

Introduction

Good life skills give children the confidence to make healthy decisions and build strong relationships with peers and adults. This Life Skills curriculum consists of ten to twelve thirty-minute sessions to help students learn the skills necessary to make healthy decisions, build strong relationships, develop better problem-solving and communication skills, and manage their emotions in difficult situations. Our goal with this curriculum is to help children become more well-rounded individuals and handle life's challenges with resilience and determination.

This Life Skills curriculum is tailored for 2nd through 8th graders and covers essential topics such as kindness, patience, respect, gratitude, responsibility, honesty, friendship, compassion, forgiveness, and perseverance. While some of these topics may seem obvious, it's often the first time someone has explicitly taught the students you are working with this information. This curriculum recognizes the unique ways in which each student learns, emphasizing that there's no singular 'correct' way to embrace these ideas. Just as each lesson is individualized to cater to diverse learning styles, the curriculum remains flexible, ensuring that every child can engage, understand, and practice these essential life skills.

The strategic design allows students to empathize, connect with others, and translate their new knowledge into practice. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA)-aligned curriculum contains an introductory lesson, ten core Life Skills lessons, and a final closing lesson. Facilitators have the flexibility to include the initial and final lessons as part of the core sessions if they have extra time.

You'll find a range of essential resources in the book's concluding pages. These consist of permission and completion letters, attendance logs, a group expectation form, and a certificate of completion. You'll also find pre- and post-group surveys to measure the success of the programming and templates to share the results with interested parties. Moreover, this workbook provides a comprehensive small group action plan that will integrate effortlessly into your ASCA evaluation document and facilitate a seamless transition from planning to assessment.

Practical and applicable, the activities provided are suitable for small and large group instruction and require no additional materials. You do not need to bring supplies beyond pencils, markers or crayons, and scratch paper; you won't need to spend hours prepping materials before meeting with your students. Everything you need is included!

See Page 72 for information on Downloadable Resources

What's Included:

Life Skills: Comprises ten lessons and all necessary documents to conduct a group. Following the overview of the lesson curriculum, you'll find supporting documentation to develop a small group within the school setting.

Mind Map: Provides an illustrated diagram of the life skill that can help students make connections between the life skill and other concepts. Students should begin each lesson by considering the meaning of the specific life skill. It is optional to write these, but visuals are helpful for many students. Some have found it helpful to draw the Mind Map on the board, or you can draw a tree with the life skill written on the trunk and the related words on the fruit on the tree.

ASCA Standards: Each lesson includes success criteria for the learning target.

Lesson Introduction: At the start of each lesson, we will introduce a concept and explain it to provide clarity for the upcoming story.

Circle Time Questions: This section has three optional questions for the facilitator to start the conversation. These questions allow students to deepen their understanding of the topic and build community by discussing and sharing their experiences.

Story Time: Provides stories related to the life skill that should be read aloud to help children understand the concept.

Coloring Sheets: Allow students to visualize the life skill. Students can color the sheet while the facilitator shares the initial story after the lesson is complete or take it home with them.

Discussion Questions: Students can discuss the questions posed to help them process their beliefs on the subject.

Skill Practice/How Would You Practice ___ Skill If?: Using the round-robin method, go around the table and ask students how they would practice that skill, giving them each a chance to answer one question.

Additional Activities: Provides activities to help students practice and apply the concept.

Closing Considerations: Is an opportunity to review the concept and ask students to reflect on their new experience with the material.

Would You Rather? Game: Provides an opportunity for students to consider what they would “rather” do related to the lesson’s topic. The facilitator can cut out the cards and let students discuss or read aloud while moving from one side of the room to the other to communicate their preferred answer.

Accompanying Group Documents:

Small Group Action Plan Guide: Provides the necessary information required to complete the ASCA National Model’s Small Group Action Plan.

Permission Form: The permission form is used to gain the permission of the student’s caregivers for the child to attend the Life Skills group. Be sure to send this home about two weeks before the group starts.

