have ended when classes ended. Now, people can use technology to start, continue, or intensify their harassment.

### **How can we stop cyberbullying?**

As horrible as cyberbullying is, there are ways to stop it. There are many online guides that explain what cyberbullying is and how to prevent and address cyberbullying.

In addition, it might be a good idea to remind children and young people that our online lives shouldn't be all that different from our actual lives.

We could remind them that when they post something online, the audience members reading or watching their posts are real people. They have real emotions and can be hurt by hurtful comments.

Ask them, "How would you feel if someone posted something insulting about you?" Your conversation could spur them to consider other people's feelings and help them foster respect for others.

Keeping the lines of communication open can help if you think your children are the targets of cyberbullying. If you talk regularly with your children, they may be more likely to share their problems with you and go to you for help.

Frequent conversations can also help you notice if your

children seem nervous or fearful or don't seem like themselves, which could be clues that they're being cyberbullied or if something else is wrong.

Communication fuels cyberbullying, but it's also a tactic for ending it. Reinforcing kindness and respect and providing safe spaces to share can help prevent and stop cyberbullying and other harmful exchanges.

***About the author:*** Pamela Zuber is a writer and editor at Sunshine Behavioral Health who is interested in mental health, addiction and recovery, human rights, gender issues, and several other topics.

## **Sources**

[stopbullying.gov](https://stopbullying.gov) – What Is Cyberbullying

[sunshinebehavioralhealth.com](https://sunshinebehavioralhealth.com) – Top Tips for Preventing Cyberbullying

[raycenter.wp.drake.edu](https://raycenter.wp.drake.edu) – Four Ways to Nurture Kindness

Learn more about character education.

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# **When the Six Pillars Conflict**





At CHARACTER COUNTS!, we often refer to the Six Pillars of Character as universal values. In other words, they are values that transcend race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and even time. Put another way, nearly everyone can agree that more trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship would be good and even necessary for our individual, community, and societal growth.

Though the Six Pillars are universal, they are not absolutes. Like anything else in society, what the Pillars look like, sound like, and feel like can change due to context or circumstance. What is considered perfectly respectful behavior at a football game would not be considered respectful in a boardroom, for example. How we define what each pillar looks like and sounds like in unique circumstances is particularly important when Pillars appear to be in conflict. One definition of citizenship may include following the rules, respecting the law, and so on. And yet, Rosa Parks is often highlighted as an example of fairness, for her protest on the bus in which she technically broke the law – an unjust, unfair, and racist law, but a law nonetheless. Does that mean she's a bad citizen? Or, a student may argue that she was showing caring by letting her friend copy homework so her friend wouldn't get in trouble, while a teacher might argue that the student was being irresponsible and untrustworthy by

letting her friend cheat.

The tendency in these moments is to ask, “which Pillar is more important?” but that’s the wrong question. The right question is, “in this time, given these circumstances, what does it mean to put the Six Pillars into action?” When one asks this question, Rosa Park’s action is not only a demonstration of fighting for fairness, but citizenship, as she tries to make her community a better place for everyone, regardless of race.

Of course, some may view the constant need to negotiate what the Six Pillars look like in different circumstances as soft or unprincipled, but maybe it’s the opposite. The intentional, deliberate conversation about what the Six Pillars look like for us, in this situation, is exactly the kind of conversation, sometimes hard conversation, we must have if we’re going to work together successfully. Yes, the Pillars are universal, but what we want them to look like for our students, school, community, family, and society is ultimately up to us.

Learn more about character education.