

Self-Esteem

Activities to Build Self-Worth



Grades 4-5

Published by World Teachers Press®
www.worldteacherspress.com

Foreword

Addressing self-esteem and social resilience in students is fundamental to creating a safe, happy learning environment. *Self-Esteem, Grades 4 to 5* is a resource for investigating personal and social issues faced by elementary school-aged students. The activity topics in this book have been carefully selected to address issues specific to middle

elementary-aged students with a view to building self-worth and establishing resilience in challenging situations. All activities are suitable for whole-class instruction or for use with individuals or small groups with particular needs. Other titles in this series are:

Self-Esteem, Grades 2 to 3
Self-Esteem, Grades 6 to 8

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Helping Others

Indicators

- Understands that being helpful fosters a positive, cooperative environment.
- Differentiates between helpful and unhelpful behavior.
- Demonstrates a willingness to be helpful in a classroom situation.

Pre-Lesson Focus Discussion

Ask the students to suggest times when they could be helpful. Suggest that they have an opportunity to be helpful in almost every interaction they are involved in and that being helpful is holding a positive state of mind. Give examples of how they can choose to be helpful in the simplest situations. For example, if someone greets them, they can either be helpful and cooperative by saying hello and asking how the person is, or they can be unhelpful and uncooperative by ignoring him/her or grunting in response.

Provide the students with several simple scenarios and ask volunteers to demonstrate helpful and unhelpful behavior in each.

Using the Student Activity Sheet

1. Look at the cartoon at the top of the student activity page. Ask the students whether they have ever thought to be helpful in a simple way such as this. Discuss how being helpful in this way can make others feel.
2. Read the text describing how being helpful is integral to our ability to get along with others. Ask the students to explain how the way they behave affects the people around them and in particular, how much enjoyment they can get out of life.
3. Direct the students to the cartoon in Question 1. Read what Billy is proposing and then read the possible responses Bella could give him. To complete the task, allow the students to analyze each of the responses and determine which are helpful and which are unhelpful.
4. Allow the students the opportunity to report back to the class their reasons for deciding whether each of Bella's statements was helpful or unhelpful.
5. Read the text that follows and encourage the students to share some of the other ways they are helpful, both at home and at school. They can then write some examples of this type of helpfulness to complete Question 2.

Follow-Up Suggestions

When resolving conflicts, describe students' interactions as "helpful" or "unhelpful" to demonstrate their willingness to get along with others.

Make a roster of helpful duties nominated students can perform; for example, cleaning the board, handing out books, collecting lunches and running errands.

Sensitivity Issues

Being helpful is something that students need to do with a generous nature, and though it certainly can be encouraged, it should not be forced. "Helpful" and "unhelpful" are terms which are appropriate for describing student behavior, as they are suggestive of a positive attitude towards cooperating and interacting with others.

Activity Links

- Things I Am Responsible For.....pp. 8–9
- Who Is Watching You?.....pp. 18–19
- Why Misbehaving Doesn't Workpp. 44–45
- Using Good Mannerspp. 78–79
- We Can Work It Outpp. 116–117

Answers

1. H, U, U, H, U
2. Answers will vary

Offering a Helping Hand



Getting along with others is something we choose to do. We choose whether we are going to be cooperative and helpful or disagreeable and unhelpful. The way we choose to behave affects the people around us and how much fun we can have.

1. Look at the cartoon below. Show whether Sam's responses are helpful or unhelpful by writing an "H" for helpful or a "U" for unhelpful next to each.

Let's build a playhouse!

Okay! What will we use to build it?

Okay! But it has to be built where I say.

Okay – but not until I've finished everything I want to do.

Okay! We can play games inside it once we're finished.

Playhouses are for babies. Can't you think of something else we can do?

A cartoon illustration of a girl suggesting to build a playhouse. A boy responds with five different statements, each followed by a checkbox for classification.

We can get along with others by being helpful in other ways too—like doing special jobs.

2. Write some jobs you do at home and school that help everyone get along better.

Encouraging Others

Indicators

- Understands what is meant by the term "encouragement."
- Recognizes how encouraging others assists in developing strong friendships.
- Understands how to encourage others in an appropriate, nonthreatening way.

Pre-Lesson Focus Discussion

Introduce the term "encouragement" and ask the students to share what they think the term means.

Brainstorm to list encouraging comments the students could say to others; for example, "Well done!" or "You can do it!"

Using the Student Activity Sheet

1. Look at the cartoon at the top of the student activity page. Explain why Della might feel like her friends can help her to succeed. Discuss what might happen to Della's attitude if her peers were not encouraging or said things which were hurtful or negative in some way.
2. Read the text suggesting that encouraging others can help us to get along better with them. Encourage the students to share times when they were uplifted by their friends' encouragement.
3. Review some of the suggestions in the pre-lesson discussion about the types of things the students could say to their friends to encourage them. They can then write some of these to answer Question 1.
4. Ask the students to reflect upon how their friends behave around them. Are they encouraging? Do they make them feel special and confident that they can succeed? How could they help them feel this way? The students can then write their ideas to complete Question 2.
5. Read the text which follows, suggesting that the wrong kind of encouragement could be described as forcing someone to do something. Discuss the difference.
6. Direct the students to the cartoon of Billy about to attempt the high jump for the first time. To complete Question 3, allow the students to write an example of positive encouragement and an example of forcing Billy into doing it in the speech bubbles.

Follow-Up Suggestions

Have the students compose an encouraging letter to a nominated class member. Brainstorm to list encouraging words and phrases to assist the students with their compositions.

Provide encouragement awards for students to help build their confidence for an upcoming event or to recognize their effort in a particular field.

Sensitivity Issues

Students may confuse positive encouragement, which is a selfless act, with coercion, which is a desire for another to do what they want. Students should be made aware of the difference and the potential for causing the person they are "encouraging" discomfort if their motives are not appropriate. Peer pressure can take both a positive and negative role in a student's development. When pressure from peers comes in the form of positive encouragement, it is an overwhelmingly positive experience for the recipient.

Activity Links

- Who Is Watching You? pp. 18–19
 Compliments pp. 22–23
 What People Like About Me pp. 40–41
 You're the Greatest! pp. 42–43
 Leave Me Alone! pp. 54–55
 Learning New Things pp. 82–83

Answers

Answers will vary

Encouraging My Friends

I can do anything with my friends' help!



We can get along with others by being helpful and agreeable. But friends who get along very well do something extra—they give each other encouragement.

1. What kinds of things could you say to your friends to encourage them?

2. How would you like your friends to encourage you?

There is a big difference between encouraging someone to do something and forcing him or her into doing it.

3. Look at the cartoon below where Della is about to have her first try at the high jump.

(a) How do you think Della is feeling?

(b) Write something Billy could say to encourage Della in her speech bubble.

(c) Write what you think someone might say who is forcing Della to do it in the other speech bubble.

