

KWL-RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT WE KNOW

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW

WHAT WE LEARNED

1. What we KNOW:

Use a **large sheet of paper** and have your group brainstorm what the students KNOW about what it means to be responsible.

Questions to help the discussion: What does it mean to be responsible? What does it mean to be responsible for yourself? What does it mean to be responsible for your family? What does it mean to be responsible to your community or town? What does it mean to be responsible for the world? Each question may start a new line of thinking. Remember to write down all the thoughts and not judge if they are right or wrong.

2. What we WANT to Know:

On the same sheet have the students think about what they WANT TO KNOW about responsibility.

3. You may keep this sheet posted and students can add to *What we Want to Know* - or put it away until the last week. Before you end the study on Responsibility post this paper and have the students review what they KNOW and WANT TO KNOW. Then have them talk about and list what they LEARNED.

RESPONSIBILITY		
KNOW	WANT TO KNOW	LEARNED

The Big R

Student will conduct a self-discovery of what responsibility means to them.

Materials:

R – Handout Template

Markers/Color Pencils

Magazines & Glue (optional)

Time: 30 minutes

Grade: K – 8th

Steps:



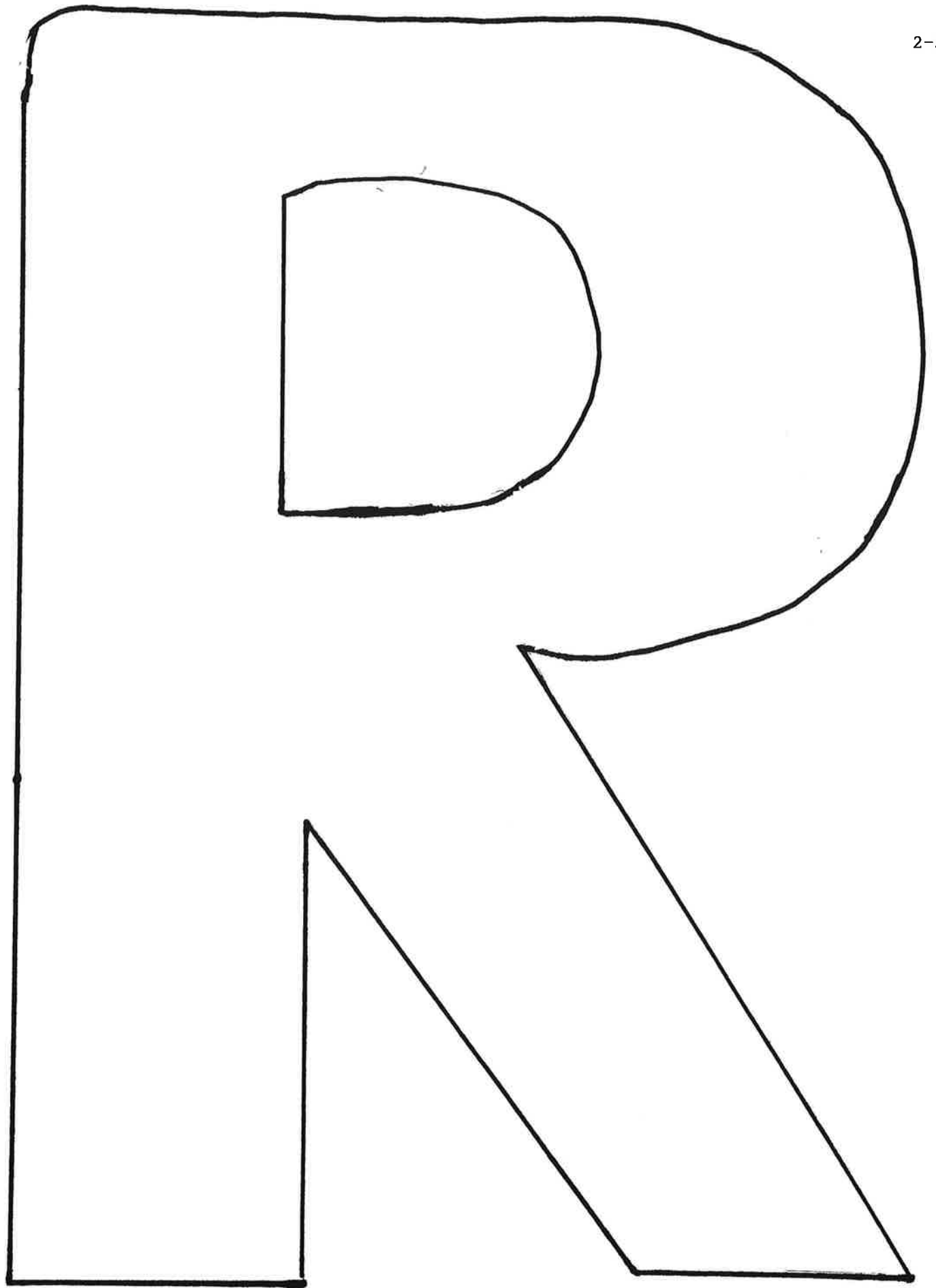
1. Close your eyes.
2. When you think of responsibility what word, phrases and actions come to your mind.
 - How can you responsible to oneself, school, community, planet
3. Write down your phrases and words inside the R.
4. Color and decorate your sheet.
5. Have students share with the class some of their phrases and actions.
 - What were some of the more common answers?
 - What were some of the more unique?

Tweaks:

If working with younger students:

They can draw or cut out pictures of people doing responsible things and place them in their R.

You can make a list of the most common words



Responsible

Circle of Responsibility



Grade Level: K-3rd

Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Different colors of construction paper
- Card Stock
- Hole puncher
- Markers/Crayons
- 1 paper clip per student
- Circle of Responsibility template (attached)

1. Print out 1-3 sets of the above circles on cardstock for groups to share. Have each student trace the circles onto four different colors of paper.

2. Focus on one circle at a time, beginning with the environment. Have students reflect about the statements below for each circle and fill in the coordinating circle with their answers. Their personal answers can be a collage of statements, pictures, messages, etc.
 - I can be responsible to the Environment by.....
 - I can be responsible At School by...
 - I can be responsible At Home by...
 - I can be responsible to myself by...

3. Have students arrange circles from smallest to biggest and punch one hole through them all. Use a ribbon, string, or paper clip to hold them together.



To Myself



At Home



At School

To the Environment

You can accept and take responsibility in all areas of your life. Complete each of the statements below, naming at least one way you can take responsibility in each area.

**Developmental
Assets Tie-in:**

30—Responsibility

I can take more responsibility at home by:

I can take more responsibility at school by:

I can take more responsibility in my community by:

I can take more responsibility with my friends by:

I can take more responsibility with my personal goals by:

Responsibility Walk

Grade Level: 6th-8th

Time: 30-45 minutes

Objective: For your students to consider ways to gain more Responsibility

Materials: Markers, newsprint, tape

Before the Group arrives: Write these labels at the top of separate sheets of newsprint: home, school, congregation, youth organization, neighborhood, work. Post these around your meeting area, spacing them as far apart as possible.

Set the stage: Ask youth to think about the various responsibilities they have-things other people are counting on them to do.

Step 1: Invite youth to walk around to each chart and write down key responsibilities they have in the areas mentioned. (Youth do not need to put their names by the things that they write.)

Step 2: As a group, review the items listed on each chart. Focus your discussion with questions like:

- Are there any surprises on these charts? If so, what are they?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of having these various responsibilities?
- What is the relationship between responsibilities and privileges in these various areas? What do you think about the balance of responsibilities and privileges in your life?
- Are adults more likely to trust youth who handle responsibility well? Why or Why not?
- What advice would you give to a friend who wants to have more responsibility?
- Do you have enough responsibilities? Too many?

Respect The Environment

Grade K-1

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

Students will learn that respect must also be shown to the environment. Students will identify specific ways care and concern can be shown for planet Earth.

