C aring is at the heart of an ethical person's character. Caring people are loving, helpful, giving, and kind. They care for people pets, plants, possessions -- and the planet. A caring person always thinks how his or her decisions, words, and actions will affect other people.

A big part of growing up is the ability to think and care about someone besides yourself. Caring people have grown from selfish to selfless, me-minded to we-minded, from give-me to give-you.

The Golden Rule
"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is a rule that helps us focus on our duty to care for others in a selfless and loving way – regardless of the way they choose to treat us. This rule is common in cultures and religions around the world – from Islam to Hinduism, from ancient Greek to Chinese philosophy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will learn caring by:

- Understanding natural feelings of empathy
- Helping students perceive themselves as caring people
- Developing recognition of emotive states in others
- Increasing pro-social behaviors in the classroom

OVERVIEW

Empathy, along with knowledge and self-determination, are among the characteristics of a successful learner. Young students demonstrate a natural tendency toward helping others and offering support and commiseration to friends in tough situations. This lesson encourages students to think about how new students joining their class might be feeling and how the class can develop caring attitudes to help newcomers feel less lonely.

MATERIALS

- First Day at School picture
- Memory Card Template
- School Plan Template
- Names and Numbers Template

ACTIVITY

1. Arrange the class in a circle. Show them the First Day at School picture and ask them to explain how they felt on their first day.

2. Ask the students what they think the new person is feeling. Brainstorm how it feels to be the new person at school.

3. The students should recognize the person is feeling lonely. Encourage them to offer advice to help alleviate loneliness. What can they do to show a new student they care? Write their suggestions on the board.

4. Ask them how they think visitors such as substitute teachers, new students, and new staff feel when they come to the school. Is the school welcoming? What can they do to show their school is a caring school?

5. Tell the class they're going to work in groups to make a welcome pack for new students. Divide them into three categories (approximately four students per group).

    •   The first group will work on creating a School Plan. Their task is to draw a map of the important places in the school that a new student will need to know. Where are the restrooms? Do they have to move from class to class? Where are good places to play? What can they do on rainy days at break times? Think of all the special and important places in the school a new person would need to know about. Draw maps of these places.

    •   The second group will work on creating a Memory Card that incorporates language used in the school and in the classroom. Does your classroom have rules about how people talk to each other? Are there some words used at school that have special meaning? What about a new student from a country where English is not its first language? What information could help them?

    •   The third group will work on Names and Numbers of students in the class and people at school who can help new students. List all the people who a new student can go to if they need help and where they can be found. What do they look like? Make similar descriptions of the other students, including their likes and dislikes.

6. Distribute the appropriate Templates to each group or use our templates to create your own. Give them an appropriate amount of time to complete the project.

7. When the groups have finished, have them share their information to make the school a welcoming place for a new student. Collate all the material to make Welcome Packs for new students or new teachers if appropriate.

FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

◻ Make a poster to display in class that includes the advice brainstormed earlier. What advice do they have for new students or anyone feeling lonely? What can they do to help someone feel cared for? Make a poster with these ideas on it and display it in a prominent position in the classroom.

◻ Have the class research how to say "Welcome to our class" in as many languages as they can. Create a poster out of the words and phrases they learn. Use a world map as the background.

◻ Have them think about family members who they care about or who care about them. Discuss actions that show they care. What things might they do to show they care about their family? What things do their family members do to show they care about them?

OTHER CARING ACTIVITIES

◻ Distribute heart-shaped templates and have the students write caring words inside them.

◻ Encourage students to learn vocabulary that is kind and caring. Have them practice complimenting each other. Remind them to be sincere by looking into the person's eyes when talking to them. Remind them to say "thank you" when they receive compliments.

◻ Make a "Caring Characters" portrait gallery. Have the class draw pictures of caring people or characters they read or hear about. Label the pictures with the characters' caring actions.

◻ Help strengthen the principle of caring in children's minds with a "Sit-Up and Notice Others" exercise:
"Care – One! Care – Two!
It's great when people care for you!
Care – Three! Care – Four!
Life gets better when you care more!"
This is a good activity for sit-ups, or let the students make up their own exercise for the slogan.

LINKS TO USEFUL WEBSITES

http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/7/cu13.html
List of resources, ideas, and a synthesis of research into teaching pro-social behaviors in the classroom from the North West Regional Education Laboratory.

http://ofcn.org/cyber.serv/academy/ace/soc/elem.html
Large list of links to lesson plans that teach caring, empathy, and other aspects of character education.

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/atyourschool/sept02.htm
List of ideas and activities from UCLA to welcome new students to a class.

http://charactercounts.org/
Visit our website for free teaching resources, lesson plans, ideas, and much more to help you incorporate character education into your classroom and school.

STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS
Standard 6
Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.

LEVEL 1 [Grades K-2]
Benchmark 3
Knows setting, main characters, main events, sequence, and problems in stories.

