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## Grades 6-8: Everyday Practices for a Kind Classroom

These lessons provide a framework for developing a positive and engaged classroom through simple, but impactful, practices. They will help students connect with each other in healthier ways and give them strategies for respectfully resolving conflicts. These activities are intended to create a kind and inclusive classroom by teaching youth important techniques for developing and maintaining healthy relationships. They are core social and emotional learning practices that will benefit your students for many years to come and throughout all facets of their lives.

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

Learning how to be a responsible global citizen starts with how we connect and coexist with those around us. Working together, youth will create a set of guidelines to develop a safe and civil learning environment. These guidelines will provide the foundation for communication and community within your group. By leveraging student voice, this activity increases engagement and understanding among peers.

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

This activity introduces the value of utilizing a circle in your educational setting to foster inclusion, encourage equal participation, and practice active listening. The intent is for the *Community Circle* to become a daily practice for creating a classroom that is a positive and thriving learning community. The *Community Circle* formation, rooted in restorative justice practices, can be used to address conflicts, celebrate positive events, learn social and emotional skills, and enhance relationships.

### STEP (activity).....Page 17

Every class deals with conflict. This activity gives students the tools needed to resolve those conflicts in a mutually satisfying and productive way. Students can use STEP, a mnemonic device to remember the four-part process to resolving conflict. Students will see how STEP works, by practicing the process through role play, which will increase their ability to successfully utilize it when situations arise where it is needed.

## Grades 6-8: Is It Fair?

Everyone wants to be treated with fairness, but do we, ourselves, always treat others with fairness? In these lessons students will reflect on how some societal norms can marginalize people, cause harm to animals, and exploit natural resources. Ultimately, these lessons challenge youth to think critically about whether or not certain behaviors towards others and our natural world are justified.

### Boxed In (lesson).....Page 24

This lesson invites students to explore ways that stereotypes and gender expectations affect themselves and other members of their communities. They will be encouraged to think of ways that some of their own characteristics or behaviors are *boxed in* by social norms. Students will learn how to affirm one another's personhood when certain identity traits do not conform to social expectations.

### Understanding Peer Pressure (lesson) ....Page 31

Through engaging simulations, this lesson invites students to examine how peer pressure functions and the negative ways in which it can affect people. Students will think critically about whether or not they agree with utilizing societal influence to sway people in certain circumstances and will learn ways to resist peer pressure when it feels uncomfortable or inappropriate.

### Understanding Others

### Through Perspective-Taking (lesson) .....Page 39

Students will learn about the importance of looking at a situation from multiple perspectives. They will think about activities where animals are used for human entertainment and consider the perspective of people who enjoy these activities. Then they will read stories from the imagined points of view of the species who are used for those activities. Youth will consider whether or not they support these activities themselves and reflect on how perspective-taking can influence our behaviors and treatment of others.

## Where Has All the Water Gone? (lesson) .....Page 54

By examining their own water consumption, youth will think about the ways in which they use water both subsistently and luxuriously. They will learn about the global water crisis and work in groups to investigate potential solutions to water scarcity. Weighing the benefits and challenges of each proposed solution, students will then present on whether or not they think their solution is a viable strategy for water conservation.

## Forest Protectors (lesson) .....Page 65

In this lesson, students will grapple with the benefits of both preserving and felling forests, and consider whether or not there are effective ways to balance these two conflicting actions. They will learn about some effective strategies that conservationists use to protect forests and manage them in a sustainable way.

## Grades 6-8: Media Literacy— Reading Between the Lines

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Media is all around us. Corporations are very persuasive with their advertisements, which often target youth. Equipping students with the skills to view media messages through a critical lens is increasingly important if youth are to develop a clearer understanding of how these messages influence their purchasing decisions. Encouraging students to examine advertisements empowers them to make choices based on their genuine interests and needs instead of being swayed solely by manipulative advertising techniques.

## Who Decides What is Cool? (lesson) .....Page 80

This lesson sheds light on the influence that advertisements have on society, the consequences of that influence, and how we can critically analyze advertisements to unveil the magnitude of that influence. Students will learn about the techniques that advertisers use to influence the public's purchasing decisions through manipulating their understanding of what is "cool," as well as their desire to purchase goods that align with this definition.