MATERIALS

- Paper bag
- Safety scissors
- Crayons

PROCEDURE

1. Review previous lessons with students by asking the following questions:
 - a. How do we respect ourselves? *(We respect ourselves when we take care of our bodies by washing our hands, combing our hair, wearing shoes to protect our feet, and wearing hats to keep our heads warm.)*
 - b. How do we respect others? *(We respect others by showing care and consideration. For example, we wait our turn, we don't push or shove, we don't call others names or tease them.)*
 - c. How do we respect those in authority? *(We respect those in authority by obeying them, speaking politely to them and by following the rules.)*
 - d. How do we respect possessions? *(We respect possessions by taking care of them, and not damaging or destroying them.)*
 - e. How do we respect someone when we borrow something that belongs to him or her? *(We respect someone when we take care of the belonging and return it to him or her on time.)*
 - f. What should we do if we find something that belongs to someone else? *(We should return lost items to the owner.)*
2. Tell students that today they will have their last lesson in the unit on Respect. Emphasize that they will learn the importance of respecting the environment. Explain that the **environment** is everything around them that makes up planet Earth, such as the air, soil, water, and animals.
3. Discuss the importance of a healthy environment based on the following points:
 - a. *We need fresh air to breathe. Chimneys, smokestacks, and car exhaust pollute our air.*
 - b. *Both humans and animals need clean water to live. Water is polluted when garbage and poisons are put in it.*
 - c. *Animals are important to us for many reasons. They provide us with food, clothes and transportation. They also help to clean the earth.*
4. Inform students that when we respect our environment we show care and concern for everything around us. Emphasize that just as their parents or guardians care for them, they must help to care for the earth. Ask students for ways they can respect the environment. *(Answers*

should include: picking up trash and throwing it in a trashcan, not damaging trees or other plants, not writing on things other than what they have permission to write on, not hurting an animal or insect for fun, recycling trash such as newspapers, aluminum cans and plastics.)

5. Tell students that disrespecting the planet is harmful. When there is a lack of care and concern, people, animals, air and water suffer. Emphasize that everyone must show respect for the earth in order to care for our environment.

6. **Activity #1—Color Me Beautiful:** Instruct students to color and then paste the pictures onto the earth. Remind students that they can respect the Earth by showing care and concern for the environment.

7. **Activity #2—Respect All Things:** Tell students they will now play a game on what they have learned about respect. Copy and precut the statements and place them in a paper bag. Draw a tic-tac-toe grid on the board, divide the class into two teams and designate them as X or O. Choose one person at a time from each team to draw a sentence from the bag. Read the sentence out loud for the students and instruct them to fill in the missing word. A correct answer allows the team to choose where on the grid to place the X or O. If the team does not answer correctly, the question goes to the other team.

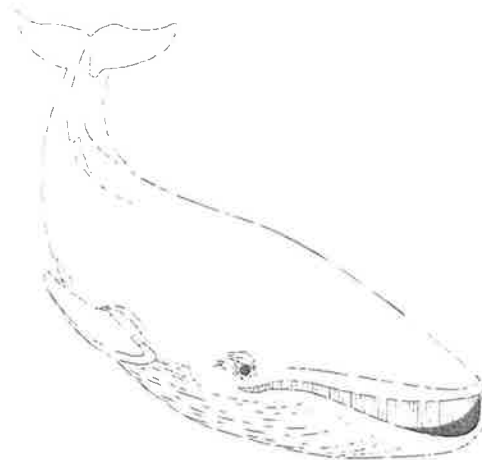
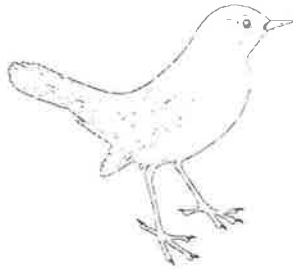
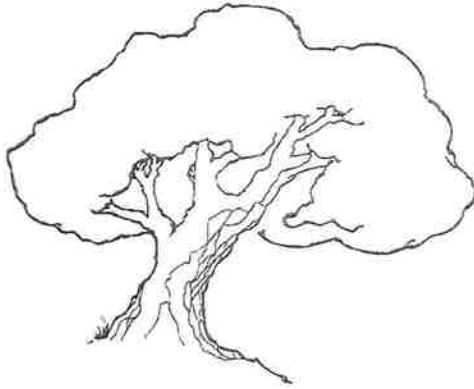
8. Conclude the lesson by emphasizing to students that they must have self-respect, respect for others and their belongings and respect for the environment. Emphasize that this will make a more peaceful world to live in and will help to keep the earth beautiful.

Lesson Seven
Activity #1
Color Me Beautiful

Color the earth below and the pictures on the following page, then cut out and glue the pictures onto the earth.



Lesson Seven
Activity #1
Color Me Beautiful



Lesson Seven

Activity #2

Respect All Things

I can take care of my teeth by _____ them.	I care for my ears by wearing _____ when it is cold.
I care for my _____ by sleeping at night to rest them.	I care for my _____ by washing them and wearing gloves.
I show respect for my teacher by following school _____.	When I _____ my parents I show respect.
I say _____ when I ask for something. This shows respect.	I say _____ when I am given something. This shows respect.
Policemen and firemen are _____ figures.	When I _____ someone's belonging, I take care of it.
I should never hit or _____ others.	I respect possessions by taking _____ of them.
The things I won are my special _____.	I _____ my books up off the floor.
I put my _____ away when I am finished playing with them.	When I lose something it makes me _____.
If I find something I _____ it to the owner.	I respect the earth when I _____ my trash away.
We need clean _____ to breathe.	We should never hurt any animal for _____.

Lesson Seven

Activity #2—Respect All Things

Answer Key

I can take care of my teeth by <u>brushing</u> them.	I care for my ears by wearing <u>ear muffs or a hat</u> when it is cold.
I care for my <u>eyes</u> by sleeping at night to rest them.	I care for my <u>hands</u> by washing them and wearing gloves.
I show respect for my teacher by following school <u>rules</u> .	When I <u>obey</u> my parents I show respect.
I say <u>please, may I</u> when I ask for something. This shows respect.	I say <u>thank you</u> when I am given something. This shows respect.
Policemen and firemen are <u>authority</u> figures.	When I <u>borrow</u> someone's belonging, I take care of it.
I should never hit or <u>shove</u> others.	I respect possessions by taking <u>care</u> of them.
The things I won are my special <u>treasures</u> .	I <u>pick</u> my books up off the floor.
I put my <u>toys</u> away when I am finished playing with them.	When I lose something it makes me <u>sad, worried</u> .
If I find something I <u>return</u> it to the owner.	I respect the earth when I <u>throw</u> my trash away.
We need clean <u>air</u> to breathe.	We should never hurt any animal for <u>fun</u> .

Random Acts of Service

Grade Level: 3rd-8th

Time: (2) 30 minute sessions

Objective: For youth to choose simple ways to serve others

Materials Needed: "A Contract to Serve" for every student (attached), pencils

Activity:

1. Have youth brainstorm a list of simple, easy ways to serve others. Write all the ideas on a chalkboard or Easel.

Examples might include:

Taking out the Garbage without being asked	Helping the elderly cross the street	Mowing someone's lawn
Writing a thinking-of-you note to someone	Reading to another student	Saying thank you to your parents or teacher
Picking up garbage from the lawn or blacktop	Helping your parents or teachers with something	

2. Have each student choose one thing they could do within the next week.
 - a. Have students fill out the "*A Contract for Service*" (attached)
 - b. Have students observe the receiver's reactions and also notice their own reaction to the receiver's reactions.
 - c. The next time you meet together, ask your students to share their experiences with the group.

3. Discussion Questions:

- a. Which activity did you choose? Why?
- b. How did you feel while you were doing the activity?
- c. How did you feel after completing the activity?
- d. How did the receiver's reaction affect your feeling about the service?
- e. Do you want to do other acts of service? Why or why not?

**Developmental
Assets Tie-in:**

9—Service to Others
26—Caring

Choose a kind of service you would like to do (for example, mowing a neighbor's lawn, baby-sitting so the parents can run errands, or cleaning up litter from your block) and how much time you can realistically spend doing it. Then fill in the contract below. Consider showing or giving the contract to the person you plan to help.

