

daybyday

Learning about good character



# Facilitator's Handbook

for teaching character education  
classes in your school or home

*“The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct”*

Dear teachers of character education,

We would like to congratulate you on your commitment to advancing the character education of children and warmly welcome you to a family of character education facilitators in China and elsewhere around the world. As a character education, you have been inspired to embark on a noble and important path of service. We would like to do all we can to assist you in this worthy endeavor. To this end, this Facilitator’s Handbook is provided to you as a reference to support your learning and share with you a few concepts and skills you might find useful in the implementation of your character education program.

The supplementary materials found on the Day by Day Learning website is the result of many years of dedication by a team of educators, artists, and musicians across the globe who feel strongly about the value of character education. The materials have been tested in private and public kindergartens and primary schools with 4-7 year old children from different cultural, economic and racial backgrounds. The learning and experience gained has helped us enhance and enrich the materials over an 8 year period. It is our hope that these materials will help children develop good habits and gain an understanding of what virtues are and how we can use them to help make our communities, and the world, a better place to live in.

We would be delighted to read about your experiences, thoughts and reflections as you learn and grow in your understanding of character education in your homes and schools.

With much love and admiration for your service in the field of character education.

Day by Day Learning  
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## **Introduction**

The progress and advancement of our civilization is highly dependent on the quality of our education system. In recent decades, we have made great advances in the field of education, preparing children for the technical and scientific innovations of tomorrow. Yet, despite these valuable efforts, moral challenges continue to plague our families, schools and communities. Disobedience, disrespect and violence toward parents, teachers and authority are on the rise. The world continues to expend its resources to cope with war, hunger, environmental disasters, poverty, family disunity and corruption.

If we yearn for a better world for ourselves and our children, a more peaceful, more just, more honest, and a more humane world, we must change our focus. We must reflect on the cause of our afflictions and develop preventative solutions. As educators and parents, as communities and nations, we must ensure that material education is complemented with character education, so that every child learns to recognize his/her nobility, and use their virtues in service to humanity.

## **The Facilitator**

The educator plays an important role in all educational endeavors. The educator's qualities and skills are even more critical when the aim is the education of the child's character and inspiring the practice of such human qualities as love and kindness. It is necessary, therefore, for the teacher or parent to reflect on their own character and strive to practice virtues in their own daily life and natural interactions with others. It is through this genuine modeling of virtues that any character education program will have its greatest effect on the hearts and souls of young children.

In order to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, teachers and principals can participate in regular study about character education. Through this study, the teachers or principals are inspired to initiate or accelerate their own transformation as well as learn the skills to effectively facilitate the character education classes.

## **Key Principles**

Below are several guiding principles for the facilitator to reflect on:

### **1. All children are born as noble, spiritual beings**

The human being is a special being with both physical and spiritual aspects. While sharing physical needs such as food and shelter with animals, he is able to transcend his needs and control his physical desires through the power of his spirit. If the human spirit is strong, it can withstand great difficulties and rise above physical challenges. If the spirit is not strong, physical desires can dominate and cause great harm to them as an individual and to society. As such, the teacher of character education needs to understand the true power and divine nature of the human spirit. She can then help children comprehend their true nature and understand their nobility. Developing this understanding at a young age will help them develop as individuals and become useful members of society.

### **2. All children can manifest virtues.**

“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”

Understanding this principle provides a strong foundation for all efforts towards character development. The teacher of character education needs to have confidence that all children have the potential to be kind, loving, peaceful, etc. though at times they might not manifest these qualities. This understanding and belief assists the teacher to persevere in her efforts to discover and develop the gems of character in each child. The teacher of character education guides the children slowly and patiently to understand that they all have within them a ‘mine’ rich in gems of inestimable value’ and that over the course of their lives, through education, their

virtues will be revealed, grow and develop through service to their family and the society in which they live.

**3. The Educator *Facilitates* the Development of Virtues**

Based on the understanding that all children have the potential to manifest all virtues, the educator's job is not defined by that of transferring the knowledge of virtues to children and teaching them how to behave properly. Rather, the educator has the privilege of helping to develop the potential talent within in each child. Just as a loving gardener tends the seed to grow to *its* full potential, it is important that the teacher of character education also sees their role as *facilitating* the development of virtues in children at all times. Most important in this process is the teacher's own modeling of virtues. The deeds and manners of the teacher have far greater influence on the students than his/her words. Effective character education lessons are not *delivered* in a one way instructional manner according to the accepted traditional teaching style in many countries. Instead, in all lessons, through conversation and role play, by playing a game, singing a song, or by doing an art activity the teacher of character education helps the child to reach inside and develop insights on the meaning of the virtue and its application in his own life and the life of others. The teacher must also create opportunities for children to practice virtues in order to help the child deeply understand and experience the influence of these virtues on their own soul and the lives of others.

**4. We *choose* to practice virtues**

In helping children develop their character, the teacher of character education builds awareness of the virtues in children, helps them understand how to use virtues in service to others and motivates them to choose to practice the virtue. However, the desire to practice their virtues comes from within the child herself. Once the inner desire is generated and translated into virtuous action, the teacher/facilitator nurtures the growth of the virtues by acknowledging efforts and praising the virtuous choice. As such, it is not correct for the teacher /facilitator to make or force the child to practice a virtue by shaming or blaming him, for such practice would be devoid of conscious inner desire and understanding and is, therefore, not conducive to the development of the child's character.

