

# KINDER KIDS, SAFER SCHOOLS & ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: An Introduction to The Virtues Project



## BENEFITS OF THE VIRTUES PROJECT IN SCHOOLS

- **Attendance increases** because students feel safe, valued and connected.
- **Student achievement increases** because students have higher self-esteem and embrace 21st Century Skills, integrating excellence in academics and ethics.
- **Discipline referrals decrease** because students feel heard and do not need to act out for attention.
- **Bullies are transformed into leaders** learning to apply their power with compassion and responsibility.
- The overall climate of the school is more **peaceful and joyful** resulting in less stress for everyone allowing both **students and staff to thrive**.

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# GEMS I WANT TO REMEMBER...



The Virtues Project was honored by the United Nations as a model global program for all cultures & is being used to transform individuals, families, schools, businesses & communities in over 95 countries.

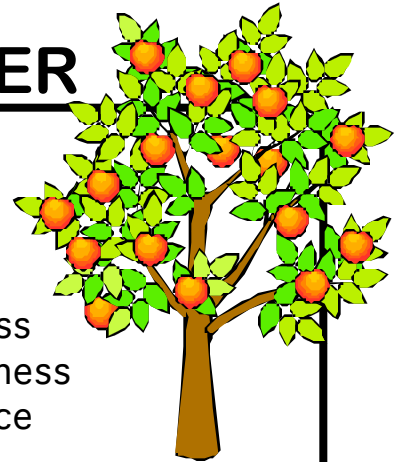
## The Family Virtues Guide

“Parents are always saying children don’t come with a guide book. This is one.  
This helps you get them on the right track for leading a good life.”

~Oprah



# VIRTUES: THE GIFTS OF CHARACTER



Acceptance	Flexibility	Peacefulness
Accountability	Forbearance	Perceptiveness
Appreciation	Forgiveness	Perseverance
Assertiveness	Fortitude	Purity
Awe	Friendliness	Purposefulness
Beauty	Generosity	Reliability
Caring	Gentleness	Resilience
Certitude	Grace	Respect
Charity	Gratitude	Responsibility
Cheerfulness	Helpfulness	Righteousness
Cleanliness	Honesty	Sacrifice
Commitment	Honor	Self-discipline
Compassion	Hope	Serenity
Confidence	Humanity	Service
Consideration	Humility	Simplicity
Contentment	Humor	Sincerity
Cooperation	Idealism	Steadfastness
Courage	Independence	Strength
Courtesy	Initiative	Tact
Creativity	Integrity	Thankfulness
Decisiveness	Joyfulness	Thoughtfulness
Detachment	Justice	Tolerance
Determination	Kindness	Trust
Devotion	Love	Trustworthiness
Dignity	Loyalty	Truthfulness
Diligence	Mercy	Understanding
Discernment	Mindfulness	Unity
Empathy	Moderation	Wisdom
Endurance	Modesty	Wonder
Enthusiasm	Nobility	Zeal
Excellence	Openness	
Fairness	Optimism	
Faith	Orderliness	
Faithfulness	Patience	
Fidelity		



# THE FIVE STRATEGIES

The Five Strategies of The Virtues Project inspire individuals to live more authentic, joyful lives, families to raise children of compassion and integrity, educators to create safe, caring and high performing learning communities, and leaders to inspire excellence and ethics in the workplace.



## 1. Speak the Language of Virtues

Language has the power to inspire or to discourage. Using virtues to acknowledge, guide, correct and thank awakens the best within us.



## 2. Recognize Teachable Moments

Recognizing the virtues needed in daily challenges helps us to become lifelong learners open to the lessons of character.



## 3. Set Clear Boundaries

Boundaries based on respect and restorative justice create a climate of peace, cooperation and safety in our homes, schools and communities.



## 4. Honor the Spirit

We sustain our vision and purpose by integrating virtues into our activities, surroundings, celebrations and the arts.



## 5. Offer Companionship

Being deeply present and listening with compassionate curiosity guides others to find clarity and to create their own solutions. It supports healing and growth.



# HOW TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF VIRTUES



THERE ARE USUALLY THREE ELEMENTS OF A VIRTUES STATEMENT:

- 1) an opening phrase;
- 2) a virtue;
- 3) how the virtue is being shown or needs to be shown.

## ---TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK---

It was	kind	of you to babysit.
You were really	patient	to wait so long.
I see your	generosity	in sharing your lunch.
I honor you for your	courage	in standing up to him.
Thank you for being	flexible	about changing the time.
I appreciate your	helpfulness	with loading my boxes.

## ---TO GUIDE--

Please be	considerate	about the volume of your music.
We need to be	respectful	by listening to what each person says.
How can we show	courtesy	for her?
What will help you find your	courage	to face that challenge?
I would appreciate it if you would be	flexible	about changing the time.

