

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



THE JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

CHARACTER MATTERS

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PRIMARY EDITION

ABC

BACK TO SCHOOL

123



CHARACTER MATTERS.

Character matters now more than ever.

With the closure of schools in the United Kingdom since March 2020, many pupils, and teachers, have been anxiously preparing for their return to school to begin a new term, in a new environment. Whilst there is no denying that the education of our pupils should be a national priority, for many teachers and pupils, they will have to adjust to a new 'normal' in our educational settings. The first term of this new academic year brings with it not only an opportunity for pupils to socialise with their friends and teachers once again, but also an opportunity for teachers to help pupils reflect on their character and virtues after the UK lockdown.

These five resources have been created to offer teachers an introductory toolkit that helps pupils to reflect on their character. The resources have been created for Key Stage Two pupils, but they can easily be differentiated and tailored for Key Stage One and to the specific needs of your pupils. They provide teachers with practical activities and questions that promote class discussions and individual reflection. Each lesson focuses on a character virtue and includes a presentation, lesson plan and resources. Character Matters Primary focuses on: compassion, resilience, gratitude, service and 'being a virtuous person'.

We hope you find Character Matters Primary resource pack useful and that it helps your pupils to reflect on their character and virtues.

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. The Centre was founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur and is based at the University of Birmingham.

It offers world-class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits they bring to individuals and society. A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up good character can be learnt and taught. In undertaking its own innovative research, the Centre has developed a wide range of character resources for teachers in schools.

LESSON ONE

COMPASSION

Learning Objective: To understand and sympathise with other peoples' challenges in life.

KEY VIRTUES: COMPASSION, EMPATHY, KINDNESS

STARTER: EXPLORING COMPASSION

Show pupils various headlines from the news during the coronavirus outbreak (see presentation). Discuss how these headlines make us feel. News stories aim to stimulate us to feel for those who are in pain and distress and to think about what can be done to alleviate their suffering.

In pairs, ask pupils to discuss the meaning of compassion. What do you think it is? Show them the definition 'Compassion is feeling pain at someone else's undeserved bad fortune.' Can you think of a time when you have shown compassion? Would you show compassion for:

- An advert on TV for a charity?
- When someone you love is having a difficult time?
- If someone is a victim of a crime?

MAIN ACTIVITY: HOT SEATING

Look at the 'Hot Seating Scenario Cards'. If appropriate, add to them some scenarios that are relevant to your class/school. Give each table (depending on classroom arrangements) one scenario card. Get them to read it to themselves and to understand what it is. Tell them to discuss the person in the scenario and what they would be thinking, feeling and doing. What would they do in that scenario?

Once scenario cards have been discussed in groups, ask one pupil from each table to sit in the 'hot seat'. They are going to 'be' the person in their scenario and answer questions as that person. If you haven't done hot seating with your class before, it might be a good idea for you to be in the hot seat first and your pupils to ask you the questions.

Either ask, or nominate other pupils to ask the following questions, giving the person in

the hot seat enough time to think and answer the question as their character.

- What happened?
- What are you thinking?
- How are you feeling?
- What are you going to do?

Once finished, ask the person in the hot seat – not their character – how they felt. Was it easy to take on the position and feelings of the character? Reflect on what we could do as a class to show compassion to the person in the scenario.

If you have a big group you could do this in pairs (one in the hot seat and one person asking questions, then swapping over) rather than one person in the middle and everyone else asking questions.

PLENARY: REFLECTION

Reflecting on this activity, encourage pupils to think about the sort of things they could do to offer people support when they are upset. What support is available? What things do people need support for?

Share YouTube video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Wi0UWLeT9I (accessed 18.08.20) and finish by reflecting on how compassion is demonstrated in the video.

MATERIALS

- Presentation
- Hot Seating Scenario Cards

LESSON TWO

GRATITUDE

Learning Objective: To express gratitude towards others.

KEY VIRTUES: GRATITUDE, REFLECTION

STARTER: WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

As a class, discuss the meaning of being grateful and the virtue of gratitude. Make a mind map on the board with words that link to gratitude. Ask pupils to think about people who have helped them when they were feeling upset or worried. Encourage them to think of at least four people. Invite pupils to reflect on and write down what qualities and characteristics are common in these people. Try not to use prompts (these may include: compassion, humour, humility, kindness etc.)