**5. Each child is unique and develops in his own unique way**

Though all children have the ability to learn and grow many virtues, they are born with strengths in different virtues. As such, one child might appear to be more caring than his friend while the friend might show more courage than him. As children are continuously developing, they will make different choices. As a result, this situation might change after a while. Since the actual capacity of each child to practice a given virtue is unknown, it is not correct to compare one child to another or in any way set up a competitive atmosphere in the practice of the virtues. For example, we would not say

“Let’s see whose uniform has stayed the most clean today.” Rather, we might say: “Let’s all practice cleanliness and keep our uniforms clean”. Also, if we would like to encourage a child for practicing a virtue, this needs to be stated as an acknowledgement of a kind act the child has chosen to perform: “Thank you Lee for showing compassion to the new child in the class when he was crying, I really like the way you brought him a tissue.” not as a label such as: “Lee is a very kind boy.” Labels, whether good or bad, burden the child with a still image of himself, one which does not acknowledge his ability to grow and develop. The teacher of character education needs to be watchful of her own language and the language used by children in the classroom and at all times avoid labeling and competitive language.

#### **6. We Develop Our Virtues for the Purpose of Serving Humanity**

The teacher of character education needs to clearly understand the ultimate goal of virtues education. While it is great to have well behaved or happy children in our school and families, this is not achieved in isolation. The ultimate goal of virtues education is to awaken and strengthen virtues so we can use these virtues in service to humanity. As we create opportunities for children to grow in their virtues, they can serve better. As they serve their family and community, they grow in their virtues. With this integrated principal in mind, the teacher of character education facilitates the classes in such a way to inspire the children and their desire for service.

“That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.”

We hope that reflection on the above key principals will help maintain the spirit of service and love with which you are to approach your task every day.

## **Preparation**

Early childhood is the time in children's lives when they are most capable of acquiring good character. Young children learn through observation and experience. They absorb patterns of behavior, speech and attitudes through observing their environment and the people in this environment. As such, conscious reflection and effort is critical in the effective implementation of any character education program.

### **The Prepared Teacher of Character Education**

In order to bring out the best in children and help them to become virtuous adults, the teacher of character education needs to align their thoughts, attitudes and actions with what they will be teaching about the virtues to children. The teacher, therefore, needs to exert effort to prepare himself for this noble and important task.

### **Self-preparation and Development**

The teacher of character education exercises self-discipline and is in control of her manners and language. She chooses gentle and positive words to instruct or correct a child, and has a positive attitude toward life and its challenges. At first, this might feel uncomfortable or 'unnatural' for some teachers. However, with diligence and perseverance, it will soon become a wonderful habit with long term benefits for both the teacher and the children in her care. Towards this end, the teacher of character education is encouraged to set aside some time every evening to reflect on the following questions:

Did I smile often at the children and my co-workers today?

Did I show love and understanding to the children in my care?

Did I use a kind, gentle voice when speaking to the children and parents?

Did I set clear boundaries and natural consequences in my classroom?

Did I respond rationally or emotionally to a difficult situation?

Did I work with joy and excellence today?

Did I talk or listen more?

Was I prepared for my lessons today?

Were my actions calm and graceful in the classroom?

Did I challenge the children with new lessons and seize teachable moments?

Did I encourage the children to ask questions and consult with each other?

Did I empower and trust the children to help themselves and others?

Did I actively listen when a child had a problem and see it from his perspective?

Did I criticize or scold a child? If so, what could I do next time?

Did I occasionally give the children acceptable choices instead of telling them what to do?

Did I model the virtues I want the children in my care to develop?

Did I see each child as ‘a mine rich in gems of inestimable value’?

Did I see the good qualities in my co-workers today?

This exercise will help the facilitator to, day by day, align her actions with her words. In this way, what she teaches will go beyond academic learning and have a positive lasting effect on the minds and souls of children.

It is also highly recommended that at the end of each day, the character education facilitator write down her observations and thoughts on the developments and challenges of the day for both herself and the children in the class. Reflection on the strengths and challenges of the day will assist the facilitator to continually improve her classes and increase her own effectiveness.

“Let each morn be better than its eve and each morrow richer than its yesterday.”

### **Love**

The Teacher of character education is first and foremost a teacher of love. At first encounter, some children may be more lovable than others due to their nice appearance, courteous behavior towards the teacher or their academic excellence, etc. The facilitator strives to love **all** children and to find ways to show this love in action and words. In order to achieve this, she focuses her attention on the latent potential of each child as a ‘mine rich in gems of inestimable value’.

With utmost love and patience, she concentrates her efforts to help each child to develop, according to his own capacity, his gems of virtues in service to humanity. She frequently reminds herself that “In the world of existence, there is indeed no greater power than the power of love.” With his kind and loving approach, using clear and firm

virtues based boundaries, patiently and tactfully she helps each unique seed grow into a fruitful tree.

