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Grades K -5: Everyday Practices for a Kind Classroom

These initial activities provide a framework for simple practices to utilize throughout the entire school year. They will help to foster a positive and engaged classroom, where students will connect with each other in healthier ways and understand how to respectfully resolve conflicts. These are core social and emotional learning tools that will serve your students for many years to come.

Agreements for Peace (activity).....Page 10

Being a responsible global citizen starts with how we treat those around us. Working together youth will create an agreed upon set of guidelines to develop a safe and respectful learning environment. These guidelines provide the foundation needed for communication and community for the duration of the group's time together. By leveraging student voice, this activity increases buy-in and understanding.

Community Circle (activity).....Page 13

This activity introduces the value of utilizing a circle in one's learning environment to foster inclusion, encourage equal participation, and practice active listening. The aim is for the *Community Circle* to become a daily practice for creating a learning environment that is also a positive community. The circle can be used to address conflicts, discuss positive events, and teach a variety of content.

STEP: How To

Talk It Out (activity).....Page 17

Every class deals with conflict. This activity equips students with a tool to manage daily conflicts in a positive way. Youth will learn STEP, a mnemonic device, that will allow them to resolve their conflicts more peacefully. Then, students will practice STEP through role play.

Grades K - 2: Kindness—Near and Far

One of the most important traits that we can foster within youth at an early age is kindness. In this unit youth will explore what kindness is, why it matters, and consider many ways to engage in kind behaviors toward other species, local ecosystems, and global communities.

One with Nature (lesson)Page 24

After observing nature, youth will generate an interpretation of the natural world through artwork and discuss how all the parts are connected to create a healthy ecosystem.

What Do You See? (lesson).....Page 27

Through story and observation, youth will discuss various situations from both a person's point of view and an animal's point of view. Students will be challenged to consider how they can demonstrate kindness by changing their behaviors to account for multiple points of view.

Appreciation for Others (lesson)Page 42

After discussing what kindness is, youth will be asked to think deeply about how their attitudes of kindness shape their behaviors toward people, animals, and the environment. To practice their kind behaviors they will participate in a series of short role plays. Then, they will create a kindness chain to express the types of behaviors they want to see in their classroom.

One World for All (lesson).....Page 49

Youth will discuss the common needs and wants of all children and then compare those ideas to the rights identified in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through the children's rights matching game, students will practice their reading skills and analyze what the rights mean. Finally, they will create a children's book to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of human rights.

Coexist with

Our Animal Neighbors (lesson)Page 67

In matching habitats to the animals who occupy them, youth will learn how wild animals have homes that meet their needs. They will learn that many wild animals have

lost their homes due to human impact, but they will discover ways they can help to conserve and improve the habitats of animals with whom we share living spaces.

Plastic Planet (lesson)Page 78

After learning how plastic causes harm to wildlife, youth will create artwork by reusing plastic to educate others about the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling.

Kindness Campaign (lesson)Page 86

As a culminating lesson, youth will create bookmarks, magnets and badges with messages promoting kindness toward people, animals, and the environment in order to create a culture of kindness among their peers.

Grades K - 2: Superheroes

Youth and adults alike have a fascination with superheroes. This unit will encourage students to recognize the hero within themselves by considering how they can stand up for people, other species, and the planet to create a more just and sustainable world.

Being an Upstander (lesson)Page 98

After discussing the difference between a bystander and an upstander, youth learn upstander strategies they can use in everyday life, and then practice those strategies through role play. Empowering upstanders is one of the best strategies to combat bullying and peer mistreatment.

What Would You Do? (activity)Page 103

Students will read short informational texts about real problems facing people, animals, and the planet. They will consider what actions they can take to address those problems and then read about the actions that other children have taken to help mitigate the problems. They will compare and contrast their suggested solutions to the actions that were taken.

Thinking Outside the Box (lesson)Page 114

Using an engaging interactive riddle, students will learn what it means to think outside the box to solve a problem. Then, they will hear the stories of advocates who thought outside the box to develop a creative solution to an issue that concerned them. Youth will research someone who *thought outside the box*, to act heroically, and create a poster about that individual, to share with the class.

Humane Heroes (lesson)Page 122

By comparing superheroes to humane heroes, youth learn that while superheroes have fantastical powers, humane heroes are real people who utilize their talents and resources to make a positive difference. Youth learn about children who are humane heroes and think about how they can be a humane hero too.

Animal Heroes (lesson)Page 129

Students learn that heroes come in all shapes and sizes because being a hero is not about the way you look, but about what you do. Youth will be inspired by the stories of animals who helped others through their courage and compassion.

Becoming a Hero (lesson)Page 135

As a culminating lesson to this unit, youth will review what they have already learned about being a hero, and add to that knowledge by discovering six specific traits and skills that most heroes have in common. They will engage in some activities to better understand how those traits and skills relate to being a hero. Finally, they will participate in a class service project to practice heroic behaviors themselves.

