



Relationship Skills



ABOUT OPEN CIRCLE

Open Circle is an evidence-based social and emotional learning program for Kindergarten through Grade 5. Our grade-differentiated curriculum proactively develops children's social and emotional skills including recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving. It helps schools build a community where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning.

Cooperating

By: Open Circle

Cooperating

OBJECTIVES

- To define “cooperate”
- To identify the skills needed to cooperate

MATERIALS

- Cooperate mini-poster
- Chart paper and markers

REVIEW

Ask students to talk to a partner briefly about some ways that including others could make a difference in this classroom.

INTRODUCE

Ask for five or six volunteers to go to the center of the circle and arrange themselves in a line in order of their birthdays, starting with birthdays in January, February, etc.

When the group has lined up by birthday order, ask them what they had to do as a group to complete the task. Ask students who were watching, what they noticed about how the group worked together.

Share the **Cooperate** mini-poster to introduce or review the definition. Have students give examples of times during the school day when they have to work together to get something done.

PRACTICE/APPLY

Ask students to think about what cooperation looks and sounds like. Record responses on chart paper. (*Sharing, taking turns, agreeing on roles, sharing equipment, agreeing on someone to take the role of organizer, encouraging others, making sure that everyone gets to take part, making sure that no one is upset or feels that they are not being treated fairly, etc.*) What works against cooperation? When is it hard to cooperate? When is it easy?

Divide students into groups of three or four and assign each group an area of the school, for example: cafeteria, playground, library, office, classroom, gym, etc. Have each group make a list of specific ways that people can cooperate in their assigned different part of the school.

Have someone from each group report to the whole class. Ask students if they notice any common behaviors or actions for how to cooperate in different parts of the school.

HOMEWORK/EXTEND

Share an activity, such as “Symphony of Sounds,” “Numbers,” or “Creating Silence,” to give students an opportunity to practice their cooperation skills. Directions are in the Activities section.

Have students write in a journal about an experience they have had with cooperation. For example, on a sports team, in a small group working on school project, etc. Have them include examples of how the members of the group cooperated with each other.

Send the *Home Link* newsletter to your students’ families. To edit the *Home Link* to include more specific information about what your class is working on, or to send them electronically, you can download the text at www.open-circle.org/homelinks.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *Shoeshine Girl*. HarperTrophy, 1989.

Determined to earn some money, 10-year-old Sarah Ida gets a job at a shoe shine stand and learns a great many things besides shining shoes.

- How do Sarah Ida and the people in her neighborhood cooperate with each other when the Shoeshine Man is injured?

Tingle, Tim. *Crossing Bok Chitto*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2006.

Martha Tom and her Choctaw Indian family work together to help the Little Mo and his family get across the Bok Chitto river to freedom.

- How do Martha Tom and Little Mo meet? How does Martha Tom’s family make it possible for Little Mo and his family to get across the Bok Chitto River? In what ways do they cooperate?

Cooperate

Work together to get something done.



Preparing to Facilitate Lessons

Preparing for each lesson helps you to listen and be responsive to students.

1. Read the entire lesson. Have a clear understanding of lesson objectives and key vocabulary words.
2. Review lesson “Notes.”
3. Have lesson “Materials” ready to go (skill mini-posters, chart paper, etc.).
4. Look at the suggested literature connections at the end of the lesson. If you don’t have the suggested books, choose a book that you already have that connects to the lesson content.
5. Work towards not depending on having the lesson sheet in front of you. You may want to highlight key questions on note cards or list main ideas on chart paper.
6. Consider how the objectives and concepts apply to your own life experience.
7. Think about some recent classroom examples relating to the concepts.
8. Think of ways to intentionally integrate the vocabulary and concepts into other parts of the school day.

The material on the preceding page(s) is an excerpt from the grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum*. The complete curriculum contains:



- 32 core lessons across five units: Beginning Together, Managing Ourselves, Strengthening Relationships, How to Sort Problems, and Problem Solving;
- 27 supplementary lessons;
- 80 community-building and mindfulness activities and practices;
- 27 skill mini-posters;
- 18 *Home Link* family newsletters;
- Over 250 children’s literature titles that connect to specific SEL topics;
- A myriad of homework and extension activities; and
- End-of-unit student and teacher reflection activities and additional curriculum-wide reflection and assessment tools.

Open Circle is an evidence-based, universal social and emotional learning program for Kindergarten through Grade 5. The grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum* proactively develops children’s social and emotional skills, including recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving. It also helps schools build a community where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning. Open Circle’s unique whole-school approach includes all adults in the school community – teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff and families – learning to model and reinforce prosocial skills throughout the school day and at home.

Teachers implement the *Open Circle Curriculum* during twice-weekly, 15-minute classroom meetings in which students form a circle of chairs, including an empty seat to symbolize that there is always room for another person or opinion. These meetings are also a familiar and safe setting for children to discuss important issues in their classroom, school, community or the broader world. Teachers and counselors also use the *Open Circle Curriculum* with students who require additional, targeted instruction.

The *Open Circle Curriculum* is designed for educators who have participated in Open Circle’s Core Program, an interactive and experiential professional development experience that combines training and coaching sessions to help educators strengthen their knowledge and skills in several areas, including: social and emotional learning (SEL) theory, research and practice; facilitation; group development and community building; problem solving; mindfulness and reflection practice; appreciation for cultural and other differences in students; integrating SEL throughout the school day; and using children’s literature to teach and reinforce SEL.

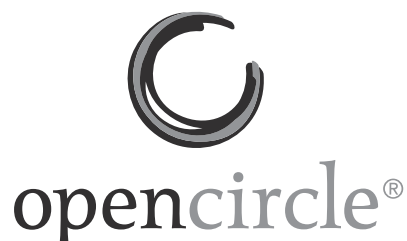
For more information, visit www.open-circle.org or call us at 781-283-3277.

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Open Circle
Wellesley College-STC
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481

Phone: 781-283-3277
Fax: 781-283-3717
info@open-circle.org
www.open-circle.org



Wellesley
Centers for
Women