### **Gentleness and Grace**

The teacher of character education walks slowly and gracefully in the classroom. She takes special care not to 'rush around' and run into children or materials in the classroom. Her voice needs to have a gentle and loving tone. If she observes a child using discourteous language to get attention on the other side of the classroom, she would not yell or shout across the room to correct the child. Instead, she walks to the child, puts her hand gently on his/her shoulder, and using a firm but gentle voice, calls the child to the required virtue by saying "I can see that you really need my attention. However, next time, I need you to come to me and speak courteously to ask for what you need." In order to correct a child's wrong behavior, she would not physically pull the child away or force the child to obey. Rather, with patience and kind words, she helps the child to understand the result of her action and become motivated to voluntarily decide to obey. The teacher is encouraged to smile often at the children. This kind of acknowledgement touches the heart and soul of children and builds their self-esteem.

### **Respect:**

Respectful communication with children helps set an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy in the classroom and the kindergarten/school. When speaking to young children the facilitator bends down or kneels so that she is looking into the child's eyes. While facilitating a character education class, she makes frequent eye contact with the children and strives to involve as many students as possible in the discussions. Whether during the lesson or other activities, the facilitator manifests a deep sense of respect for the child and his unique learning pace, learning styles and capabilities. She refrains from labeling or shaming the children or making negative comments about a child's answer. The facilitator's respectful, considerate and loving attitude in turn instills a deep sense of self-worth in the young child, an element which is critical for their ability to function well in society.

### **The Classroom Atmosphere**

While in the classroom, children are busy learning through the lesson, specific work, play or interaction with teachers or other classmates. In all these, the classroom atmosphere should manifest orderliness, respect, joy and beauty. In order to achieve this, the teacher needs to reflect on the class dynamics and requirements, and implement clear boundaries accordingly. Simple examples of these boundaries are self-discipline to raise hands instead of interrupting the teacher when she is speaking, sitting peacefully while a lesson is conducted and responsibility to put materials back after use. As children understand these boundaries and experience the consequence of obedience to these rules, the class atmosphere is transformed to that of joyful peacefulness and order. Much more guidance

and examples may be found in Jane Nelson's book 'Positive Discipline in the Classroom'. In this environment, children thrive both academically and spiritually.

### **The Character Education Class setting**

In a kindergarten or grade1 classroom, the character education lessons may be conducted for small groups of children in a specific area of the room. This area can be beautifully arranged and decorated for this purpose. The area can be creatively designed by the facilitator with consideration of the following general guidelines:

- It needs to feel special to the child. Fresh flowers, comfortable and cozy seating arrangement, beautiful table or tablecloth, etc. can be used to achieve this.
- The seating arrangement should allow for close interaction between the children and the Facilitator.
- External distractions such as toys or other unrelated materials need to be removed from this area.

### **Lesson Routine**

Young children thrive in an orderly atmosphere. It is therefore recommended that the facilitator adopt a systematic lesson routine according to their facilitator lesson plans. All lessons can begin with a greeting. The greeting can take the form of a simple verbal greeting like "Hello, how are you?" coupled, if possible, with a warm handshake. Children are encouraged to reply by saying "I am fine thank you." instead of "OK". The greeting can be followed by singing a relevant song. You may find the 'Virtues in you and virtues in me' song available on 'Favorite Children's Songs from The Family Learning House' CD, useful and is downloadable on iTunes.

Any character education lesson should be delivered in a peaceful, gentle and orderly fashion using loving and respectful language. Each lesson can end with a story that reinforces the understanding of the virtue and its application. The way in which the lesson begins and ends can be the same each time. The facilitator can use or create effective routines to attract and maintain the attention of the children in her class in consideration of her classroom dynamics, physical set up and the number of children attending the session.

### **The Importance of stories**

As stories are a very important part of education in early childhood years, all daily lessons also include a specially created or selected short story that demonstrates the application of the virtue in daily life. Please refer to the section called 'Stories' listed in 'Teaching Resources' or section called 'Books' listed in 'Further Learning' on our website. When possible, use puppets or props to bring any story to life for the children.

## Day by Day Learning Materials

You may wish to use the Day by Day Learning materials as a program or certain Day by Day materials as a supplement to your current character education program. Many of our materials are available to download free on our website at [www.daybydaylearning.com](http://www.daybydaylearning.com).

The complete package of Day by Day Learning materials contains the following teaching resources:

1. 19 Facilitator Lesson Plan books (one for each virtue taught)
2. Resource Material B package
3. Virtues in Action book set (one book for each virtue taught)
4. Virtues in Us Song CDs
  - a) School age songs in English and Chinese
  - b) Preschool songs in English and Chinese
  - c) 19 Quotation Song CDs
5. DVD of Actions for 19 Quotation Songs
6. 19 coloring sheets
7. Quiz sheets
8. My Virtues Journal
9. 'Friends from Around the World' character set (9 children and Bark, the dog)
10. Visual Aid poster set (one for each virtue being taught)
11. Poster listing 19 virtues

To view a full lesson plan about each virtue, please visit our website under Teaching Resources.