MAIN ACTIVITY

Explain that during lockdown, people all around the world showed many 'acts of kindness'. A way of showing our gratitude to these people is to show our appreciation for their kindness. Ask pupils to think carefully about someone who has made a positive difference in their life, ideally someone they haven't yet thanked for this important contribution. Saying thank you increases good feelings for the person being thanked. They feel appreciated. Research has shown that saying thank you also increases good feelings in the person saying thank you.

Explain that we are going to be writing a 'Thank You Letter' to show our gratitude. This could be to a person, group or organisation who has inspired you or improved your community. Reflect on the following questions:

- Who are you saying thank you to?
- Why are you grateful to them?
- Has knowing them encouraged you to achieve something in your own life or improve how you act towards others?
- How have they helped or inspired you?

Pupils to use the template provided to write their thank you letter. Encourage pupils to be as creative as they want. For example; to decorate their letters with pictures, write a poem, create a cartoon etc.

PLENARY: REFLECTION

Invite pupils to share their 'Thank You Letters'. Encourage pupils to make plans to go and see the person they are saying thank you to with a view of reading the letter out loud and giving it to them to keep. Discuss how this would make you feel linking back to the mind map in the starter. Reflect on who else we can show gratitude to this week.

It may not be feasible to deliver the letter in person – if possible provide stamps and envelopes so that the letters can be mailed.

SCAFFOLDING FOR LOWER ATTAINERS

It may also be helpful to write some 'sentence starters' to help lower attaining students to make a start on the letter. These can be written on the board:

- Dear...
- There is something I really want to share with you...
- I've been thinking about you recently and there is something I would like to tell you...
- I want to say thank you to you for...
- Yours sincerely...
- Lots of love...

MATERIALS

- Presentation
- Thank you letter template
- Envelopes
- Stamps (if necessary)

LESSON THREE

RESILIENCE

Learning Objective: To identify how resilience helps us to overcome challenges.

KEY VIRTUES: RESILIENCE, DETERMINATION, PERSEVERANCE, COURAGE

STARTER: 'HEROES DURING THE PANDEMIC'

Watch the video 'Tribute to Unsung Heroes of Coronavirus Pandemic' (accessed 17.08.2020) www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqjKdkhqRIE

Ask pupils what character strengths these 'heroes' have shown. Things they may mention include: courage, perseverance, determination, compassion/kindness to others, gratitude, patience, resilience.

Highlight resilience and discuss the following three questions:

- What do you know about resilience?
- What does it mean to you?
- Have you ever shown resilience?

MAIN ACTIVITY ONE: IDENTIFYING RESILIENCE IN OTHERS

Explain that we show resilience when we are faced with a challenge. Reflect on how challenges make us feel? (write down suggestions from pupils on the board. These may include: scared, sad, anxious, emotional.)

We must show resilience to overcome challenges in our lives. Explain that the NHS have shown an incredible amount of resilience to fight the coronavirus. Look at the four pictures on the board (doctor, teacher, policeman, store worker). In pairs, reflect on how these people have shown resilience during the coronavirus pandemic.

MAIN ACTIVITY TWO: WHEN HAVE I SHOWN RESILIENCE?

Think of a time when you have shown resilience. Using the templates provided, reflect on the following:

- What was the challenge you faced?
- How did you overcome it?
- How did it make you feel when you overcame it?

Pupils to identify three times they have shown resilience using the template provided. Allow pupils to share their stories and as a class reflect on the importance of resilience.

PLENARY

Together as a class, discuss when we may need to show resilience in school. As a class, list ways we can all become more resilient when we are faced with challenges.

MATERIALS

- Presentation
- Resilience Template

LESSON FOUR

BEING VIRTUOUS

Learning Objective: To recognise how to be a virtuous person

**KEY VIRTUES: COURAGE, HONESTY, GENEROSITY,
GRATITUDE, KINDNESS, RESILIENCE**

STARTER: WHAT IS A SUPERHERO?