Grades 3 - 5: The Empathy Connection

This unit builds multiple pathways for students to develop and practice empathy for those around them. Ranging from true narratives from peers to those based on real experiences of humans and animals around the globe, your students will experience perspectives, emotions, and connections that will develop their empathy receptors.

Circle of Compassion (activity)Page 148

After defining *compassion*, students will apply the concept to their own lives by creating their own *Circle of Compassion*. They will read fictional short stories of youth who have acted compassionately, inspiring them to see the many ways they too can act with compassion toward others.

Someone Else's Shoes (activity)Page 152

While working in groups, youth will read the story of another person to understand an unfamiliar situation from multiple points of view and practice empathy. They will engage in an activity to simulate the person's experience and then share what they learned with the rest of the class.

A Day in the Life (activity)..... Page 160

Youth will read a story about an animal's life, in small groups, and discuss the situation from that animal's point of view. Then they will write a letter from their animal's perspective, describing a day in the animal's life and how s/he feels. They will share their letters with their peers and consider ways to help animals who are mistreated.

If You Could See the World through My Eyes (activity).....Page 172

This activity can connect your group in a powerful way. To increase empathy, perspective taking, and problem-solving, students will anonymously share a conflict they have experienced with someone. Together, the class will consider each scenario from both parties' perspectives and brainstorm possible solutions.

Empathy Blockers (lesson)Page 175

When we embrace empathy for others, it usually increases our compassion; however, sometimes our empathy is blocked. Youth will read about some of the most common *empathy blockers* and learn through stories how those blockers influence the way people treat others. They will consider how our relationships with others change when we feel empathy for them.

Find Your Voice (lesson)Page 182

We all have different identities. Youth will break into groups based on a shared identity they feel characterizes them, and answer questions as representatives of that particular group. They will share their responses as a way to share their voice, break stereotypes and assumptions, and promote empathy.

Empathy in Our School (lesson).....Page 186

In this service focused lesson, youth are encouraged to become better acquainted with those around them and build community. They are challenged to interview someone they do not know at their school as a way to see what life is like from that individual's perspective and to understand how that person feels in his or her role in the school community.

Grades 3 - 5: Mysteries Uncovered

In this unit, youth will learn about topics related to people, animals, and the planet that are typically hidden from view. They will have the opportunity to delve into these pressing issues, and will be challenged to think critically about them. Youth will develop their own unique perspectives and opinions about these problems and feel empowered to take action on both individual and systemic levels.

Investigations: Finding the Truth (activity)Page 194

For this activity, youth will assume the role of a detective. They will watch a documentary to gather information about an important issue facing our world. They will complete a worksheet to share what they learned and how the documentary has or has not influenced their opinions and behaviors regarding the issue.

Is it Child Labor? (activity)Page 197

After learning about oppressive child labor, youth will read short scenarios to determine what types of working conditions constitute oppressive child labor. They will be asked to provide evidence to defend their position.

How Much Does that Really Cost? (lesson) Page 208

Working in small groups, youth will analyze the *true cost* of a particular product for people, other species, and the planet. They will gather information about the life cycle of their product and then share what they learned with the rest of the class.

Water Is Life (lesson)..... Page 223

Youth will review the impact that human activity has had on our water supply, compare and contrast the pros and cons of private and public water, and engage in a game to consider what they think is the most sustainable way to dispose of our waste.

Children Just Like You (lesson) Page 239

In studying the Fair Labor Standards Act, youth discover that the law does not extend the same protections to youth in all fields of work, specifically child migrant farmworkers. They will learn about the lives of child migrant farmworkers through a story and a guided visualization. Then, they will compare and contrast different approaches concerned citizens are

taking to effect change. Students will write a short essay about a day in the life of a child migrant farmworker.

It's Raining Cats and Dogs (lesson) Page 248

Through stories and video, youth will learn about some of the most common causes of dog and cat homelessness and consider ways to resolve the problem so that every companion animal has a forever home.

What's Really Happening on the Farm? (lesson) Page 260

In learning that the majority of farm animals in the United States are raised on factory farms, youth will consider who is most affected by the way these farms are operated. Students will work in small groups, each group representing someone affected by factory farms. They will rewrite information presented to them in the voice of the group they represent.

The Consequences of Our Changing Climate (lesson)Page 272

While most students say they have heard of climate change, understanding what it actually means is still a mystery to many of them. Using research packets provided, students will work in groups as *climate science reporters* to investigate the impact fossil fuel use and other types of industrial activity are having on the natural world, animals, and human communities. Groups will present what they learn about climate issues to their peers in the form of a newscast that will include a special report.

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