### **Introducing our Day by Day Learning 'Friends from Around the World'**

These are the sweet characters used in our stories, our Virtues in Action books and the visual aid posters. A description of the 10 characters including their age and cultural background are provided below:

**Justice:** Justice is a 7 year old Chinese boy who lives with his mother and father in China. He loves his mother, father, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles very much. He wears glasses and traditional Chinese clothes. Justice is intellectual, inquisitive, extremely generous, humble and always seeks what is fair and just. Like an investigator, he carries a little green note book with him everywhere and when he encounters a situation that requires helping his friends to discover their virtues, he pulls out his book and writes down what he hears and observes. He uses a process we know called spiritual companionship to ask his friends questions like, "what is happening?" "what are those tears for?" "what is the



hardest thing for you?” When he thinks he has discovered how he can help he always says, “Aaaa haaa, I think I’ve got it!” Grace is his closest friend and companion in their mission to help make the world a better place, by helping their friends discover and use their virtues. He enjoys the game wei chi and plays the violin.

**Grace:** Grace is a six year old Canadian girl who lives with her mother and father and little sister in China. Her relatives are all still in Canada but she writes them letters sharing news of school and her friends. She visits her Grandma and Grandpa in the summer. She is gentle, kind and always trusts her instinct. She enjoys art, ballet and visiting galleries and museums. She plays the piano and has a dog named ‘Bark’.



**Malaika:** Malaika is a six year old Nigerian girl who lives with her mother, father and sister in China. She is very compassionate and loves animals, playing African drums and dancing.



**Corbin:** Corbin is a six year old British boy who lives with his mother and father and two brothers in China. He has great determination and perseveres in all that he does. He loves playing soccer and the classical guitar.



**Maria:** Maria is a six year old Peruvian girl who lives with her mother and father in China. She enjoys cooking and baking interesting foods from around the world.



**Shawn:** Shawn is a six year old Australian boy who lives with his family in China. He is very joyful and his sense of humor delights every heart. He is fascinated by space and the solar system. He enjoys eating the food that Maria makes and brings to school!



**Roja:** Roja is a six year old Indian girl who lives with her mother and father and little sister in China. She loves math and going to the theatre.



**Samir:** Samir is a six year old Turkish boy who lives with his mother and father in China. He is physically disabled and sits in a wheel chair most of the time. He is passionate about protecting the environment and is an avid reader. He is a very kind hearted and sensitive boy.



**Yuki:** Yuki is a six year old Japanese girl who lives with her mother and father in China. She enjoys gardening, flower arranging and listening to classical music.



**Bark:** Bark belongs to Graces and is a very mischievous dog. Our characters practice their tolerance and creativity to keep him out of trouble.



### **A Virtues Growth Folder**

A folder can be provided for each child by the facilitator at the beginning of the year. It can be in a form of a simple paper or plastic folder where the pages are kept in an orderly fashion. It is recommended that the cover contain the title, 'My Virtues Growth Folder', the name of the child and an appropriate creative design. Its purpose is to provide a complete collection of the child's work from their character education class during the year as a representation of his/her work over this period. The contents would include the child's colored quotation sheets, art activity sheets, free sketches and other related activities the child has created. Photos of the child engaged in service projects may also be added. The folder can be sent home at the end of each term for parents' review and understanding and returned to school. Each folder would be used for one academic year and then be sent home for the family to enjoy.

### **Guidelines for conducting character education classes**

The aim of any character education class is to assist with the development of good character in children. This requires that a deep understanding of virtues be developed in the minds and hearts of the children such that they have an inner desire to learn and practice them in their lives.

In order to achieve this, the Facilitator needs to facilitate the lessons in such a way to touch the hearts of children with his/her loving and enthusiasm and help them reflect on the importance of developing our virtues. Consultation/reflection, clear explanation, encouragement, love and most important, leading by example, contribute greatly towards this goal.

The following are guidelines if you choose to use The Day by Day Learning Lesson plans in their entirety.

#### **Day1 Developing Understanding**

The aim of this lesson is to help children achieve a basic understanding of the virtue being taught. ...

To prepare, the facilitator reviews the Conversation Questions provided in the lesson plan and chooses the ones appropriate for his class. As well, he views the four pictures provided in the Visual Aid poster and reflects on how he will introduce each of the pictures to the children.

After greeting each child and singing a relevant song introducing the name of virtue. Then, the facilitator poses introductory conversation questions to help children reflect on the meaning of the virtue. He/she poses some scenarios through role-play and demonstrates how the virtue can be used to help the situation in the given scenario. For example, when teaching about friendliness, the teacher can do a role-play where a new

student may be sitting alone and feeling very lonely in the playground. The teacher can then ask the class what this child needs to feel happy and included. Then a volunteer from the class can play the role of another student who would show friendliness, approach to the new student and invite her to join the others to play. After the initial conversation and role play, the facilitator shows the visual aid posters to the children, taking time to allow each child to view all of the 4 pictures. She involves the children in explaining each of the four pictures and the meaning and application of the virtue practiced in each. By the end of the first session, the children have been introduced to the name, meaning and application of the virtue that will be studied for the next 9 days.

### **Day 2 Memorization of a Quotation**

In this lesson, the children are assisted through a song, to memorize a relevant inspiring quotation to help in the retention of the name and the concept of the virtue.