CONTRACT FOR SERVICE

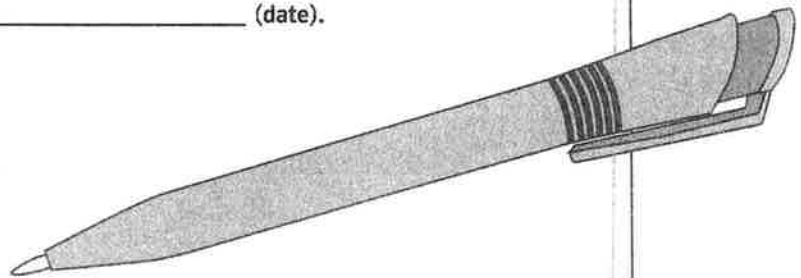
I, _____ (your name), make a
commitment to _____
_____ (type of service).

This service will be of help to _____
_____ (name of receiver)

because _____
_____ (reason for doing the project).

I realistically can spend about _____ hours on this project.

I intend to start by _____ (date).



(your signature)

(today's date)

Think Page 1

Name: _____

How Responsible Are You?

Read the questions. Then write your answer on the lines by using the following numbers:

- 4 -- Always
 3 -- Usually
 2 -- Sometimes
 1 -- Never

1. Do I keep my room neat and put my clothes away? _____
2. Do I do my chores without being asked? _____
3. Do I leave for school on time every morning? _____
4. Do I hand in my homework assignments when they're due? _____
5. Do I brush my teeth twice a day? _____
6. Do I finish a job once I've started it? _____
7. Am I careful not to leave toys, shoes, books, or backpacks lying around the house? _____
8. Do I plan the best way to do a job before I start it? _____

Now add up your score.

If your score is **8 to 16** your sense of responsibility **Needs Improving**

If your score is **17 to 24** your sense of responsibility is **Satisfactory**

If your score is **25 to 32** your sense of responsibility is **Very Good**

If you got **NI**, write on the back of the paper some things you could do to change to **S** or **VG**.

A MORE PERFECT SCHOOL

Note: This is the first part of a two-part lesson.

READY

Summary: This lesson gives participants the opportunity to brainstorm ideas to improve their school. Participants generate ideas under the three broad categories of *Student to Student*, *Student to Adult*, and *Physical Environment*.

SET

Time Required: 45 minutes

Assets Promoted: Caring School Climate, Community Values Youth, Youth as Resources, Positive Peer Influence, Caring, Planning and Decision Making

Materials Needed:

List or poster of the 40 Developmental Assets
Display Chart 1: Mission

Display Chart 2: Agreements
Sticky notes (100 per group of six participants)

Preparation:

- Read the lesson and think about how to facilitate it to meet your group's and school's particular needs. Keep in mind that the scripted parts (shown in italics) of the lesson provide only suggested language. Feel free to modify to fit your own style and your group's unique goals.
 - On three pieces of poster board or sheets of flip-chart paper, write the following headings (one on each sign):
 - Student to Student
 - Student to Adult
 - Physical Environment
 - Hang the three signs on the wall before the meeting.
 - Display the 40 Developmental Assets, as well as Display Charts 1 and 2, where all participants can see them.
 - Have the sticky notes ready to distribute.
-

GO

Review of Previous Meetings

① Welcome participants, thank them for being here, and **REMINDE** them: *We are here today to continue with our efforts to improve our school. What is our mission?*

Refer to Display Chart 1, Mission, and **SAY** *Our mission is to promote a safer and more supportive school climate, to help build more caring relationships, and to understand the importance of the Developmental Assets.*

ASK *What did we discuss at our last meeting?* (Review.)

Explain that the purpose of ongoing meetings is to remind ourselves of the importance of continuing to make a difference in our school.

Refer to Display Chart 2, Agreements, and give a brief review.

② **SAY** *Today we are going to give you an opportunity to brainstorm some ideas to help improve our school.*

③ Arrange participants into groups of six, each group seated in a circle separated from other groups.

④ **SAY** *We are going to brainstorm ideas in a few moments, but before we begin we need to think about the end result: a more perfect school!*

ASK as a rhetorical question: *What is a more perfect school? a more caring school? a more supportive school?*

⑤ Lead the participants through a short visualization. In a calm voice, **SAY** *Close your eyes and imagine a more perfect school. A school that is bright, clean, and inviting. A school where both the adults and the students are kind, caring, and respectful to everyone.*

Pause, and then **SAY** *Think about how it feels to approach the school from afar. See the outside of the building, look around, see the school grounds and listen to the sounds in the air. Feel how it feels to enter the building. Whom do you see? See the friendly expressions on their faces, hear their kind words as they greet you. Feel how it feels to be warmly welcomed.*

Pass by the office. Whom do you see? What do you hear? Someone calls your name and greets you: "Good morning!" Continue down the hall. Who else greets you? Who are the adults? Who are the students? See their bright eyes and smiles. Walk by the cafeteria. Whom do you see? What do you hear? Hear the laughter and good conversation. Walk over to the doors of the gym and go in. Who is there? What do they say? What do they do? Feel how it feels to be genuinely respected.

Pause, and then **SAY** *Continue down the hall toward your class. Turn to walk into your classroom. Who sees you? What do they say? What do they do? Feel how it feels to be supported, to be cared for, and to belong.*

Pause, and then **SAY** *Open your eyes, and come back to the here and now.*

⑥ **ASK** *How did that feel to be in a school that seemed so caring?* (Take several responses.)

⑦ **SAY** *Let's brainstorm some ideas to make our school the type of school that we just imagined. What do we mean by brainstorming? (Generating as many ideas as possible with little thought about the practical implementation of those ideas. We should not judge ideas while we're brainstorming.)*

⑧ **SAY** *We're going to consider three general categories for improving the school. They are student to student, student to adult, and physical environment.*

⑨ Then **SAY** *Think about your vision for a more perfect school for each of these areas. Then in your small groups, write down or draw a picture of an idea to help promote that vision.*

Pointing to the Student-to-Student display chart attached to a wall, **SAY** *"Student to student" refers to relationships between students. Some ideas to improve those relationships would be students stopping rumors, students sticking up for other students, and students breaking out of their groups to connect with other students.*

Pointing to the Student to Adult display chart attached to a wall, **SAY** *"Student to adult" refers*

to relationships between students and school adults. School adults may be teachers, coaches, bus drivers, food service workers, counselors, administrators, custodians, and so forth. Some ideas to improve those relationships would be students and teachers eating lunch together, administrators knowing students' names, and students asking teachers for help.

Pointing to the Physical Environment display chart attached to a wall, **SAY** Finally, physical environment refers to things like student artwork displayed in the hallways, green plants in the lobby, or a friendly and welcoming entrance into the school.

10 Then **SAY** Again, think about your vision for a more perfect school for each of these areas. In your small groups, share your ideas to help promote that vision, and then write them on sticky notes. Use as many notes as you wish, but be sure to print neatly and make your ideas as clear and concise as possible. Be sure to generate ideas in each of the three areas.

EXPLAIN Then choose someone in your group to be the messenger. The job of the messenger is to collect the written notes. When the messenger has collected about five, he or she walks up to the charts and attaches each of the notes to the appropriate list. When we are done, we will have generated lots of ideas in all three areas. Any questions?

Give the participants about 15 minutes to complete their task. Ask for a volunteer (adult or student) to help monitor the three charts and to cluster the notes by common themes.

11 When time is up, ask for three student volunteers, one to stand by each chart and to read the notes on that chart.

12 Then **ASK** What is the purpose of this activity and what does it have to do with our mission of helping to create a more caring and supportive school climate? (There is a lot of work to do; there are lots of good ideas; if we apply some of these ideas, we will make a difference.)

13 **ASK** What should we do with these ideas? Reach a consensus that they should be saved, transcribed, prioritized, and that the group should implement the top few ideas.

SAY In a future meeting we will prioritize items on the lists and plan to implement several of them.

14 Thank the group for sharing and for making a difference.

Discuss when and where the next meeting will be. If possible, establish the time and place now.

Closure

15 Close with the entire group standing in a circle, and **ASK** Would anyone like to share anything with this group (feelings, thoughts, words of encouragement, etc.)?

Thank the group for its commitment and willingness to help make the school a better place. Once again, state the date, time, and location of the next meeting.