## ---TO CORRECT--

Please be	kind.	That remark hurt.
What would help you to be	tactful	even when you're irritated?
What is a	respectful	way to say that?
We need to be	peaceful.	What would be fair to both of you?



# RECOGNIZE TEACHABLE MOMENTS



“In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized”

*-Haim Ginott*

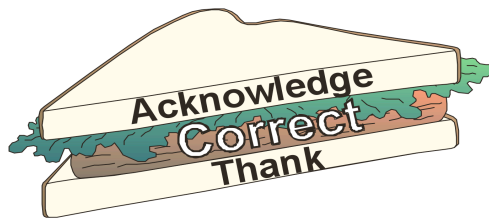
Recognizing the virtues needed in daily challenges helps us to become lifelong learners open to the lessons of character. There is no need for special classes on character. In fact, it is best if most lessons on virtue occur within the context of daily learning and living.

Turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones, by taking personal responsibility to clear up mistakes, by being open to learning from challenges and by replacing shaming with naming virtues.

*Always remember that humility is the goal, not humiliation.*

## What gift of character are we really calling students to when we say...

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Stop your talking.     | A. respect         |
| 2. Get back to work.      | B. orderliness     |
| 3. Clean up this mess.    | C. self-discipline |
| 4. Don't talk back to me. | D. purposefulness  |



**Positivity Sandwich**

**Acknowledge:** I want to acknowledge you for your purposefulness in starting your work right away.

**Correct:** Please be orderly and hang up your coat.

**Thank:** Thank you for your cooperation.

**Write your own example:**

**Acknowledge:**

**Correct:**

**Thank:**



# SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES BASED ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



## THE PROCESS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In the ideal process of restorative justice, students:

- Take *responsibility* for what they do in order to...
- Make *restitution*, which results in...
- *Reconciliation*, which is to make friends again, which...
- *Restores* the relationship and restores the offender to the community.

Forgiveness alone is not enough. Justice requires there be some amends, an action or gesture to fix the problem, with the offender taking responsibility instead of merely being punished. In the ideal situation there is also reconciliation restoring of friendship and contentment on all sides with the outcomes.

## FOUR STEPS TO RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

1. Ask all involved what happened. Use how and what questions, not why.
2. Ask what virtue was missing to create the conflict.
3. Ask what it would look like if they had used the missing virtue.
4. Ask how they can make an amends.

## CREATE A PEACE ZONE IN YOUR CLASSROOM FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

Use a special rug for young children or table large enough for two or more students to sit in a circle and have their "Peace Talks". Post a sign where the spot is located that guides students to solve their problems. Role-play what happens in the Peace Zone at the beginning of the year so students can use it to solve problems on their own.

## PEACE ZONE

1. Take turns **Truthfully** telling your experience of what happened.
2. Listen **Respectfully** to the other person's point of view.
3. Share how you **Honestly** felt.
4. **Creatively** find a virtue you each need.
5. Use **Justice** and **Forgiveness** to decide what amends need to be made.
6. Practice **Commitment** to decide how to do it differently next time.

**Congratulations! You have solved a problem Peacefully!**



# TEN GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM GROUNDRULES



1. **Be Moderate:** Only have 4 or 5 rules.
2. **Be Specific:** Focus on the behaviors specific to your situation.
3. **Be Positive:** Base rules on virtues and word them positively when you can.
4. **Establish specific, relevant consequences for bottom line behaviors**
5. **Make consequences Educative, not Punitive:** Give an opportunity to make reparation.
6. **Be Consistent:** Be trustworthy ~ keep your boundaries.
7. **Communicate Rules Clearly:** Use visuals. Humor helps.
8. **Be sure students understand the virtue involved when receiving consequences.**
9. **Make Ground Rules Non-Negotiable:** Be sure that you can live with the rules and then keep them.
10. **Be Assertive:** Make your expectations clear.

## OUR CLASS PROMISE or OUR CLASS COMMITMENT

We are peaceful with our words and our actions.

We are gentle with people and things.

We are respectful of people and things.

We are enthusiastic learners and always work with excellence.

## CREATE YOUR OWN

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



# HONOR THE SPIRIT OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP



## The A.R.T. of Boundaries

### Assertiveness

Do what is right for you

### Respect

Be deeply present without  
advising

interrupting

criticizing

teasing

### Trust

Be worthy of trust

What we say here stays here

## Virtues Pick Directions

1. Choose a partner
2. First person reads their card aloud
3. Next they share how it resonates with them
4. Second person listens in complete and respectful silence
5. At the end the listener acknowledges a virtue they have recognized
6. Repeat for other partner

Example: *"I heard your compassion when you shared about the difficulties your child has in school."*

## WAYS TO HONOR THE SPIRIT

Virtues Sharing Circles

Celebrations

Traditions

Reflective Time

Moments with Nature

Service Learning

The Arts

Virtues Picks



# THE COMPANIONING PROCESS



**FOLLOW**

## THE COMPANIONING PROCESS

**LEAD**

Open the door



Offer receptive silence

Give a virtues acknowledgement



What's happening?