To prepare, the facilitator reviews the relevant virtue quotation in advance and memorizes it using the 'Virtues in Us' 19 Quotation Song CD. She can also use the suggested movements from DVD of Actions for Quotation Songs to accompany the quotations and help children in their memorization. The facilitator is encouraged to reflect on the meaning of the quotation and develop ways to help children understand and internalize its message.

During the class, the facilitator first teaches the words, meaning and movements of the quotation to children. Then, she plays the CD, and sings the quotation several times with the children. The actual memorization of the quotation will be achieved with repetition in the next several classes. Starting from lesson 4, the facilitator gives a copy of the quotation card to each child who has memorized the quotation once. The child colors the quotation sheet and keeps it in her folder or workbook.

### **Day 3 Playing a Cooperative Game:**

In this lesson, through games and fun activities, children come to personally experience the concept of the virtue and feel its impact.

To prepare, the facilitator reviews the game(s) included in the Facilitator Lesson Plan book for the virtue being taught and chooses the game most appropriate for his class. He then studies the description of the selected game more deeply to understand the objective of the game and its intended way to facilitate and conclude the game. The facilitator may choose many of these activities and games throughout the year.

After greetings, opening song, conversation questions and review of the quotation song, the main part of the lesson starts by introducing the chosen game to the children. This should be done in clear, simple language. If required, the facilitator can role-play the

game to demonstrate how it should be played. Once he ensures that all children are clear about the instructions, he invites the children to play the game, joyfully and peacefully. During the game, children may not always behave as expected. For example while grouping for a game, children might try to exclude a classmate from their group. In such a situation, the facilitator is encouraged to use this opportunity, as a teachable moment, to facilitate a discussion about what happened and ask the children about what virtue may be needed in this type of situation. In this way, the facilitator helps everyone in the class to learn and develop a deeper understanding of the virtue.

At the conclusion of each game, the teacher of character education takes the opportunity to consolidate the learning from the experience. He/she asks the children how they felt while playing the game and what they learned.

#### **Day 4 Reading from the ‘Virtues in Action’ Book**

Using beautiful illustrations and short texts, this lesson is a visual journey of virtues in action.

To prepare, the facilitator reviews the pictures and text in the ‘Virtues in Action’ book for the virtue being taught. He also familiarizes himself with the questions for consultation and reflection located at the end of each book. If possible, digitized pictures can be projected on the board/screen. If this is not possible, the teacher can personally walk to each row of children in an orderly manner to ensure that each child has had a chance to properly see the pictures.

After viewing all the pictures and reading the text, the facilitator shows the page with small pictures to the children and asks them to identify different pictures. For example, he asks: “Which picture shows a child practicing generosity by giving her friend the bigger piece of cake?” The facilitator then invites a child to identify the small picture of the children depicting the scenario he described. He then continues to describe the different scenarios shown on the page and asks children to identify the respective picture.

After identifying all the small pictures, the facilitator asks the ‘Questions for Reflection and Consultation’ provided at the back of the book and encourages the children to answer them by expressing their thoughts and ideas individually or in small groups. While deepening children’s understanding of each virtue, this exercise also helps children develop communication and consultation skills, which will help them in their future service to society.

#### **Day 5 Drama or Role Play:**

Drama or role-play is a very effective way for children to understand and experience how virtues can be used in our daily lives. Involvement in role-plays also helps children retain

the experience of the virtuous act in their memory. Later, when they are faced with the same or similar situation, they can more confidently choose the right course of action. It is, therefore, important that the teacher uses this lesson to involve as many students as possible in dramatization activity of different scenarios depicting a virtue that is needed or that is being studied.

In large classrooms, in order to involve more students, the teacher can break the class into smaller groups. Each group can create its own drama and perform for the whole classroom. Alternatively, groups can perform for each other to save time.

The teacher of character education can create her own drama script based on an appropriate story. Care should be taken to ensure that the story to be dramatized is fully in harmony with the virtue and relevant to the life of students. For example, in order to depict courage, it would be more appropriate to choose a story about having the courage to tell the truth rather than having the courage to go to war with the enemy. The latter would not be in harmony with what is taught about peacefulness and is not relevant to children's everyday life. To assist facilitators, we are providing guidance suited for teaching drama to young children below.

To consolidate the learning, during or at the end of this lesson, the teacher can take a few minutes to ask the students different ways the virtue was shown through the role-plays.

While nurturing children's performance talent, we should help them use imagination and creativity as much as possible so that acting becomes a fun and happy activity. We can set about from the following aspects, from simple to complex, part to whole, from gentle and fine movement to big body movement, paying attention to their facial expression and their understanding on the words and characters during acting and trying as much as possible to encourage them.

### **Day 6 Song:**

In this lesson, a specially written or selected song that carries the message of the virtue is taught to children to create a joyful atmosphere and help in the long term retention of the taught concepts.

To prepare, the facilitator would need to listen to the song herself and try to memorize the lyrics. The lyrics of the song for each virtue can be found in the Facilitator Lesson Plan, and on The Day by Day Learning website. If desired, she can also develop appropriate actions to accompany the song. If children are at a reading age, she can also write the lyrics on the board or project them on the screen to facilitate their memorization.