WORKING TOWARD A MORE PERFECT SCHOOL

Note: This lesson is a follow-up to Lesson 19.

READY

Summary: This lesson gives participants the opportunity to prioritize the ideas to improve their school that they generated during Lesson 19. Participants also plan to implement at least one idea to help improve their school.

SET

Time Required: 45 minutes

Assets Promoted: Caring School Climate, Community Values Youth, Youth as Resources, Positive Peer Influence, Caring, Planning and Decision Making, Sense of Purpose, Interpersonal Competence

Materials Needed:

List or poster of the 40 Developmental Assets	Display Chart 1: Mission
Poster board or flip-chart paper to make Display Chart 12	Display Chart 2: Agreements
Charts listing ideas for a more perfect school from Lesson 19	Display Chart 12: Our Project
Flip-chart paper, stand, and markers	
Copies of the list of ideas generated during the Lesson 19 brainstorming session	

Preparation:

- Read the lesson and think about how to facilitate it to meet your group's and school's particular needs. Keep in mind that the scripted parts (shown in *italics*) of the lesson provide only suggested language. Feel free to modify to fit your own style and your group's unique goals.
- Prior to this meeting, type and print on 8.5" x 11" paper the ideas generated during the Lesson 19 for the three categories (student to student, student to adult, and physical environment).
- Make copies of the list, one for each person.
- Hang on the wall the charts with the lists of ideas created during Lesson 19.
- Make Display Chart 12 (see page 115), using poster board or flip-chart paper.
- Display the 40 Developmental Assets, as well as Display Charts 1 and 2, where all participants can see them.

GO

Review of Previous Meetings

① Welcome participants, thank them for being here, and **REMINDE** them: *We are here today to continue with our efforts to improve our school. What is our mission?*

Refer to Chart 1, Mission, and **SAY** *Our mission is to promote a safer and more supportive school climate, to help build more caring relationships, and to understand the importance of the Developmental Assets.*

ASK *What did we discuss at our last meeting?* (Review.)

Explain that the purpose of ongoing meetings is to remind ourselves of the importance of continuing to make a difference in our school.

Refer to Display Chart 2, Agreements, and give a brief review.

② **SAY** *Today, we are going to give you an opportunity to prioritize the lists of ideas for improving our school that we brainstormed at our last meeting. We will also select at least one of those ideas and plan to implement it.*

③ Arrange participants into groups of six, each group seated in a circle separated from other groups. Ask that each group select a recorder and a reporter.

④ **SAY** *Here are three general categories for improving the school that we brainstormed last time we met. They are Student to Student, Student to Adult, and Physical Environment. Have the large charts that were created at the previous meeting posted on the wall.*

Distribute the typed lists with all three categories to all participants. Then assign each group to work on a single category. Depending on the number of groups, some groups may work on the same category.

⑤ **SAY** *Our plan is to choose at least one of the listed activities and make it happen in our school. Read over the list and then begin to assign priorities to the items in the list your group has been assigned. When you have the top five items (listed as number 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), create a plan for making the #1 activity a reality in our school.*

EXPLAIN *The recorder's job is to write down the new list and the group's plan to implement that idea. Your plan could be a simple statement of what you could do to make this happen in the school.*

You need to reach a consensus on ranking the activities. What is a consensus? (Reaching a general agreement through compromise.) If students have trouble coming to consensus through discussion, you might suggest that they take a vote.

ASK *Any questions?* Allow about 15 minutes for the groups to work on their assignment.

⑥ When the groups are almost finished, be sure each group has a reporter ready to share the group's work.

Then ask for volunteers to report their group's prioritized list and its brief plan. On chart paper, record a basic title for each of the plans they report. Acknowledge each group's work with applause after its report.

⑦ **ASK** *Which of these ideas do you think would have the greatest impact on our school? Which of these ideas should we all work on?*

I would like your groups, through consensus, to identify the top two plans—those that you think are practical and have the potential to have a big impact on our school. Recorders, write down your results, your top two ideas, and why you chose those plans. Reporters, be prepared to report your findings.

Allow about 10 minutes for groups to discuss and reach a consensus.

⑧ When time is up, ask the reporters to share their findings. Keep a running list of the top two plans selected by the groups.

When all groups have revealed their findings, reach a consensus about which project the large group would like to work on. There are lots of options at this point. If appropriate, you could agree upon and implement more than one plan. Also, if there is good energy in a small group, it is possible for that group to work on its plan. You could also consider implementing one activity from each of the three general categories:

Student to Student, Student to Adult, and Physical Environment.

⑨ After a plan (or plans) has been determined, refer to Display Chart 12, Our Project, and

SAY *Now I'd like us all to work together to create the process for which the idea can be implemented by completing the questions on the chart.*

When the chart is completed, discuss any details that are needed to implement the project (such as assignment of tasks, time lines, support, material, etc.). Repeat the process if the group has agreed to implement more than one idea.

⑩ Then **ASK** *What is the point of this activity and what does it have to do with our mission of helping to create a more caring and supportive school climate? (There is a lot to do; there are lots of good ideas; if we apply some of these ideas, we will make a difference.)*

⑪ Thank the group for sharing and for making a difference.

Discuss when and where the next meeting will be. If possible, establish the time and place now.

Closure

⑫ Close with the entire group standing in a circle, and **ASK** *Would anyone like to share anything with this group (feelings, thoughts, words of encouragement, etc.)?*

Thank the group for its commitment and willingness to help make the school a better place. Once again, state the date, time, and location of the next meeting.



Responsibility Reporters

Grade Levels: K- 8th

Time: 30-45 minutes

Objective:

- Students will learn to think fairly about taking personal responsibility for their actions

Materials:

- Children's literature about a character who is reluctant to take responsibility.
 - The original story: *The Three Little Pigs*- attached
 - Modified version: *The Woof Who Wanted A Friend*- attached
- Paper
- Pencils

Advanced Preparation

Ahead of time

- Read both versions of the story in advance.
 - *The Three Little Pigs* is a retelling of the classic story of three pigs being sent out to the woods to find their way. They built homes to live in and ended up working together to protect themselves from the big bad wolf.
 - The Modified version is a retelling of the classic story from the wolf's point of view. He claims that he was innocent and simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

1. Activity

- Read aloud *The Three Little Pigs* original version. Next, read aloud *The Wolf Who Wanted A Friend*
- Discuss and compare the difference between the stories. From the *Wolf Who Wanted A Friend*, invite participants to imagine the story from the defendant's (Wolf) point of view Ask:
 - What choices did the character make in the story?
 - How is the character blaming others for their mistakes?
 - How might this character take responsibility for their actions?

2. Divide the young people into small groups so that there are enough students for each character in the story plus one extra person. Have one group member pretend to be a reporter sent from the local paper to interview the characters and investigate what really happened. A group may have multiple reporters if it has extra people.

Use the questions below to help the reporters:

- What are the facts in the story?
- What questions could you ask the main character to get them to take responsibility for the choices they made
- How do the other characters feel about the main character's actions?
- Will you portray the main character as a villain or a victim? Why?
- What lessons might people learn from this story?

3. Let participants rotate roles and take turns acting out the various roles. Give them time to write their newspaper accounts. You might conclude the activity with more reflective discussion that includes these questions:

- What is hard about taking responsibility for our own actions?
- What have you learned that will help you take responsibility in your own life?

4. Optional Variation

- Publish the various versions of the story in a homemade newspaper

The Three Little Pigs

Once upon a time there was a mother pig with three little pigs.

Because they were growing up quickly and it was getting harder to care for them, she sent them into the world to earn their fortunes.

The first pig to leave home met a farmer in the fields with a bundle of straw.

"Please, sir," said the First Little Pig to the Farmer. "Give me that straw so I can build a fine home."

So the Farmer gave the First Little Pig some straw, and he built himself a house.

One day, a Wolf came along to the door of the First Little Pig's straw house.

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in," said the Wolf, knocking.

"Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin," replied the First Little Pig behind the locked door.

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"

So the Wolf huffed and he puffed, and he blew the house in.

Then the Wolf ate the First Little Pig

The next pig to leave home met a Woodsman in the forest with a bundle of sticks.

"Please, sir," said the Second Little Pig to the Woodsman. "Give me those sticks so I can build a nice home."