Group Expectations: These provide basic expectations for the group process. The form has space for the facilitator and group to collaborate on adding additional expectations to fit their group.

Group Attendance Form: This is a blank form that allows the facilitator to track which students attended each session and what topics were discussed.

Group Attendance Form (Example): This form is an example of how to best utilize the group attendance form.

Pre- and Post-Group Survey: Provides an opportunity for students to share what they know of the concepts before and after they’ve completed the curriculum.

Example: Group Attendance Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Student 1																				
Student 2																				
Student 3																				
Student 4																				
Student 5																				
Student 6																				
Student 7																				
Student 8																				
Student 9																				
Student 10																				
Student 11																				
Student 12																				

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To measure the progress of students who participate, use the same assessment for both the pre-group and post-group survey. Administer the pre-group survey at the start of the instructional period, followed by instruction and practice opportunities for measured skills or knowledge.

At the end of the instructional period, administer the post-survey and compare the results of both surveys to identify areas of improvement and areas that need further instruction. Then calculate the average score of the pre-survey and post-survey and determine the percentage of improvement by subtracting the pre-survey average from the post-survey average and then dividing the result by the pre-survey average. Use this pre-survey average improvement to measure the students' progress effectively.

Percentage of Improvement Formula:

$$(\text{Post-Group Total} - \text{Pre-Group Total} / \text{Pre-Group Total}) \times 100 = \text{Percentage of Overall Improvement}$$

Example:

$$(44 \text{ Post-Group Total} - 31 \text{ Pre-Group Total} / 31) \times 100 = 41.94\% \text{ Overall Improvement}$$

Look at your data to determine who should attend your group. Review conduct referrals, attendance data, and achievement metrics and look for students with deficits. Consider also tracking students' academic achievements, absences, and discipline referrals. You can better see the impact of your small groups when strategically selecting students and closely monitoring their academic, attendance, and conduct metrics. Be sure to share the results of your intervention with your advisory council.

Post-Group Survey Results: The survey shows one way to share your data with your interested parties. Remember, we want to make sure that we use graphs and charts as they show our data, which is often more impactful than a paragraph of text. Use whatever platform you prefer to show your data but be sure to complete the data following the group and then share with your interested parties.

Post-Group Survey Results (Example): The survey shows what your data might resemble following the completion of the groups. You can use this form to share your data.



Certificate of Completion: Present students with a certificate to congratulate them on completing the curriculum.

Life Skills Group Completion Letter: Letter written to the caregivers/guardians of students following the completion of the group. Provide students with their certificate and their life skills group review letter during the last session.

Additional Materials: We promised to provide everything you need in this workbook, and we have. However, you will need to make copies of the pre- and post-group assessment surveys

and print the coloring pages. You might also print and cut the "Would You Rather?" game or facilitate that activity verbally. We recommend having crayons or colored pencils readily available on the table for those who wish to complete the coloring sheet. It might also be helpful to have some fidgets accessible for your students during their group session.