After the opening routine, the facilitator can teach the song using the Virtues in Us Song CD (for pre-school or school age as appropriate). The facilitator explains the concept of

each song and strives to create an atmosphere of joyfulness in the class when teaching and practicing the song. While the song is introduced in this lesson, the actual memorization of the song will be achieved with repetition in the next several sessions

### **Day 7 Quiz Game:**

In this game, reflection questions are presented to the children in a game. The objective is to assist children in understanding the application of the virtue in their own lives through presentation of possible real life scenarios. By playing this game, children also develop their courage and eloquent speech to explain their answers to the quiz questions in front of the class. The quiz activity should NOT be conducted as a competitive exercise to test the knowledge of children, but rather as a fun and joyful activity where each student is encouraged to reflect and contribute his/her understanding. The quiz cards can be found on The Day by Day Learning website under 'Teaching Resources' and is downloadable.

For each virtue, the facilitator cuts out the individual small quiz cards from the Quiz Card sheet provided. The set of small cards are kept together and placed with other relevant teaching aids for the virtue. It is recommended that these cards be laminated for durability. Some of the cards have a star on them. The questions on these cards are suitable for children younger than 4 years of age. For other ages above 4, the whole set can be used.

The quiz game can be played with any number of children up to the number of small quiz card. If needed, the teacher can create additional cards using the blank square areas provided on the big quiz card. For small groups, the facilitator lays the cards face down on a table such that they are accessible by all students in the group. For larger classes, the teacher can use small cards or copy the questions on bigger cards and post them on the board using tape or magnetic buttons as appropriate. Before starting to play, the facilitator clearly explains the game and any rules she might have for keeping the class orderly

#### **Game Description:**

- Lay the cards face down on a table or post them on the board in an attractive design.
- Invite a child to pick one of the displayed cards. Four year old children are invited to pick only those cards which are marked with a star at the back while older children are free to select any of the cards on the table.
- The child then reads the question aloud for the class. For kindergarten age children, the teacher helps to read the card if the child is too young to read.
- The child tries to answer the question according to his/her understanding of the virtue.
- If the answer is correct, the teacher encourages the child and acknowledges his effort. Please note that there can be many correct answers to a question, not just one. The facilitator keeps an open mind and encourages the child in expressing and expanding her own opinion to the class.

- If the child's answer is clearly not correct, the facilitator avoids giving discouraging responses such as "You are wrong!", "This is not a correct answer!", or "You have not understood the virtue." The facilitator also refrains from asking the class "Who can give us the correct answer?" This type of response discourages the child from sharing his understanding with others. Rather, in such cases, the teacher/facilitator kindly guides the child by asking additional relevant questions so to assist him to clarify his understanding and to come up with an appropriate answer of his own for the question.

### **Day 8 Art Activity**

Children participate in a creative activity that includes a simple art project or workbook activity designed to reinforce the theme of the lesson or the quotation that they have memorized.

To prepare, the facilitator familiarizes himself with the activity and ensures beforehand that all the materials listed in lesson 8's lesson plan table is prepared in enough quantity for the class.

In the class, the facilitator explains clearly the art activity and its purpose. If required, she takes time to demonstrate the activity to help the children's understanding, but not in a way to limit their creativity. The facilitator also clearly states the time allotted for the activity and encourages those who finish first to help others who might need their help.

For very young children, the children are invited to color a photocopy of the visual aid/coloring sheet. Alternatively, the facilitator can assist the younger children to do the provided art activity and through this interaction with each child reinforce the intended aim of the art activity.

The facilitator strengthens and supports the theme of the virtue while the children are doing the art activity. For example, while children are making a courtesy crown, the facilitator discusses with the children about different ways one can show courtesy and how this adorns our character in the same way a crown adorns a king's head.

The children's artwork could be displayed on the classroom or hallway walls for all children and parents to see and enjoy. In this case, ALL the art work should get an opportunity to be displayed. If it is not possible to display all of them at the same time, perhaps the class can be broken into smaller groups and the work of each group be displayed 2-3 days each. In this way, every child feels appreciated and encouraged to continue to grow and develop his creativity.

## **Day 9 Free Sketching Activity**

This activity assists the child to reflect on his learning about the virtue and create a drawing that describes her own understanding of the virtue.

To prepare, the facilitator photocopies the drawing frame provided in the ‘Teaching Resource’ section of The Day by Day Learning website and labels it for each child in the class. During the class, each child receives a drawing frame with his/her name on it and is asked to draw his understanding of the virtue. The facilitator gives enough time for the children to think about what they are going to draw by reflecting on previous lessons, stories or role-plays. Once they have completed their drawing, children are asked to place their free sketches in their own ‘My Virtues Growth Book’ folder to be retrieved in the next session (lesson 10). This creative activity is very effective in consolidating both the concept and application of the virtue in the child’s mind and soul.

It is important that EVERY child’s drawing is appreciated, not only the few “best” ones. The teacher makes an effort to encourage each child by finding something good about his artwork, and acknowledges it. By appreciating all art work and not ranking the children’s creative works, the facilitator models respect for all children. If a child in the class starts to compare and rank the drawings, the facilitator gently and kindly reminds him that everyone is unique and everyone’s art is beautiful in different ways. She can then invite the children to find beautiful parts of each drawing together.