So the Woodsman gave the Second Little Pig some sticks and he built himself a house.

Then along came the Wolf to the Second Little Pig's house of sticks.

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in," said the Wolf.

"No, no, no!" replied the Second Little Pig. "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"

So the Wolf huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed.

And at last the Wolf blew the house down then ate the Second Little Pig.

Now the Third Little Pig met a Carpenter in town with a load of bricks.

"Please, sir," said the Third Little Pig to the Carpenter. "Give me those bricks so I can build a great home."

So the Carpenter gave the Third Little Pig some bricks and he built himself a house.

And so the Wolf came to his house, as he had done with the other pigs.

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in," said the Wolf.

"No, no, no," replied the Third Little Pig. "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well the Wolf huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed.

And he puffed and he huffed, and he huffed and he puffed.

But the Wolf could not blow down the Third Little Pig's solid brick house.

"Little pig," said the Wolf, "I know where there's a field of turnips.

The Third Little Pig asked: "Where?"

"In Mr. Smith's garden. Tomorrow morning I'll call at six o'clock and we'll go dig up some dinner."

"Very well."

Next morning the Third Little Pig rose at five.

He went to Mr. Smith's garden, dug up the turnips, and was home before six.

When the Wolf came at six he asked, "Little Pig, are you ready?"

"Ready!" he replied. "I have gone to Mr. Smith's and come back, and have a pot-full for dinner!"

The Wolf was now terribly angry for having been tricked by the Third Little Pig.

"I'm going to eat you little pig," shouted the Wolf. "Here I come down the chimney to get you!"

So the Wolf found a ladder and climbed up to the little pig's roof.

Meanwhile the Third Little Pig lit a blazing fire beneath the pot of turnips and water in the fireplace.

Then just as the Wolf came down the chimney the little pig took off the cover and the Wolf fell in.

Into the pot fell the wolf, with a big splash. And that was the end of the wolf. And so The Third Little Pig slammed on the cover and cooked up a pot of Wolf and turnip stew. The third little pig was too clever for him, and lived happily ever after.

The Wolf Who Wanted a Friend

One day I was walking through the meadow, feeling very sad and lonely. I wanted a friend to spend time with. My mother sent me out to play, but I couldn't find anyone to play with. I looked everywhere until I came to a house made out of straw. I knocked on the straw door, and a little pig answered and told me to go away! I thought that was very rude of him. I told the little pig that I wanted to come inside and play. The little pig said, "Not by the hairs of my chinny chin chin!" I was so sad. Just as I was about to walk away my dumb allergies started acting up. I sneezed so hard that I blew the house down. The little pig ran away and I ran after him, trying to tell him I was sorry.

He ran to his brother's house and I knocked again. This time they both told me to go away. I almost cried! I just wanted to play with them. They told me, "Not by the hairs of our chinny, chin, chin!" I turned to walk away and just then, I sneezed so hard that my hat blew off my head. I turned back to get my hat and sneezed again! This time I blew the house of sticks down. I was so embarrassed! My friends, the pigs, came running out of the rubble, and scampered away. I ran after them to ask if they wanted to play catch.

They ran into another house. This one was really nice. It was made out of bricks. I knocked on the door and they told me to go away again! I started to cry. When I cry a lot, I sneeze a lot. I sneezed and sneezed and sneezed some more. I heard them laugh at me! I started to get mad and wanted to tell them to stop, so I climbed on to the roof of their house and tried to yell into their chimney, but I slipped and fell right in. When I dropped into their house, they tried to cook me alive! I was very afraid. I was stuck into a big black pot and they started to slice carrots into the boiling water that I was sitting in. I realized that these pigs were very uncouth and discourteous. I guess they really didn't want to be friends.

What Responsibilities Accompany Our Rights?

Grade Level: 6 to 8

Purpose of Lesson

Suppose your government does everything it can to protect your rights. Is this enough? Will your rights be protected? Do we have any responsibility to protect not only our own rights, but each other's as well?

In this lesson you will discuss some important questions about the responsibilities of citizens. You must develop your own answers to these questions. We hope this lesson will help you develop good answers.

Is a good constitution enough?

The Framers planned our government carefully. They organized it so its powers were limited. They separated the powers of our government among three different branches. They balanced the powers among these branches. They provided ways each branch could check or limit the powers of the other branches. Finally, they added a Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights now protects our rights from unfair treatment by our national, state, and local governments.

Some of the Framers believed they had organized the government very well. They believed the way they planned the government was enough to make sure our rights and welfare would be protected.

Other Framers did not agree. They did agree that the way the government was organized was very important. However, they believed that the government would only work well if there were good people running it. They also believed it would only succeed if the citizens were good citizens.

Today, most people agree. A well-written constitution is not enough to protect our rights. We need to elect leaders who will make and enforce laws that protect our rights and promote our welfare.

However, even a good constitution and good leaders may not be enough. If we want to protect our rights and welfare, we, the people, have certain responsibilities to fulfill. Let's examine what some of these responsibilities might be.

What responsibilities go along with our rights?

Most of us agree we all should have certain basic rights. For example, we all want the right to speak freely. We want the right to believe as we wish. We also want to be able to own property and to travel wherever we want to go. Is it fair to say that if we want these rights, we must also take on some responsibilities? Let's examine this question.

Problem solving • Can you have rights without responsibilities?

Let's examine what some of the responsibilities might be that go along with our rights. Your class should be divided into five groups. Each group should develop answers to the questions on one of the rights listed below. Then each group should report its findings to the class.

Group 1 · Freedom of Expression

Your government cannot unfairly limit your right to speak freely. What responsibilities might go along with this right?

- Suppose you attend a meeting of students in your school. The group is supposed to suggest rules for the playground. You have the right to speak and give your suggestions. What responsibilities should you have in the way you speak and in what you say? List and explain these responsibilities.
- What responsibilities should other students at the meeting have toward your right to speak? List and explain these responsibilities.
- What responsibilities should you have toward the other students' right to speak? List and explain these responsibilities.
- What might happen to the right to free speech if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

Group 2 · Freedom of Religion

Your government cannot interfere with your right to believe as you wish. It cannot unfairly limit your right to practice your religious beliefs. What responsibilities might go along with these rights?

- Suppose you believe in a particular religion. You attend a church or temple in your community. List and explain what responsibilities you should have in the way you practice your religious beliefs.
- Suppose there are people in your community who believe in different religions or in no religion at all. List and explain what responsibilities they should have to protect your right to practice your religious beliefs.
- List and explain what responsibilities you should have to protect other people's right to practice their religious beliefs or not to have any religious beliefs.
- What might happen to the right of freedom of religion if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

Group 3 · The Right to be Treated Equally

Your government may not favor some people over others because of such things as their age, sex, race, or religion. What responsibilities might go along with this right?

- Suppose people in your community are planning a picnic for the public. List and explain what responsibilities they might have to be fair to you no matter what your age, sex, race, or religion may be.
- Suppose you were helping to plan the picnic. List and explain what responsibilities you think you should have to other people no matter what their age, sex, race, or religion might be.

- What might happen to the right to be treated equally if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

Group 4 · The Right to be Treated Fairly by Your Government

Your government must be fair to you when it is gathering information and making decisions. What responsibilities might go along with this right?

- Suppose someone has accused you of doing something wrong in your school or community. What responsibilities should that person have toward you? List and explain those responsibilities.
- Suppose you have accused others of doing something wrong in your school or community. What responsibilities should you have toward them? List and explain those responsibilities.
- What might happen to the right to be treated fairly if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

Group 5 · The Right to Vote and Run For Public Office

When you are eighteen, you will have the right to vote. You will also have the right to run for public office if you want to. What responsibilities might go along with this right?

- Suppose you are about to vote in an election. You can vote for or against five proposed laws. You must choose between two people running for Congress. What responsibilities should you have? List and explain those responsibilities.
- Suppose some friends, neighbors, and others in your community do not agree with the way you are going to vote. List and explain what responsibilities they have toward your right to vote.
- Suppose you do not agree with the way some of your friends, neighbors, and others in your community are going to vote. List and explain what responsibilities you should have toward their right to vote.
- What might happen to the right to vote if no one fulfilled the responsibilities you have discussed?