Show an image on the board of a variety of superheroes. Discuss the following questions:

- What is a superhero?
- Who are these people/characters?
- What do they have in common?
- What virtues do they show in their stories?
- What makes them a hero?

MAIN ACTIVITY

Show an image of Sir Thomas Moore (Captain Tom) on the board. Explain his story (watch YouTube clip if time permitted: www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0tRq9j6xmM assessed 20.08.20.)

- What virtues did Captain Tom show? Write on the board to refer to during activity.
- What virtues does Captain Tom have in common with the virtues shown by the superheroes we have discussed?
- Would you consider Captain Tom to be a superhero? Why?
- Can you think of a time when you have demonstrated one of the virtues shown by Captain Tom?

When we think about superheroes, the virtue that comes to mind is courage. Can you think of a time when you have shown courage?

Explain that we are going to be designing ourselves as superheroes, focusing on one of the virtues demonstrated by Captain Tom (refer to virtues on board as discussed earlier.) For ideas, pupils could choose from one of the following virtues: honesty, generosity, gratitude, neighbourliness or kindness.

Your superhero must have a costume, mode of transport and nemesis. You may want to model creating yourself as a superhero, modelling your thinking aloud as to how their costume etc. relates to their virtue.

PLENARY: REFLECTION

Invite pupils to share their work, focusing on the virtue they have centred their work on. As pupils share their work, discuss how different virtues are required in different situations. Draw upon the virtues pupils have worked on and explain that we can all be virtue superheroes, using our virtues to help someone. Next time you feel worried or scared, imagine using the virtues we have discussed to help.

- Can you think of any times you have used your virtues to help someone?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did it make the person you were helping feel?

MATERIALS

- Presentation
- YouTube Clip - Captain Tom's Story
- Superhero Template

LESSON FIVE

VOLUNTEERING

Learning Objective: To identify the virtues that are needed to be a volunteer and to understand the reasons why people volunteer.

KEY VIRTUES: SERVICE, VOLUNTEERING, CITIZENSHIP, COMPASSION, FRIENDLINESS

STARTER: WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

Look at the charity logos on the board and discuss the following questions:

- How many logos/organisations can you identify?
- Can you explain what each charity does?
- What is the purpose of a charity?
- What would happen if charities did not exist?

Many charities rely on volunteers. They would not be able to do their work without them.

- What is a volunteer/volunteering?
- Do you/or anyone in your family volunteering?

MAIN ACTIVITY

Show the number 750,000. Explain that more than 750,000 people in the UK offered to volunteer for the NHS in its fight against the coronavirus. Discuss the voluntary roles people volunteered for e.g. delivering food and medicine to the vulnerable.

- What virtues did these volunteers show?
- What do you think motivated them to volunteer their time and experience to help others?

ACTIVITY 1: WOULD YOU VOLUNTEER?

Ask pupils "Who wants to help me?" Without specifying what you want them to do. Ask pupils to put their hands up if they would like to volunteer.

Say to pupils "It is interesting that some of you have chosen to volunteer, even though you do not know what you will be doing. Why did you make that decision? To be a role model? You like helping? There might be a reward? Some of you decided not to volunteer. Why did you make that decision? You needed more information? You are not sure if you could commit? You are shy?"

ACTIVITY 2: VOLUNTEERS' STORIES

Watch the video "Volunteers across UK deliver meals to NHS staff during coronavirus crisis" www.youtube.com/watch?v=roGRna2SkPw (accessed 19.08.20)

Discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think these people volunteered?
- Is there anything that surprised you? Why?
- How do you think they felt volunteering?

Give out the copies of the case studies of people who volunteer. In pairs, ask pupils to pull out the reasons that they volunteer and then sort them into a table using the headings: benefit to themselves, benefit to others, and other.

PLENARY: REFLECTION

Explain that there are many opportunities to volunteer (at home, in the community, charity etc.) Make a brainstorm of all the opportunities to volunteer in school (this could be joining the school council, being a librarian, peer mentor etc.) Ask pupils to choose one of the volunteering opportunities discussed and reflect on the virtues that might be needed and the virtues that they could develop through doing the role.

MATERIALS

- Presentation
- Case Studies
- Table Template