## **Day 10 Consolidation of Learning**

The aim of the activities in this session is to review and consolidate the main concepts and application of the virtue.

To prepare, the facilitator chooses special review questions to ask which develops deeper understanding in the children’s mind about the virtue. She also chooses a story to retell which was enjoyed by the children and especially touched their hearts.

You may also wish to invite the children to describe their free sketches from the 9<sup>th</sup> lesson to the class. For this activity, the facilitator first prepares the children by helping them understand the appropriate attitude and behavior towards a person who is speaking. She talks to the children about respect, peacefulness and courtesy and invites the children to practice these virtues by remaining silent and attentive to the child who is explaining his drawing.

Children retrieve their free sketches from the previous day and take turns explaining to the group how they have portrayed the virtue in their drawing. This activity is also designed to assist children to develop language and public speaking skills.

While each is presenting, the facilitator models an attitude of respect and courtesy during the session and refrains from interrupting the child or doing other things. After the child has finished describing his drawing, the teacher can highlight the depicted action or idea if appropriate or simply praise the child's creativity and encourage him. As much as possible, all the children in the class are given equal opportunity to present their drawing to the class.

The facilitator can close the session by, reviewing briefly the key concepts and telling the selected story.

### **Stories**

Day by Day Learning offers at least 10 written or adapted stories for each of the 19 selected virtues. The appropriate age for each story has been indicated in the stories table.

The aim of the stories is to touch the hearts of children and motivate them to practice virtues in their own lives. Great care has been taken to ensure that the wording, setting, concept and message of each story are appropriate and meaningful. It is important that the stories are told with feeling, enthusiasm and animation.

In order to prepare, the facilitator needs to read the story several times in advance and become familiar with the main events, characters and the message of the story so that he can deliver it without reading and with the appropriate feeling. He also prepares several key questions to ask at the end of the story to help children in comprehending the main message and how it relates to the theme of the virtue being studied.

While telling the story, he makes eye contact with children, uses appropriate gestures, body movement and necessary inflection in his voice to attract and maintain the attention of children in his class. If the story is about one of the 10 'Friends from Around the World' characters, the teacher holds the relevant character in his hand and moves it according to the script of the story. If possible, he also uses other tangible items to help children's retention and creative visualization of the story. For example, if the story is about a boy who planted a seed, it is helpful to use a real seed or a clay flower pot while telling the story. After the story is told, the facilitator may want to ask comprehension questions he has prepared. If a child's answer is not correct, the facilitator does not move to ask the same question from another child. Rather he asks additional questions or provides clues to help the child in answering the question.

For older children (6-8), the facilitator can choose questions to help children's critical thinking. For example "What would have happened if... ", "Did the main character have other choices in the way he acted?" or "Could the story end in a different way", etc.

Stories are one of the most effective ways of learning about a concept for all ages especially 4-8 year olds. They nurture the child's creative imagination and create an atmosphere of joy and mystery. As such, the facilitator is encouraged to use this great tool at the end of each of the 10 lessons to help translate the virtue from the realm of concept to the very practical and real realm of action and behavior.

## **Cultivating a Culture of Good Character in Schools and Kindergartens**

### **Sharing and Studying Together**

Facilitators of character education from each kindergarten or school have the valuable opportunity and the privilege of initiating positive change in their school/kindergarten. With the knowledge, insights and skills they have gained from learning and practicing, these facilitators can initiate the creation and cultivation of a new culture at their school/kindergarten at all levels. They can take steps to prepare themselves and their classroom environment to reflect beauty and the nobility of man. Parallel to this preparation, they also endeavor to create awareness among their school leadership and staff. To achieve the latter objective, the facilitators reflect on the knowledge and insights gained from their learning and select key ideas and concepts to share with others at their school. They can arrange study sessions with their colleagues and share with them their understanding and feelings about the character education of children as well as some of the main concepts discussed in their study sessions. With enough preparation and an attitude of humility, love and enthusiasm, the facilitator can attract others to also participate in this valuable endeavor.

### **Creating a Virtues Conscious School Environment**

The kindergarten/school's physical environment needs to be a manifestation of care, beauty, cleanliness and orderliness. Clear standards of orderliness and cleanliness need to be set by school leaders for children, teachers, staff and cleaners which are consistently enforced. Pictures, accessories and flowers can also be used to create beauty in the environment. If pictures or posters are used to create a joyful atmosphere, great care is required to select only those graphics for wall decoration that are in keeping with the standards of the virtues. Pictures of all types of violence and inappropriate language even in the form of funny cartoons should be avoided.

### **Virtues Based Communication at School**

One of the essential ways of cultivating a culture of virtues at a school is to consciously allow virtue to penetrate the school's communication style and language and become the standard for all interactions among children and adults. The following are some helpful suggestions for all adults at school to achieve this:

Communication between teachers and children:

- Be loving and use language that is kind and respectful in all communications with children

- Establish the habit in yourself to use opportunities to acknowledge good character in children
- For correction and instruction, establish the habit of calling the child to the desired virtue. Avoid labeling and shaming in all verbal communications.
- Appreciate the differences in children’s capacity and avoid comparing the children and using competitive language. Be alert not to use competitive phrases such as “Let’s see who is the best...”, “Who has got the highest score in ...?”, “...is better than...”, “Who do you think is better...?”, etc.
- Promote cooperation and unity in all academic and fun activities

Model an attitude of learning. As children experience difficulties, help them look for the opportunity to grow. Invite them to think about the virtues they have the opportunity to develop through the experience.