Review

1. Explain what you think are some of the most important responsibilities you have in order to protect your rights.
2. What responsibilities should you take to protect the rights of others? Why?

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Choice and Accountability

Making decisions, accepting consequences, being responsible for your choices

"We are free up to the point of choice,
then the choice controls the chooser."

Mary Crowley

Choice

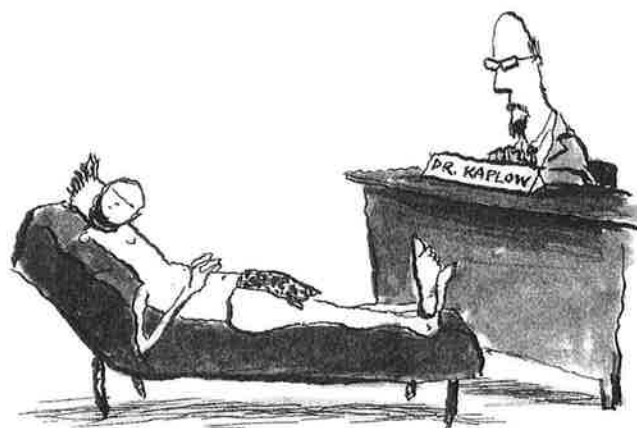
A 22-year-old man lit a firecracker in a fireworks store in Scottown, Ohio, that killed several people, including two children. His friends dared him to do it. He took the dare, and it was meant to be a joke. The joke ran amok as rockets whizzed and firecrackers exploded in a violent chain reaction. The man was charged with involuntary manslaughter, and he learned the hard way that you'd better think about consequences before making a choice.

You may think you have the right to choose many things: what you wear to school, what you eat, who your friends are. You can choose between right and wrong, to do your homework or not, to tell the truth or lie. But you can't control the consequences of your choices, and sometimes those consequences can limit you. *Examples:*

3 You can choose what you want to eat. But what if your parents don't agree with you that potato chips and onion rings belong to the vegetable food group? Unless you buy your own food, your choices are limited. And even if you do buy your own food, you can't control the consequences of eating only junk food—the harm it eventually does to your body and your health.

3 You can choose your friends. But what if the ones you choose don't choose you? Or what if the ones you choose are kids who get into trouble all the time? Are you willing to go along with them and suffer the consequences?

3 You can choose to wear a loincloth and scuba mask to school, but you might not be allowed to stay there. In fact, you'll probably be invited to spend a session with the school psychologist.



3 You can choose between right and wrong. But what if you don't know the difference? What if the adults in your life have never taught you? Or what if their definitions of right and wrong

conflict with what most people in your society or culture believe? Or what if you know that it's wrong to steal, but your family is starving and if you don't steal food, they might die? (You're right; this can get very complicated and confusing.)

2. You can choose not to do your homework. But you can't control whether and for how long your parents will ground you when you bring home a bad report card.
3. You can choose to tell a lie. But the consequences of your lie—losing your parents' trust, losing a friend, ruining your reputation—are out of your control.

Ideally, any choice you make should be both *conscious* and *informed*.

- A *conscious* choice is one you're aware of. You think it through ahead of time. You're mindful and alert when you make your decision. You realize that it might have both positive and negative consequences.
- An *informed* choice is based on information and facts you've gathered in advance. You find out as much about your choice as you can. You look at it from all sides. You try to predict the consequences.

Example: Your teacher has just assigned you a paper due tomorrow. The problem is, today is your grandmother's birthday, and your whole family is taking her out to dinner tonight. You have to choose between writing your paper or celebrating your grandmother's birthday. The choice is up to you. What will you do?

1. Think it through. If you choose to stay home and write your paper, your paper will get done but your grandmother will be disappointed. If you choose to go out to dinner, your grandmother will be happy but you'll get a zero grade on your paper. Neither choice is perfect.

2. Gather information. Before you leave school, talk to your teacher about your dilemma. Can you turn in your paper a day late? If not, how much will one zero hurt your final grade? Talk to your parents about your dilemma. Ask what they think you should do. Can you call your grandmother

and explain the problem? Can you arrange to see her later in the week and celebrate her birthday at that time?

3. Weigh your choices and the possible consequences, then make your decision. It might not be perfect, but it will be the best it can be under the circumstances. It will be conscious and informed.

Sometimes we make choices that aren't really choices at all. They're habits. *Example:* You walk to school the same way every day. This may be the fastest and most efficient route, but it's not a conscious choice. What if you decided to walk another way instead? Maybe you wouldn't have to cross so many busy streets, or maybe you'd pass a friend's house on the way and could walk with him or her.

The worst choices are the ones you make by default. Instead of making a conscious, informed choice, you simply allow something to happen. *Example:* You want school lunches to be better. On the day your school votes for a new menu, you forget to vote. So do a lot of other students, so the vote doesn't pass and school lunches stay the same. By not choosing, you have made a choice, and the results weren't what you wanted.

"Use wisely your power of choice."

Og Mandino

Accountability

When you're accountable, you take responsibility for the choices you make. Maybe they weren't the best choices; maybe you made mistakes. Perhaps you didn't find out as much about your choices ahead of time as you could have, or perhaps there were too many factors you couldn't control. Still, they were *your* choices.

Have you ever heard someone say "You made me do that" or "It's your fault that I didn't finish"? When you're accountable, you don't blame other people for your actions. You know that you can't control what others say and do—only what *you* say and do. You don't lie or make excuses for your behavior ("I'm sorry I was late. My brother kept me up last night and I overslept." "I didn't do my homework

because I had to wash the dishes"). Instead, you make conscious and informed choices. *Examples:*

- ▲ "If I stay up late and watch another video, I'll oversleep tomorrow. Then I'll be late to school and I'll probably get a detention. Plus I'll be tired all day. It's not worth it. I'll watch the video on Friday night instead."
- ▲ "Since it's my turn to wash the dishes, I'm not going to have enough time to talk to my friends on the phone and do my homework besides. If I talk on the phone, I won't get my homework done. I guess I'll have to sacrifice some of my phone time tonight."

Besides choosing and being accountable for your actions, you also choose and are accountable for your *thoughts, feelings, reactions, and attitudes*.¹ For example, you can choose to think that one race of people is superior to another—and you might choose to feel superior to other people as a result. But what if you're asked to be accountable for these choices? Are they informed choices? Are they based on facts? Or have you simply accepted something you've heard or read? If you choose to believe everything you hear and read, you might make a poor choice that leads to other poor choices in the future.

Or let's say that the school bully dumps his lunch tray in your lap. You might choose to punch him in the stomach and get into a fight. You might choose to do nothing and hold a grudge. Or you might choose to walk away, report him to a teacher, and let the teacher do something about it. You can't control what the bully does, but you can control how you react. Your reaction is a choice.

How Can You Make Better Choices?

Your life is and will be full of choices and decisions. What can you do to make sure that your choices are the best they can be?

- ✧ Be conscious and informed whenever you make a choice.
- ✧ Try to determine if your choice is more likely to help someone or hurt someone. Try to make choices that help other people, yourself, or the world.

- ✧ Talk over your choice with people you trust—people who care about you and want what's best for you. Make sure to talk to at least one adult.
- ✧ After making a choice, review what you did and what happened as a result. Did it help someone? Did it make something better? Would you make a different choice next time?
- ✧ Learn from your choice. Remember what you did and what the consequences were. Use this knowledge to keep making good choices in the future.

What If You Make a Poor Choice?

- ◆ Admit it. Be honest and accountable. ("I stole a CD from the music store.")
- ◆ Accept the consequences. ("I have a court hearing now and must do 15 hours of community service. Plus I have a police record.")
- ◆ Do what you can to make up for your poor choice and turn it into something positive. ("I'll pay the store for the CD. I'll teach and warn other kids not to steal. I won't steal anymore or get into worse trouble so my criminal record can be erased when I'm 19.")
- ◆ Learn from your choice. ("I'll be more careful with my money. I'll be patient and wait until I earn enough money to get the things I want—or I'll do without them.")
- ◆ Ask someone you trust to monitor your progress and give you support and encouragement. ("I'll talk to my parents about what happened and what I've decided to do about it. I'll ask for their help and advice.")
- ◆ Make a personal commitment to make better choices in the future.

