

Integrating Moral Literacy Activities in the Classroom: A Resource Guide for K-6 Educators

Developed by Dipali Puri

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LANGUAGE ARTS

Activity	Grade Level(s)	Moral Literacy Themes
Invite students to draw pictures of people doing different jobs in their community, such as teachers, doctors, etc. Post their pictures on a bulletin board, below each drawing, write why students respect each person. (We respect teachers because..., we respect doctors because...).	K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Kindness • Honesty • Trustworthiness
Create a bulletin board that focuses on “Who Should We Respect?”. The bulletin board should include “Home”, “School”, and “Neighborhood”. Below each caption, post student drawings of people they should respect such as parents, teachers, friends, brothers, sisters, etc.	K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Kindness • Honesty • Trustworthiness
Engage students in a class discussion about respect and the ways in which we can respect one another, create a class list and hang in the classroom.	K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Kindness • Honesty

<p>Picture walk- this activity is appropriate for early grades. Before you read the children’s book or story, tell the students that they are going to “walk through the story with their eyes”. Talk about each picture and let students guess what is happening. As you are facilitating the discussion, include issues related to moral literacy by pulling out themes.</p> <p>Refer to moral literacy booklist at www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/</p>	<p>K-2 (Also appropriate for English Language Learners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Responsibility • Honesty
<p>Create a classroom “character” book- invite students to identify their favorite character from a story or book. The students then discuss their thoughts about their favorite character and the qualities he or she possesses. The student or teacher, depending on the grade level, writes a few sentences about the character. Have the students illustrate a picture to go with the description. All of the pages are put together to create a class book; keep the book in the classroom library for students to refer to throughout the school year.</p> <p>Refer to moral literacy booklist at www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/</p>	<p>K-2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty • Respect • Responsibility • Caring • Friendship • Sharing • Trustworthiness
<p>Have students to pick a theme such as “honesty”, “respect”, “responsibility”, etc. to write about. Encourage students to discuss the importance of the theme they have chosen and the ways in which it has an influence on their lives.</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty • Respect • Responsibility • Caring • Friendship • Sharing • Trustworthiness

<p>Use literature circles in the classroom as a way to integrate issue related to moral literacy. A literature circle is a student centered reading activity for a group comprised of 4-6 students. A group member is assigned as “facilitator” of the circle to help guide the discussion of the book they are reading. The students discuss, reflect, and respond to the reading (story).</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Sharing • Honesty • Trustworthiness
<p>Integrate quotes, from literature (picture books or stories) related to moral literacy issues through classroom discussions. Have students reflect, respond, and react to the quote that is being discussed. This can be done in small groups of 4-6 students or as a whole group activity. To follow up, students could write their reactions down in a journal or on a piece of paper.</p> <p>Refer to moral literacy booklist at www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Sharing • Honesty • Trustworthiness • Citizenship • Responsibility • Fairness
<p>“My Hero”- prompt students to brainstorm qualities that make a hero. Encourage students to discuss these qualities with the class. Students may write about a person who possesses these qualities, someone they hold in high regard. The following writing prompt may be used: “Who is your hero?”</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Caring • Honesty • Truthfulness • Responsibility • Friendship • Trustworthy

<p>Acrostic poem- have students write an acrostic poem using their first names. For each letter in their name, encourage students to think about a positive quality that describes who they are and represents a unique quality or characteristic.</p> <p>* If your students are not familiar with an acrostic poem, do one as a whole group to model what it looks like *</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Self-respect • Caring • Honesty • Truthfulness • Responsibility • Friendship • Trustworthy
<p>Encourage students to write a letter to a person they respect and look up to. This person could be a parent, sibling, grandparent, friend, community member, etc. Ask students to reflect on the ways in which this person has shown them the importance and value of treating others with respect, kindness, and care.</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Caring • Friendship • Family • Kindness
<p>Journal writing- have students write in their journals (this could be a notebook or a collection of writings kept in a folder) about different moral literacy themes, such as “respect”, “responsibility”, etc. Provide students with writing prompts, which could include “I respect....”, “I think friendship means....”, etc. For early elementary grades, students can draw a picture to articulate their thoughts and ideas.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Sharing • Honesty • Trustworthiness • Citizenship • Responsibility • Fairness