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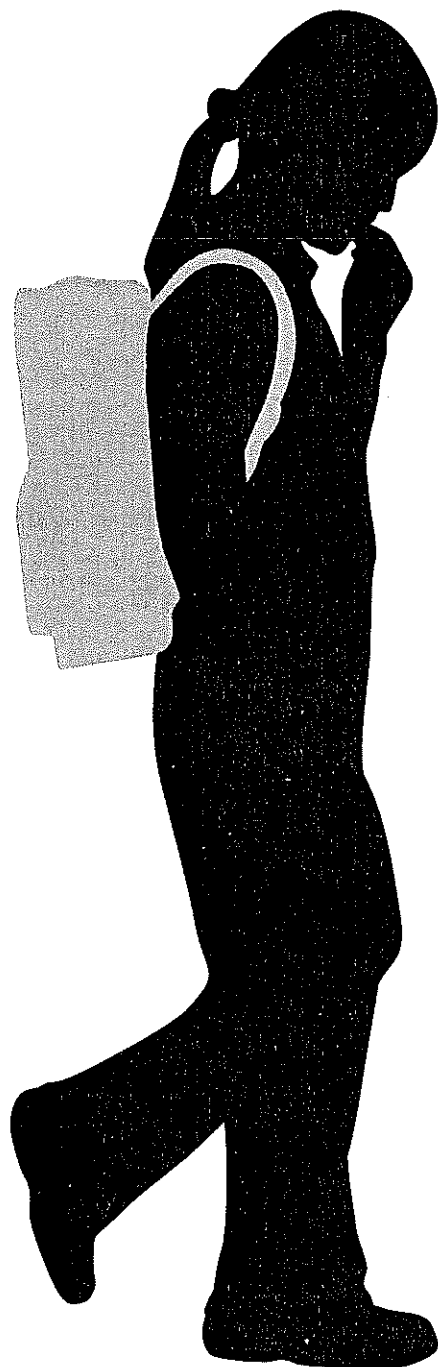
VOCABULARY TERMS

empathy
kindness
consideration

concern
sharing
mean

cruel
loving
forgiveness

CHARACTER COUNTS!

FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

Name: _____   Date: _____   **CHARACTER COUNTS!**

JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE
Center for Youth Ethics

MEMORY CARD TEMPLATE

Classroom Rules	Special School Words	Basic Classroom Vocabulary

Name: _____   Date: _____   **CHARACTER COUNTS!**

CARING

SCHOOL PLAN TEMPLATE

Use the grid to map your school.

N
W —⊛— E
S

	a	b	c	d	e	f
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Name: _____

Date: _____
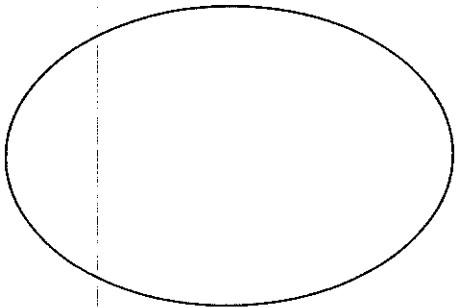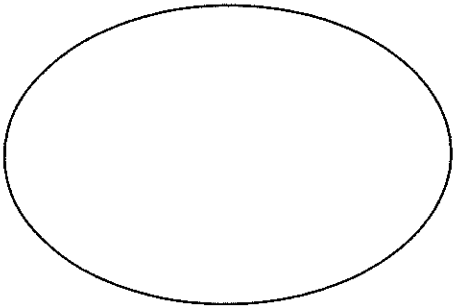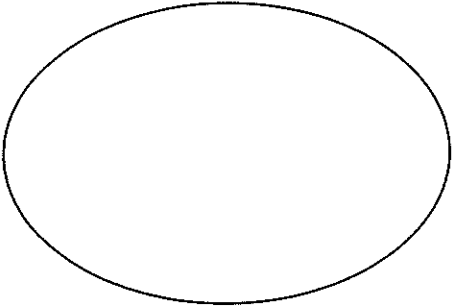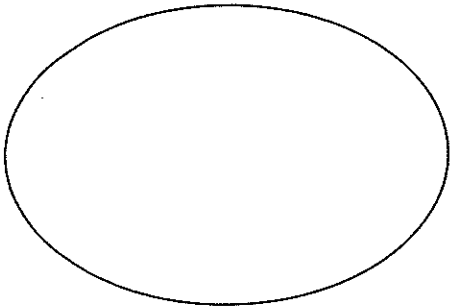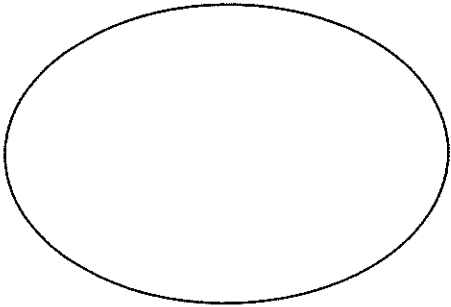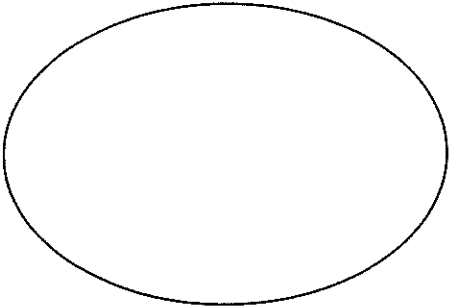
CARING

NAMES AND NUMBERS TEMPLATE

Name: _____

Date: _____

CHARACTER COUNTS!

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