"Your life is the sum result of all the choices you make, both consciously and unconsciously. If you can control the process of choosing, you can take control of all aspects of your life. You can find the freedom that comes from being in charge of yourself."

Robert F. Bennett

¹ See "Positive Attitudes," pages 14–20.

Character Dilemmas

For journaling or writing essays, discussion, debate, role-playing, reflection

Suppose that . . .

- 1** Your wealthy aunt offers to pay for a year's worth of any kind of lessons you want to take. Money is no object. How will you decide what lessons to take—or whether to take any lessons at all? How will you make the best possible choice?
- 2** You're planning your course schedule for the upcoming school year. There are two courses you really want and need to take. Unfortunately, they're both being taught during third hour. How will you choose which course to take?
- 3** You've been saving your money for a new mountain bike. You know exactly what kind you want and how much it costs. For the past year, you've done extra chores, baby-sat, brown-bagged your school lunch, rented videos instead of going to movies, and saved more than half of your weekly allowance. You're almost ready to buy your bike when something terrible happens: A fire destroys the home of one of your classmates, and the family loses everything. The student council announces a donation drive to help the family get back on their feet. How will you choose what to do?
- 4** You learn that a piece of land next to your school is up for grabs. The city hasn't decided what to do with it. Some people want to use it for a park. Others want to build stores and businesses there. Still others think it's the perfect site for a new housing development. A committee has been formed to consider the various issues involved and make recommendations, and you've been chosen to represent the students in your school. How will you choose what to recommend? Can you predict the consequences of your choice?
- 5** Two weeks ago, a friend of yours ran away from home. Yesterday, you saw him at the mall. He told you that he was living with someone he met at the bus station. Then he explained why he ran away from home: his parents were abusive, and he wasn't

going to take it anymore. He swore you to secrecy. How will you choose what to do next?

- 6** There's a student at your school who's always being bullied and teased. One day, you overhear a group of popular kids planning a mean practical joke to play on him. You're friends with one of the popular kids, and you'd really like to be part of that group. What are your choices? What will you do?

Activities

MAKE A LIST of the most important choices you need to make today, this week, this year. Think about how you can make the best choices. Jot down some possible consequences. Try to do this daily or weekly. In a month, review your list and notes. Has this made a positive difference in your life? Has it helped you to make better choices?

MAKE A TIMELINE of the most important choices you'll face during your lifetime. Show the ages at which you think you'll be making those choices. What can you do to plan ahead? If you want, you can illustrate your timeline.

WRITE IN YOUR JOURNAL² about a time when you made a poor choice. Describe the consequences of your choice. What have you learned as a result of your choice and the consequences? Write about a time when you made a good choice.

ROLE-PLAY with a friend how you might talk to another friend who's considering joining a gang. Or how you might role play talking with someone who's using drugs or alcohol, or who's planning to run away from home.

LEARN ABOUT POOR CHOICES in the history of science. *Example:* Around 150 A.D., Ptolemy theorized that the earth was the center of the universe. He chose to keep believing this in spite of other theories and evidence. Other scientists chose to believe Ptolemy's theory, too, and this halted the advance of knowledge in this area for many years. Try to find more examples of times when people have made poor choices and stuck with them in spite of evidence to

² See "Endurance," pages 88, 89, and 92, for journaling resources.

the contrary. *Example:* Sigmund Freud searched for a substance that would enhance the workings of the brain. He found and used cocaine and called it a "magical drug." His enthusiasm for cocaine led to widespread use before its harmful side effects were discovered. Find out more about the consequences of this choice—for Freud personally and for others.

FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS to people who choose not to pay their income taxes. If your state has an income tax, contact your state tax commission. Try to find answers to these questions: Approximately how many people who live in your state don't pay their income taxes? About how much money does your state spend each year trying to recover lost revenues? What happens to nonpayers who get caught? If your state doesn't have an income tax, contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and ask about federal taxes.

INTERVIEW THE OWNER of a successful small business in your town or city. Ask questions like:

- ? "What kinds of choices have you faced over the years?"
- ? "What's the best choice you've ever made? The poorest choice?"
- ? "Were you able to predict the consequences of your choices? Were there any big surprises?"
- ? "If you could go back in time and change just one of your choices, which one would it be? How would your choice be different? How would the consequences be different?"

WRITE TO 10 FAMOUS PEOPLE and ask this question: "What's the hardest choice you've ever had to make?" If you do this as a class, compile the responses you receive into a book. Donate it to your school library.

CHECK IT OUT



The Kid's Address Book: Over 3,000 Addresses of Celebrities, Athletes, Entertainers, and More... Just for Kids! by Michael Levine (New York: Perigree Books, 1997; updated often). Over 2,800 addresses (and many email addresses) for famous people. Also by Michael Levine: *The Address Book: Direct Access to Over 4,000 Celebrities, Corporate Execs, and Other VIPs* (New York: Perigree Books, 1997; updated often).

START A "CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES" discussion group. Talk about the following choices. Try to come up with at least three possible consequences for each choice. Or, if you prefer, consider real choices you're facing at this time in your life.

- ▲ going to college vs. not going to college
- ▲ eating healthful food vs. eating a regular diet of junk food
- ▲ getting regular exercise vs. being a couch potato
- ▲ joining an after-school club vs. hanging out with friends
- ▲ doing a random act of kindness vs. not making the effort
- ▲ coming home before curfew vs. staying out past curfew
- ▲ doing your homework vs. not doing your homework
- ▲ standing up for a friend who's being bullied vs. ignoring the situation
- ▲ doing your chores vs. not doing your chores
- ▲ making friends with someone who's not very popular vs. not making friends with the person.

WRITE A SERIES OF 5-MINUTE SKITS about choices, consequences, and being accountable. Present your skits to younger kids at your school. Depending on how well they're received, you might perform them for children in a hospital or shelter.

CREATE A COMIC BOOK about choices, consequences, and being accountable. You might invent a character and show scenes from his or her life. Or you might use examples from your own life or the life of someone you know. Follow the look and style of one of your favorite comic books.

CHECK IT OUT




Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art by Scott McCloud (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994). Explores the history and symbolism of comics, the energy of line and color, and the hidden worlds of comics storytelling. Ages 13 & up.

RESEARCH THE LIFE OF A FAMOUS COMPOSER, past or present. What kinds of major choices did he or she have to make? How did these choices affect the composer's life and work? What can you learn from his or her example?


READ THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ATHLETE in the news. Or learn about the athlete's life by reading articles in magazines, in newspapers, or online, or by watching televised interviews. What kinds of choices has the athlete made during his or her life and career? From what you can tell, is the athlete accountable for his or her choices, or does he or she blame other people, events, and circumstances for the hard times and problems in his or her life?


PLAY A "STICK TO THE TRUTH" GAME. Sit in a circle. Pass a stick around. The person who holds the stick shares a story about a time when he or she made a good or poor choice, and what the consequences were. People who don't have anything to share can pass the stick to the next person. TIP: Go around the circle at least twice. People who "pass" the first time might have something to say the second time.


READ STORIES ABOUT CHOICE and accountability. Look for these books:


 *Choosing Sides* by Ilene Cooper (New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1990). Jonathan doesn't want to be called a quitter, but his coach is

turning middle school basketball into a forgettable experience. Ages 10–13.

 *Here at the Scenic-Vu Motel* by Thelma Hatch Wyss (New York: HarperCollins Childrens Books, 1989). Seven teens board at the Scenic-Vu Motel because they live too far from Pineville to make the commute to the high school every day. High school senior Jake finds himself responsible for the group. Ages 13 & up.

 *Shiloh* by Phyllis Naylor (New York: Atheneum, 1991). Young Marty discovers a puppy near the Shiloh schoolhouse and soon learns that the dog's owner mistreats him and his other animals. As the dog does not belong to him, Marty struggles to decide what he should do. Ages 10–13.

 *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* by Yoko Kawashima Watkins (New York: Puffin, 1987). Eight-year-old Yoko escapes from Korea to Japan with her family at the end of World War II. Ages 10–14.