<p>Integrate literature in the classroom curriculum to highlight moral literacy. Have students read or listen to a story that focuses on different moral literacy themes, such as “Rainbow Fish” (the book that is chosen will depend on the grade level). Engage students in a class discussion and encourage them to reflect on issues related to moral literacy.</p> <p>Refer to moral literacy booklist at www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Sharing • Honesty • Trustworthiness
<p>Introductory lesson to get to know your students at the beginning of the school year: bring in a bag or box containing items that describe who you are and share this with your students. Have your students bring in 3-5 items to share with their classmates the next day. This is a great way for students to get to know and learn about each other .</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing • Family • Friendship • Respect • Kindness
<p>Ask each student to share a story and/or experience about a time when he or she was respectful to another person(s) or was expected to act responsibly in a situation. Engage students in a class discussion, focusing on themes related to moral literacy.</p> <p>Extension activity: have students write and/or draw about the experience they shared with the class.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Responsibility • Sharing • Kindness • Caring

CLASSROOM AND THE COMMUNITY

Activity	Grade Level(s)	Moral Literacy Themes
Build relationships with parents and community members: create a weekly or monthly newsletter to let parents and community members know what is happening in the classroom.	K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Kindness • Honesty
Recommend literature (books), related to moral literacy themes, for families to read to their children. Refer to moral literacy booklist at www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/	K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Kindness • Honesty • Trustworthiness
Invite parents and community members to come into the classroom to read books and share their own stories related to a moral literacy theme such as respect or caring.	K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Respect • Citizenship • Honesty
Build relationships with community members: seek out guest speakers (i.e. police officers, fire fighters) to visit with the class and discuss experiences related to the moral literacy theme(s).	K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Respect • Citizenship • Kindness • Honesty • Responsibility
Share with parents and family members: plan family night events where students can show family members the work that they are doing in the classroom and discuss components of the moral literacy curriculum.	K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship • Respect • Citizenship • Kindness • Honesty • Responsibility
Seek out ways that students can extend their understanding of moral literacy by participating in community events, festivals, and organizations.	K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing • Family • Friendship • Respect • Citizenship

<p>Build relationships between the community and the school: network with local public libraries in addition to the school library to create a communitywide emphasis on moral literacy themes as they are being taught in the classroom.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Kindness • Honesty • Sharing
<p>Discuss the importance of “recycling” with your students in the classroom. What does it mean to recycle? To grab their attention, show them a garbage can that is full of trash, it could be overflowing. Brainstorm ways to reduce the amount of garbage that is accumulated on a daily basis. Have your students draw and/or write about the importance of recycling and reducing waste.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Respect • Caring • Sharing
<p>Make connections between the classroom and culture - plan a “cultural night” with your students, invite parents, family, friends and community members to come in and share different aspects of their culture through food, music, language, etc.</p> <p>* This is a great way to introduce and expose your students to a variety of cultures around the world. *</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Family • Caring • Friendship • Responsibility • Sharing
<p>“Community Garden”- create community garden at your school. Through this activity, students will work together to grow vegetables, plants, flowers, etc. If you are unable to plant the garden outside (if you do not have the space or ideal vegetation climate), you can grow the plants inside the classroom. Throughout the school year, encourage your students to discuss, reflect, and respond to their observations and experiences working together.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Respect • Caring • Teamwork • Friendship