Ask cup emptying questions

Ask closure & integration questions



Ask virtues reflection questions

I hear your loyalty to your friend.

Get to the heart of the matter



What's been helpful?  
What is clearer now?

What was the hardest part?



What would give you the courage...?

What are those tears for?

### Use the Virtues of Compassion and Detachment When Companioning

**Compassion** is understanding & caring when someone is hurt or troubled, even if you don't know them. It is wanting to help, even if all you can do is listen and say kind words. You forgive mistakes. You are a friend when someone needs a friend.

**Detachment** is experiencing your feelings without allowing your feelings to control you. Instead of just reacting, with detachment you are free to choose how you will act. You use thinking and feeling together, so you can make smart choices.



# OFFER COMPANIONING



**This is a communication skill that:**

- Requires deep listening
- Is most effective when we don't have an "agenda"
- Is meant to support and empower, not fix or rescue
- Primarily consists of silence and open-ended questions
- Requires trust in the other's process



## Open the Door...

...with open-ended questions:

*What's happening?*

*What is it?*

*What are those tears?*



## Offer Receptive Silence

Give them the space to speak fully, to tell the whole story. Be fully present with deep concentration and compassionate curiosity. Shield yourself with detachment, so you can walk intimately with them without taking on their feelings.



## Ask Cup-Emptying Questions

Follow their lead and ask questions that allow them to empty their cup and get to the heart of the matter.

Use *what* and *how* questions, not *why* or *which*.  
*"How was that for you?"*

Take your cues from their words:

Speaker: *"I'm really worried."*

Listener: *"What worries you?"*

Speaker: *"I'm just not sure."*

Listener: Either remain silent or ask,  
*"What are you unsure of?"*



## Focus on Sensory Cues

Concentrate on and even repeat words they use that involve seeing, hearing, feeling, sensing.

Speaker: *"It was the most beautiful sunset I ever saw."*

Listener: *"Beautiful..."*

Speaker's eyes well up with tears.

*"What are the tears for?"*

Speaker is yelling, *"This place is so stupid!"*

Match their volume. *"What's stupid about this place?"*

Speaker is crying: *"What are those tears?"*



## Ask Virtues Reflection Questions

When they seem to have gotten to the heart of the matter or the core issue, ask a question that helps them to reflect on a virtue that will help them. About something that is frightening,  
*"What would give you the courage to ...?"* or  
*"What would give you peace about this?"*



## Ask Closure & Integration Questions

*"What was helpful about talking?"*

*"What's clearer to you now?"*

*"What did you appreciate about this meeting?"*



## Give a Virtues Acknowledgement

This is an essential step in restoring the speaker even if your companioning was brief and did not include all these steps.

*"I appreciate your openness to explore this."*



# RESOURCES



The following resources are referred to throughout the workshop and may be helpful as you live, deepen and share The 5 Strategies of The Virtues Project:

**A Framework for Understanding Poverty by Ruby Payne**

<http://www.ahaprocess.com/>

**A Whole New Mind by Daniel Pink**

<http://www.danpink.com/>

**ASCD's Whole Child Compact**

<http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/Whole%20Child/WCC%20Learning%20Compact.pdf>

**CEP's Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education**

[http://www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYJrF/b.993263/k.72EC/The\\_Eleven\\_Principles.htm](http://www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYJrF/b.993263/k.72EC/The_Eleven_Principles.htm)

**Freedom Writers Foundation, Erin Gruwell**

<http://www.freedomwritersfoundation.org>

**Hidden Messages in Water by Dr. Emoto**

<http://www.hado.net>

**How Full is Your Bucket and How Full is Your Bucket for Kids by Tom Rath**

<http://strengths.gallup.com/114079/Full-Bucket.aspx>

**Me To We by Craig and Marc Kielburger**

<http://www.metowe.com>

**"See Me Beautiful" on the Teaching Peace CD by Red Grammer**

<http://www.heartofeducation.net/Products.html>

**Smart and Good High Schools Report by Tom Lickona and Matt Davidson**

<http://www.cortland.edu/character/highschool/>

**The Art of Possibility by Roz and Ben Zander**

<http://www.benjaminzander.com/>

**The Family Virtues Guide, The Virtues Project Educator's Guide, A Pace of Grace,  
The Virtues Project Educator's Cards, and Virtues Reflection Cards by Linda Kavelin Popov,  
Dr Dan Popov and John Kavelin**

<http://www.heartofeducation.net/Products.html>