 *Trouble's Child* by Mildred Pitts Walter (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1985). Martha dreams of leaving her island home off the Louisiana coast. She longs to attend high school to learn more than the ways of her grandmother and perhaps broaden the lives of the superstitious villagers. Ages 12 & up.

Character in *ACTION*

Jed Michael: Living With Your Choices

Jed's science teacher looked at him sternly and asked, "Did you tie Mandy's hair in knots?" Jed hung his head and said, "Yep." He grinned fiendishly.

"Jed, is that you talking in the back of the room?" his math teacher asked. Although several other students were also talking, Jed pulled his long, corn-colored hair over his face and answered, "Uh-huh."

"Which of you students threw food in the cafeteria today?" the principal wanted to know. Jed rolled his eyes, raised his hand, and said, "I did." No one else said a word. For telling the truth, Jed was

only allowed to eat a sliced carrot and one slice of yellow American cheese on bread, with milk, for the rest of the school year. "I don't think I deserved the punishment, but it worked," Jed admits. "I stopped throwing food!"

Telling the truth doesn't always get you out of trouble, especially if you're guilty. Jed didn't always make the best choices, but he always accepted the consequences for what he did.

Many of his choices were good. For example, he spoke out at public meetings to keep out radioactive dumping near his house in Cincinnatus, New York.

But school was a different matter. "I was a pain in the neck, for sure," Jed confesses.

When you're a pain in the neck, sometimes you get blamed for things you didn't do. "I got blamed for vandalizing a mural in the hallway," Jed remembers. "I was standing outside the classroom as a punishment for speaking out of turn, and I deserved that. But I *didn't* vandalize the mural. I also got accused of stealing a carton of orange juice from the breakfast program—something else I didn't do."

Although Jed was able to prove that the hand smears on the mural were larger than his, and that the orange juice was part of his school breakfast, the school authorities expelled him anyway. For a while, Jed had a tutor for a couple of hours each day. Then

his parents were able to arrange for him to attend an alternative high school.

"It's a great school," he explains. "Everyone respects people for who they are instead of what they do." At his new school, Jed chose to help other people instead of getting into trouble. He started earning a good reputation, and many people sought him out.

"There was a guy who was pumped up on drugs and having problems. He wanted to kill himself. I pointed out to him that suicide wouldn't leave him with any choices at all. It wouldn't accomplish anything. After we talked, the guy went back to his parents' house, and then he went into rehab. He's doing okay now."

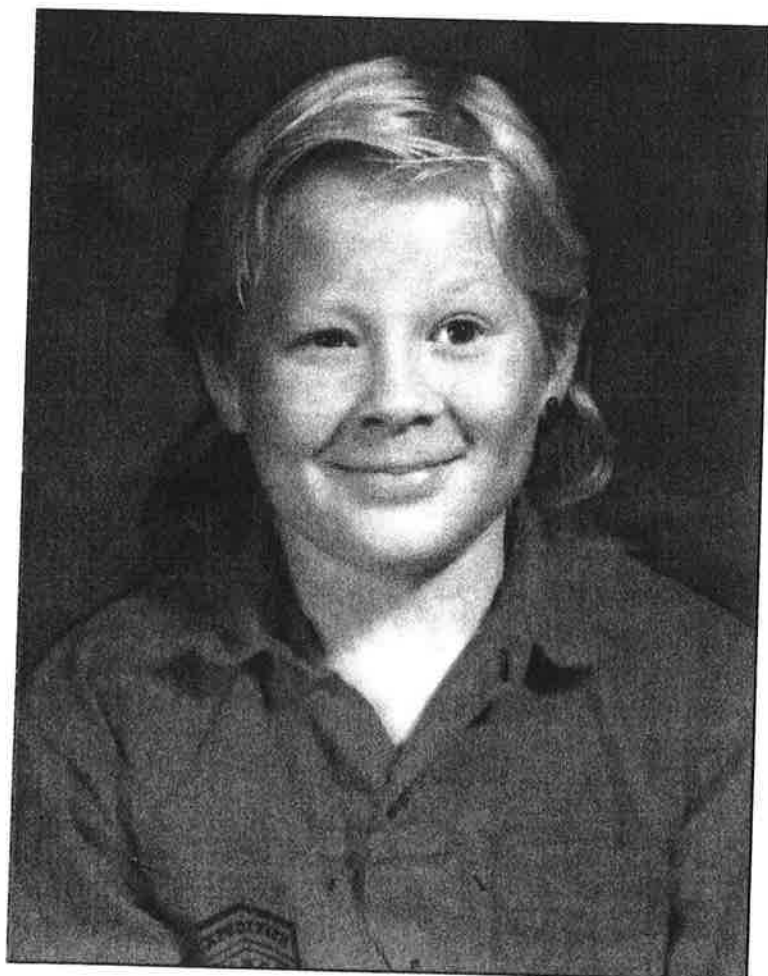
A girl Jed knew came to him with boyfriend problems. There were two guys who liked her, and they were fighting over her. "I told her to get them both together and talk it out. I was a mediator. Now all three of them are friends."

Then there was a kid nobody liked. "He had a grating personality. Kids were making fun of him and accusing him of being gay. I told him to tell the truth and people would respect him more."

Not every story Jed tells has a happy ending. "A close friend of mine fell into a wrong crowd and started dealing drugs. He's in prison now. He's smart enough to realize that dealing drugs is a dumb thing to do, but he made the wrong choice and now he's paying for it."

Jed knows firsthand the difference between good choices and poor choices. "If I do something wrong, I accept the consequences. That's just the way I am. But now I have the chance to graduate a year early, because I've worked hard at this school and made the right choices.

"Honesty works. It could be its own system of government, if everyone followed it. You can settle almost any dispute with honesty. You can get ahead by being honest. And you don't have to worry about getting caught if you tell the truth."



Jed Michael

Responsibility

**Dependability, reliability, perseverance, being organized,
being punctual, honoring commitments, planning**

"You can't escape the responsibility
of tomorrow by evading it today."

Abraham Lincoln

When you're crouched at home plate with the bat cocked over your shoulder and the ball is whirling toward you, you can't suddenly step aside and ask someone else to hit it for you. It's too late, and if you refuse to swing at the ball, you'll be out and your team will suffer the loss. It's okay if you swing and miss the ball, because doing your best doesn't guarantee success. Making mistakes is an important part of learning and growing.

When you joined the baseball team, you accepted the **responsibility** of being a team member. You agreed to wear the uniform, go to practices, listen to your coaches, be on time for games, be a good sport, and do what you can to help your team win. Depending on your role on the team, you might have other responsibilities as well. If you're the captain, for example, you're not only responsible for your own behavior but also for the behavior and performance of the team as a whole.

Responsibility implies **dependability** and **reliability**. Your coaches and team members know they can count on you.¹ You might have bad days, you might make mistakes, but you won't purposefully or carelessly let the others down. You'll show up for practices even when you don't feel like it, or when you'd rather be doing something else. If you strike

out or foul, you won't blame the pitcher, your bat, your coaches, other players, or bad luck. You'll resolve to do better next time, and meanwhile you'll practice to improve your skills. You'll have the **perseverance** to swing at the ball 10 times or 100 times or 1,000—whatever it takes to improve your chances of getting base hits or even home runs. (There's an old saying about perseverance that you might already know: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.")

As a human being, you have many types of responsibilities. They include:

- ✧ **Moral responsibility** to other people, animals, and the earth. This means caring, defending, helping, building, protecting, preserving, and sustaining. You're accountable for treating other people justly and fairly, for honoring other living things, and for being environmentally aware.
- ✧ **Legal responsibility** to the laws and ordinances of your community, state, and country. If there's a law you believe is outdated, unjust, discriminatory, or unfair, you can work to change, improve, or eliminate it. You can't simply decide to disobey it.²
- ✧ **Family responsibility**. This means treating your parents, siblings, and other relatives with love and respect, following your parents' rules, and doing chores and duties at home.

¹ See also "Honesty," pages 115–125; "Integrity," pages 135–141; and "Loyalty," pages 164–171, for related character traits.

² See "Loyalty," pages 164–171, for more about obedience.