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INTRODUCTION

“The moral purpose of education must precede and guide all others.”

– NEL NODDINGS

“The core problem facing schools today is a moral one. All the other problems derive from it. Hence, all the various attempts at school reform are unlikely to succeed unless character education is put at the top of the school’s agenda.”

– WHY JOHNNY CAN’T TELL RIGHT FROM WRONG – WILLIAM KILPATRICK

Academic achievement and character education are not mutually exclusive. All students (K-12) must first learn what behaviors we expect and then teachers, administrators and all school support staff must model and expect those behaviors of Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Fairness, Initiative, Teamwork, Courage and Perseverance.

Education, by its very nature, is a moral enterprise and educators must be moral agents of the school. There is no such thing as a value neutral school. We are all “character educators” by either design or default. What we choose to say and do, as well as what we choose not to say and do, has a significant impact on students.

Effective character education is not a program nor a prescription; it is an ongoing daily process by which teachers teach, model and expect students to demonstrate respectful and responsible behaviors. The upper elementary and middle school years, grades 4 – 8, are significant for pre-adolescent students. This is a time of rapid physical and emotional changes, a time when peer group influence and social acceptance are primary concerns for children between the ages of 9 – 13. Teachers must make a conscientious effort to plan and integrate activities into their daily classroom lessons and activities that teach and reinforce positive character traits.

We hope that this book will serve as a useful resource guide to help you and students experience and process a variety of character education life-skills and traits. Above all, let us always remember that:

We must strive to be the ‘Guiding Light’ for the ‘Bold and the Beautiful’ who are the ‘Young and the Restless’ in the ‘Search for Tomorrow,’ ‘All the Days of Our Lives’ since ‘All My Children’ have but ‘One Life to Live.’ Then, perhaps we can help to keep them out of ‘General Hospital.’

– DUANE HODGIN

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PURPOSE AND FORMAT

Character education does not come in a binder to be taught as a set pattern in a classroom. Character education is most effective when it can be incorporated into everyday lessons. It is more of a “surround sound” effect.

The format of this book is designed to help educators implement user-friendly activities within the classroom. “Character Lessons that Rock!” is a teacher resource book written by educators who have used the lesson activities with students and teachers in their school districts across the country. Over 150 easy-to-use character education activities, inspirational stories and interactive lessons are included. The activities are grouped with the appropriate sections. However, teachers can select any or a combination of activities for a particular lesson. We encourage educators to reproduce the included worksheets and activities for their specific group or class.



**CHALK
TALK:**
(Daily Oral
Language)

Chalk Talk (D.O.L) is a tool to enhance Language Arts (i.e. proofreading, editing skills). Teachers will write the Chalk Talk statement (incorrectly as shown) on the board. Students are to grammatically correct the sentence.



**COMMUNITY
CIRCLE:**
(Group Sharing /
Discussion)

Community Circle is a discussion activity in which the teacher evokes student opinions and ideas relating to the activity. The teacher will read the Community Circle statement and ask the students to respond.



**STORY
SUGGESTIONS:**
(Book to Read)

Story Suggestions are literature recommendations for oral or proposed reading to students. The teacher may choose to have the students read the listed book(s) for follow-up discussion and/or writing. The teacher may also choose to read passages or chapters to the students.



**CHARACTER
QUOTE:**

Quotes speak to various character virtues. The teacher should write the character quote on the board and then ask students to memorize it, discuss the quote, write about it, or paraphrase the quote.



**ACTIVITY
EXPLANATION:**

The activity is a step-by-step explanation of the character activity lesson. Each activity can be completed within 15-30 minutes. The teacher can use his or her own creativity to modify the activity.