



Decision Making

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.

Honesty

By: Open Circle

Honesty

OBJECTIVES

- To have students think about the importance of being honest
- To discuss situations in which it is difficult to be honest
- To understand that sometimes it takes courage to be honest

INTRODUCE

Ask students what they think it means to be honest. (*Being honest means telling the truth.*) Ask students what are some reasons why it's important to be honest. (*So that people can trust and believe you*). Ask if they can give any examples of a time when they were honest or someone they know was honest with them. Make sure to give a personal example, yourself.

PRACTICE/APPLY

Ask students to think of some reasons why it can be hard for them to be honest. (*When people will be angry, when you know you're wrong, when you think you will get in trouble, etc.*)

Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to be honest. Everyone makes mistakes. What difference does it make in our classroom when people are honest?

Share one or more of the following books with students and discuss how the stories connect to honesty. Use discussion prompts such as the following:

- Which characters have trouble telling the truth? Why do you think they are not being honest?
- What happens when certain characters are not honest?
- Describe how some characters get help or support when they do not tell the truth.
- Do any of these stories remind you of an experience that you have had with being honest, or not?

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

Demi. *The Empty Pot*. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers, 1990.

An emperor selects his successor by finding out which child in the kingdom is the most honest.

Ness, Evaline. *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine*. Holt Rinehart, 1966.

Sam and her imagination get her into a lot of trouble.

- Havill, Junaita. *Jamaica's Find*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 1987.
Jamaica finds a stuffed animal on the playground and keeps it for herself, and then returns it.
- Schur, Maxine Rose. *The Peddler's Gift*. Dial Books, 1999.
Leibush keeps a dreidel that doesn't belong to him, and later, asks for forgiveness.
- Soto, Gary. *Too Many Tamales*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1993.
Maria loses her mother's wedding ring and has to build up the courage to tell the truth about it.
- Rankin, Laura. *Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny, Tiny, Lie*. Bloomsbury USA Publishers 2007.
When Ruthie keeps a toy that is not hers, she can't stand the strain of telling a lie.
- Poydar, Nancy. *Zip, Zip, Homework*. Holiday House, 2008.
Violet's problem is that she lost her homework and lied about it.
- O' Connor, Barbara. *How to Steal a Dog*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
Georgina can't decide what's worse - stealing a dog, or lying about it.

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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