## True Ads (lesson) .....Page 89

Advertisements can often mislead consumers by highlighting or exaggerating what is positive about a product or service and omitting what is harmful about it. Students will learn how to examine print ads to identify the information or message that is emphasized as well as consider information that may be missing. They will compare and contrast real ads to spoof ads that bring attention to the product's negative impacts on people, animals, and the environment.

## Deconstructing Food Labels (lesson) .....Page 98

Youth will examine the way that food products are marketed in relation to the way the food is actually produced. They will consider in particular how advertising can shape our perception of the way that animals are raised by the meat, egg, and dairy industries. Students will consider why food manufacturers use misleading labels on their products and analyze what those labels mean to consumers. They will learn research strategies to gain more information about how their food is processed.

## How to Spot Greenwashing (lesson) .....Page 107

*Greenwashing* is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon. A *greenwashed* label can influence consumers to purchase products they think are more environmentally-friendly than they actually are. Youth will learn about four common *greenwashing* techniques and practice identifying when those techniques are being used. They will discuss why manufacturers *greenwash* products and ads and learn ways to identify if a product really is being produced in an environmentally-responsible way or not.

## Grades 6-8: The High Cost of Fashion

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We often worry about what we are wearing because we want to have the "right look," but we do not often think about where our clothes and accessories come from. These lessons challenge youth to take an inside look into how the items they wear are produced and what they are made of, and to consider how people, animals, and the natural world are affected in the process. Youth will consider actions they can take to help make the fashion industry more just, compassionate, and sustainable.

**The Cost of a T-Shirt (lesson) .....Page 118**

By looking at the way a t-shirt is produced, youth will consider the impact that low-cost, low-quality, mass-produced clothing has on people, animals, and the environment. Youth will explore the current impact the clothing industry has on others and the planet through readings and small group work. Students will examine various stakeholders within the t-shirt business to determine who they think is responsible for the negative practices of the manufacturing industry.

**The Dirt Behind Diamonds and Gold (lesson) .....Page 132**

Students will evaluate the impact the diamond and gold mining industries have on people and the environment. They will first brainstorm their initial impressions of diamonds and gold. After a short reading about these mining industries, they will compare and contrast the new information they learn about these gems to their initial impressions. The lesson will culminate with a creative project in which students create an informational brochure about diamond and gold mining to share with peers that provides suggestions for alternative gift options.

**What Are We Wearing? (lesson).....Page 140**

Students are challenged to consider how responsible they are for the impact of their consumer choices. They will explore the impact their clothing choices have on others, specifically animals. They will imagine that they are co-owners of a clothing store and present a “material brief” to their “colleagues” about the way animals are raised for clothing products, such as fur and leather. As a group, they will consider the ethical and environmental implications related to selling the various materials. They will decide if they want to sell items made of these materials at their store.

**Grades 6-8: What’s On Our Plate?**

The food that ends up on our plate is the result of complex processes and systems that impact much more of our world than we often realize. In these lessons, youth will examine the impact that our food system has on our health, farmworkers, animals, and the environment. They will question assumptions they have about food, explore factors that influence their food choices, and read about inspiring food justice advocates. They will also learn about ways that they can work towards a more humane food system through their personal consumption choices and systemic change.

**Questioning Our Assumptions (lesson).....Page 154**

Students will learn how to examine their own assumptions using the three stages of understanding: discovery, research, and fact-based conclusions. Then, students will apply this framework by analyzing common assumptions about farming and farm animals. Based on the information that they research about animal agriculture, they will reflect on how this new knowledge might influence their own opinions, behaviors, or actions.

**Why We Eat What We Eat (lesson) ..... Page 163**

Students will delve into some of the complex internal and external factors that influence our food choices. They will be challenged to think critically about how these factors affect food consumption in order to better understand their own habits, and to make more conscientious food choices.

**Food Fighters: Real Stories of Food Justice Advocates (lesson) .....Page 173**

Students will research specific concerns related to the negative impact food production has on people, animals, and the environment. They will read about the work of a few modern-day food justice advocates and the strategies that they are implementing to improve the working conditions of farmworkers, prevent inequitable access to food, protect animals, and increase sustainable farming practices.

**Standards Indexes (CCSS, ISTE, NGSS).....Page 188**

The indexes provided include charts that identify which standards are addressed in each lesson. Additionally, there is a list of all the standards addressed in the guide (written out in their complete form), categorized by grade level.