SOCIAL STUDIES

Activity	Grade Level(s)	Moral Literacy Themes
<p>“Helping Hands”- students trace an outline of their hand onto a sheet of colored construction paper. Have students write one word or sentence (depending on age and grade level) related to moral literacy themes that are important to them, such as “respect one another”, “remember to be responsible”, etc. Create a bulletin board and post the “hands” on the walls for students to refer to throughout the school year.</p>	K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Friendship • Caring • Sharing • Honesty • Trustworthiness • Citizenship • Responsibility • Fairness
<p>Introduce the topic of “diversity”- share the story “Chrysanthemum” by Kevin Henkes with your students. Engage the students in a class discussion about issues related to diversity, brainstorm what it means to be “unique” and why it is important to respect everyone and treat them with kindness.</p>	K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Caring • Friendship • Kindness
<p>Bring in articles from newspapers and magazines, related to current events, which highlight situations where respect and disrespect are issues. Engage students in a class discussion about the ways in which people are acting (either respectfully or disrespectfully).</p>	3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Caring • Honesty • Responsibility
<p>Engage students in a classroom “debate” pertaining to an issue that is important to the students and/or school, such as increased recess time, more lunch choices, starting a recycling program in the school, etc. Discuss the importance and value of conducting a debate as a way to share your beliefs with others.</p>	3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Citizenship • Kindness • Fairness • Responsibility • Trustworthiness • Sharing

<p>Have students choose a famous person, past or present, who has made a positive contribution to society. Students should research the person they have chosen and write about what they have learned. Give students the opportunity to share their information with the class.</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Responsibility • Citizenship • Sharing
<p>Invite students to brainstorm ways in which they can become responsible classroom citizens. Engage students in a discussion where they reflect on the contributions that they can make in the classroom to create a positive learning environment. Have students write their contributions down and create a bulletin board that they can refer to throughout the school year.</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Citizenship • Responsibility • Trustworthiness • Sharing • Caring
<p>Class meetings- during a class meeting the teacher and students sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs. An agenda is formulated for the meeting, stating the issues or problems that are going to be discussed. The student who has raised the issue will describe it. The class will discuss a positive way to resolve the issue or problem. The teacher acts as a facilitator throughout the meeting.</p>	<p>3-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Respect • Fairness • Kindness • Citizenship
<p>Engage students in a class discussion about rules for having a respectful classroom environment. Have students “vote” on 5 classroom rules to follow throughout the school year. Post the rules in the classroom so that students can refer to it on a daily basis.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Citizenship • Responsibility • Teamwork • Fairness

<p>Diversity in the classroom- engage students in a classroom discussion surrounding issues to related to diversity. Have students list qualities that make a person unique and special. For younger grades, discuss what it means to be “unique” and how this is an important part of who we are.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Caring • Fairness • Sharing • Friendship
<p>Create a paper tree with brown branches and post it on a bulletin board. On different colored paper leaves, have students write positive characteristics that they think are important for a person to possess. Paste the “leaves” on the branches of the tree. Students may refer to the “tree of character” throughout the school year and continue to add leaves as they think of different qualities.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Friendship • Responsibility • Respect • Family • Trustworthiness • Loyalty • Kindness
<p>Morning Meeting- the teacher and students meet in the morning, for 20 minutes to 1/2 an hour, to share and talk to one another. Morning meetings can be conducted in a circle on the floor or at the students’ desks. The teacher may prompt the students by asking a question: “What did you do last night”? “What is your favorite color”? , etc. This is also an ideal time for 2-3 students to participate in “show and tell” and share an item or story with their classmates.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing • Respect • Responsibility • Kindness • Patience • Friendship • Caring

<p>Engage students in discussion about the importance of teamwork and cooperation. What does it mean to work together? Why is it important to have “good sportsmanship” while you are playing a game? Invite students to play a game or sports activity to demonstrate the significance and value of working together. Encourage students to reflect, respond, and talk about their experiences and observations with the class.</p>	<p>K-6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Teamwork • Cooperation • Responsibility • Sharing • Friendship • Patience
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RESOURCES

Web sites:

www.atozteacherstuff.com

<http://www.caringteachers.com/>

www.charactercounts.org

<http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/valuescharacter/>

www.giraffe.org

www.goodcharacter.com

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