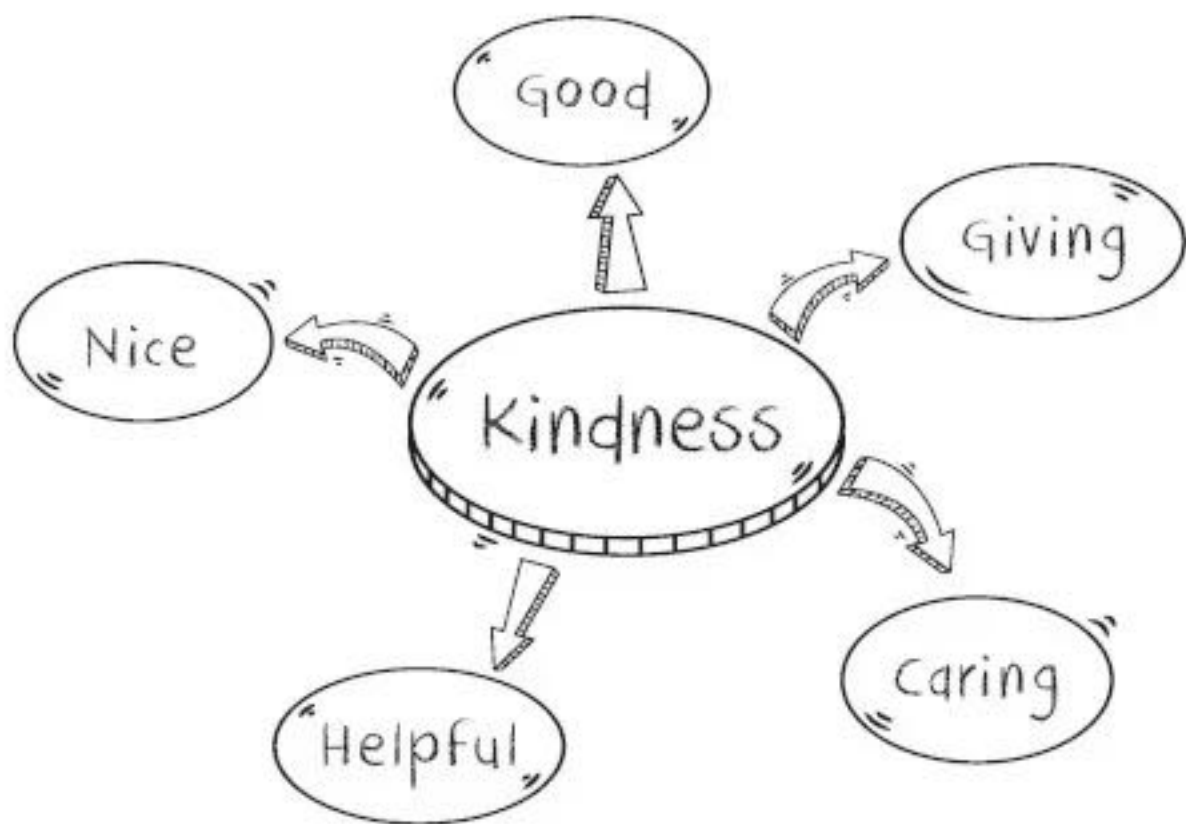
Good luck with your group! We hope you have a fantastic experience!

Kindness

KINDNESS: a kind nature; being kind rather than doing harm; gentle; a kind act.

MIND MAP

On the board, draw a mind map and ask students to consider the meaning of *kindness*.



ASCA STANDARDS

- **B-SS 2.** Positive, respectful, and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them.
- **B-SS 4.** Empathy.
- **B-SS 10.** Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness.

DIRECTIONS

Prior to the first group, be sure your students have completed the Pre-/Post-Group Survey. In a small group format, complete a brief check-in with your students by asking them to share a highlight and lowlight for the week or by using the weather to represent their emotions. In a large group format, you might ask for a thumb up if they're feeling good, a thumb sideways in the middle if they're feeling okay, and a thumb down if they aren't doing well. Review the Group Expectations before reviewing the Mind Map. Then, read the Lesson Introduction and ask the Circle Time Questions before reading the Story and asking the Discussion Questions. Students can work in pairs to craft their responses or share with the whole group. Complete the Skill Practice, "Would You Rather?" game, and Additional Activities as time allows. Be sure to complete the Closing Considerations with each lesson.

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Kindness is being thoughtful, friendly, or generous. We can show kindness by writing thank-you letters to show appreciation, helping around the house, giving compliments, or even smiling at our classmates. Kindness is treating others how you'd want to be treated. When we are kind, it can make others feel good, and they want to spread their kindness to other people.

CIRCLE TIME QUESTIONS

Ask students to reflect and share their answers to the following questions with the group. Larger groups may need to be broken into smaller groups to give students ample time to share their answers and deepen the conversation.

- Can you think of a time in your life when someone was kind to you?
- What is your favorite way to show kindness to others?
- Can you think of a time when you wanted to be kind to someone but didn't follow through? Share how you felt about that experience.