

Personal Responsibility

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.

Being a Positive Leader

By: Open Circle

Being a Positive Leader

OBJECTIVES

- To define “positive leader”
- To recognize what it means to be a positive leader in the classroom and on the playground
- To recognize characteristics of positive and negative leaders

MATERIALS

- Positive Leader mini-poster

REVIEW

Remind students that during the last Open Circle Meeting we talked about overcoming obstacles in the problem-solving process. Invite a volunteer to give an example of the kinds of obstacles someone could encounter in problem solving.

INTRODUCE

Ask students to think about what the word “leader” means to them. What kinds of people do they think of?

Share the **Positive Leader** mini-poster and have a volunteer read aloud the definition.

Ask students to look at the illustration on the poster and think about which girl is acting like a positive leader. What is she doing to help the group or to set a good example?

Ask students to think of adults they know who are positive leaders. What do they do? What words would students use to describe them? Are all leaders alike?

Point out that students have learned many skills in Open Circle that would help them be a positive leader. Ask students to think about and name some of those skills. (*Being calm, listening well, cooperating, including others, speaking up, etc.*) Remind students that a positive leader could use the problem-solving steps to help others solve problems. Ask students what opportunities fifth-graders have to be leaders in various areas of the school, including on the playground. Have students give examples and tell what the leader has to do in those situations.

What is a negative leader? (*Someone who is bossy, unfair, leads the group toward dangerous and destructive behavior, etc.*) How can a negative leader impact the group? What can you do to change things when you’re in a group and someone is being a negative leader?

PRACTICE/APPLY

Read aloud the following scenarios and have students offer suggestions for how someone could be a positive leader in each situation:

- Four students are doing a project on heroes. As a group, they have to decide on one hero for a group report. *They can't decide on which hero to focus on for their report. A couple of students in the group are getting upset.*
- *A large group of students wants to play basketball, but there is only one court open on the playground at recess, and one basketball to use.*

What might a positive leader do in each of these situations? When is it easy to be a leader? When is it hard?

HOMEWORK/EXTEND

Identify three adults or students in your community whom you consider to be leaders. Write a paragraph on each one that describes his/her leadership characteristics.

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

Freedman, Russell. *Confucius: The Golden Rule*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2002.

This is the story of the life of a great teacher, philosopher, and leader from China.

Parks, Rosa, and Gregory J. Reed. *Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue with Today's Youth*. Lee & Low Books, 1996.

A collection of correspondence between children and Rosa Parks, a leader in the Civil Rights Movement.

Milway, Katie Smith. *One Hen*. Kids Can Press, 2008.

A small loan enables a boy in Ghana to buy one hen. A year later, he has a poultry farm which he eventually turns into a successful business.

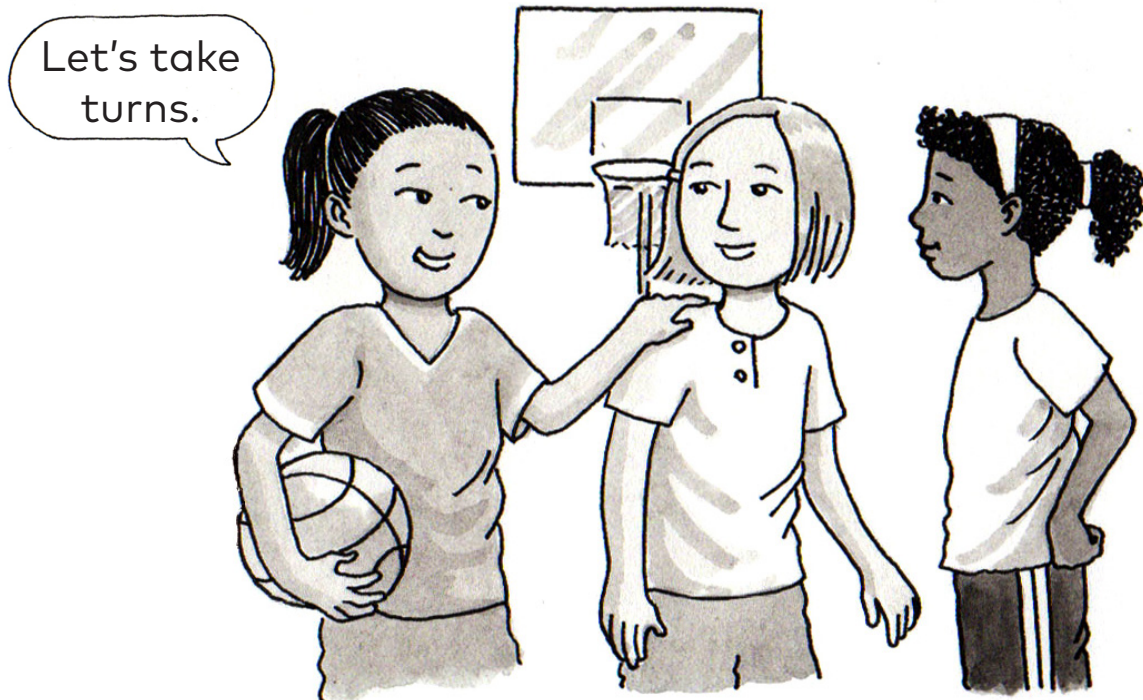
- What are some of the leadership skills that the Kojo uses to build a successful business? Think of one or two people who are effective leaders. Name some of the leadership skills they use to work toward their goals.

SUPPLEMENTARY LESSONS

The following supplementary lesson(s) can be used after this lesson:

- Practicing Positive Leadership

Positive Leader



- Does things to help the group
- Sets a good example

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.

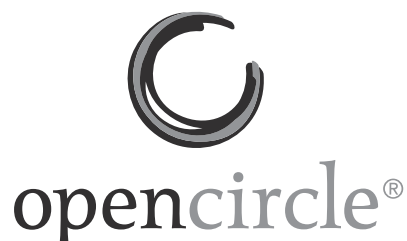
For more information, visit www.open-circle.org or call us at 781-283-3277.

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