Establish clear virtues based boundaries for the school and clearly communicate them to the children. Be firm and consistent, but communicate with gentleness and respect while applying consequences.

- Listen attentively, with compassion and detachment while accompanying children in their process of understanding and growth.

### **Communication Among the Adults**

The behavior and language of adults at the school are powerful examples for the children. Therefore, the main principles outlined above for adult to child communication also apply to adult to adult communication at the school.

Everyone thrives in an environment where they are respectfully assisted to develop their potential without being shamed and put down. The use of positive, kind and gentle language of virtues for communication among staff creates an atmosphere of trust, respect and unity. In such an environment, when problems arise and mistakes happen, the staff is encouraged to consult about the problem. The objective of the consultation would not be to find and punish ‘the offender’. Rather, to discover the opportunity, to learn and to find ways to prevent problems in the future

### **Teacher – Parent Communication**

The language used by teachers to talk about children to their parents deeply affects the parent’s perception of their child and their own way of communicating with children. It

is therefore, important that while communicating with parents, the teacher provides a view of the whole child to the parents not only her academic strengths and weaknesses. Along with her assessment of child's academic achievements, the teacher also acknowledges the child's virtues. However, this acknowledgement should not take the form of a label, e.g. "...is a very responsible boy." or "She has been a good girl in class". Instead the teacher can relate specific examples of how the child has practiced good character and any development she has noticed in the child. In formal parent-teacher meetings, the teacher can use the "positivity sandwich" to tactfully communicate areas of development for the child. If in these meetings, the parents use labels to describe some areas of achievement or development for their child, the teacher gently explains to the parents that their child is continuing to develop and labeling would not help his healthy growth.

The method of positive sandwich: first of all, children's development and progress in all aspects are approved of, which is followed by the virtues the child needs to work on and develop, and the final part is appreciation. For instance: I noticed that (Mike) loves reading; he is willing to share his understanding with classmates during breaks and his classmates like him; he loves sports and always works with the teacher in P.E. classes, he's always filled with energy and enthusiasm and can bring energy to the whole class; I also noticed that he feels responsible for protecting the environment and promotes garbage sorting and waste recycling in the class. Of course, there is room for further growth and improvement for everyone, so is Mike. I believe that he will make greater progress with more effort and help. I noticed that there is always higher chance of error towards the end in his homework, and handwriting becomes hasty and careless. I talked to him and he said that there is never enough time at the end and he becomes anxious. I believe that, if managing his time properly, he can do better. Please help him make a timetable at home so that he learns to manage time properly and pursue excellence and finish his homework carefully and neatly. Thank you for your cooperation and support, let's keep in touch and watch him make progress and grow together.

Gradually through these communications and other means of family education parents will also adopt a kind language when communicating with their children and appreciate the benefits of it.

Please note that sincerity, honesty and kindness is of the utmost importance when communicating with parents.

## Involving the Family

The character education of children is only fully effective if the child's school and family are united in this effort. It is, therefore, necessary that the teacher of character education plans and implements ways to raise awareness of the virtues in the families and involves them in the process developing good character in their child. Some suggestions for the Facilitator to achieve this goal are listed below:

- At the beginning of the year the character education facilitator can send a letter to all parents containing:
  - a) A simple but effective explanation of the importance of character education,
  - b) News that the kindergarten will be soon implementing a character education program, and
  - c) A brief description of the contents of the curriculum they will be using.
- Create a virtues bulletin board at the school entrance or a location where the parents/grandparents wait to pick up the children. This bulletin board will display attractive posters, photos from service projects, articles, pictures or drawings to inform the parents about the virtue of the week and enthuse them about their children's character education. It can also have a section containing brochures, virtue vouchers and other useful materials for parents to take home.
- Offer character education learning for parents, grandparents and care givers. At these informal sessions, the character education facilitator can introduce and study material from the key principals outlined at the beginning of this document or other relevant material.
- Start parent-teacher meetings by reviewing the child's character development before his/her academic achievements.
- Involve parents in identifying or creating projects for children to serve the society. These can be as simple as a cleanup project to remove garbage in the school yard and the streets close by, visiting orphanages or senior homes and singing or performing for them, raising funds for charity, helping other children learn about the virtues, saving/protecting the environment, etc. While serving together, parents come to appreciate and develop virtues in their children and themselves. They also learn more about each other through a worthy activity resulting in increased family unity.

It is hoped that with humility, unity and earnest effort, your character education initiative will take deep roots and flourish in your home, school and community.

We wish you all the very best.

Happy Learning from all of us at  
Day by Day Learning

Heartfelt gratitude to the many people who have contributed in different ways to Day by Day Learning, Virtues in Action books and 'Virtues in Us' music, CDs.

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