



# Alabama 4-H Leading With Character

## 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LESSON PLAN

Character Trait	Lesson #	Activity	Assessment	Home Activity
Introduction to Character	Lesson 1	The teacher writes on the board, “Do you act differently in a crowd than you do alone? She/He directs students to the question and solicits discussion. The teacher then writes the six character pillars: respect, responsibility, fairness, trustworthiness, caring, and citizenship. She/He points out that these traits are pillars of good character. The teacher leads the class into a discussion of how these behaviors are often compromised as a result of peer pressure, situation, economics etc. A focus is directed toward uncomfortable feelings that result from failure to uphold good character.	The teacher states: “Pillars are structural components that hold up buildings.” Students explain in a written paragraph using correct English mechanics “how character pillars hold up a person.” Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students relate to parents/guardians the class discussion focusing on character. Together they discuss how building good character is important to the family. They outline action steps to develop better character among family members.
Caring/ Trustworthiness	Lesson 2	The teacher writes the headings from the chart below on the board and asks students to draw the chart on paper. Students work in pairs to complete. Dictionaries and thesauruses should be available for clarity of definitions. Each group must think of at least five actions or behaviors for each heading. The groups then participate in a “share-a-thon,” putting their answers under the headings on the board. Comments are encouraged for each behavior/action listed.	The students construct a Venn Diagram to highlight the actions/behaviors that depict BOTH “caring” and “trustworthiness.” Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students share their diagrams and charts with parents/or guardians. Together they discuss the traits, which would be considered “caring” or “trustworthy.” Students ask the parents/guardians to add one action/behavior for each that refers to home and the workplace.





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Caring: Character Introduction	Lesson 3	The teacher writes the title “What the World Would be Like Without Caring” on the board. She/He then writes the topics environment, education, and national leadership as column headings. The students are divided into three groups. Each group is asked to address one of the topics and describe how the world would be if no one cared about the chosen topic. Each group shares their responses orally with the rest of the class.	Students choose the topic that would most adversely affect the world if no one cared about it. Students write at least a 10-sentence paragraph on their topic, presenting an argument to support the topic. Students share their paragraphs with the class. Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students share with their parents/guardians the paragraphs they wrote and discuss why they think it is important for everyone to help make the world a more caring place.
Trustworthiness: Character Introduction	Lesson 4	The teacher writes the sentence: “Trustworthiness means being trusted to be HONEST even when it costs more than you are willing to pay.” on the chalkboard. The teacher leads a brainstorming session to elicit some examples that would explain the statement. Students are then directed to write a two-paragraph composition on “What would be the best way to show that I am worthy of trust?” Students cite examples in the narratives.	The students share their papers with a partner for peer editing, checking for clarity, logical sequencing, supporting details, e	The students ask their parents/guardians to write down situations at home or at work that show ways of earning trust. They discuss the situations emphasizing the importance of trust at home and at work.
Respect: Fairness	Lesson 5	The class is divided into two groups. The teacher directs the groups to create a 30-second skit depicting “Playing by the Rules at School.” The other group will do the same demonstrating “NOT Playing by the Rules at School.” Students are encouraged to use experiences centered on games, lunch line, concessions stand, etc.	Students write a 7-sentence to 10-sentence paragraph analyzing the message of the skits. Students are encouraged to focus on feelings and motivation factors when playing fairly vs. unfairly. The students share their thoughts with the rest of the class. Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their classroom experiences with their parents/guardians. They will ask their parents/guardians for an example of “playing by the rules” or “NOT playing by the rules” involving a work or community issue. They will then draw a conclusion on the importance of fairness.





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Respect: Courtesy	Lesson 6	The teacher divides the class into two groups. Each group will be a part of the “Top Ten Ways to Show Courtesy at School” game. Each group will describe ways to show courtesy at school. They take turns putting their responses on the board. The group with the most responses in three minutes WINS.	Students will use their “game” knowledge to write an eight-sentence to ten-sentence paragraph explaining how they personally exhibit courtesy toward their peers at school. They use peer editing to finalize their paragraphs and then share them with the rest of the class. Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students will discuss their games and paragraphs with their parents/guardians. They will ask their parents/guardians to give examples of how they personally exhibit courtesy in daily life and at the workplace.
Respect: Consideration	Lesson 7	The teacher writes the following words on the chalkboard – “Consideration = Kindness.” The class is divided into four groups. Each group will create a skit, which illustrates standing in a long line in the rain buying football tickets. Two groups will exhibit kindness and consideration while the other two exhibit negative behaviors. Students, when writing their skits, may use comedy and exaggerations to make their points.	Students perform their skits for the class. When all skits are completed, the students summarize the main ideas into a paragraph. Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students discuss their skits with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to give examples of situations when kindness and consideration were used and when not used. Discussions should follow about the importance of consideration at home, in the community, and at work.





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Respect: Understanding	Lesson 8	The teacher defines the word “understanding” in terms of “having knowledge of.” In a class discussion, students should analyze the ways social conflict can be peacefully resolved using understanding. The teacher records students’ responses on a chart or chalkboard.	The students write a short letter to the state governor expounding on the necessity of “understanding” as part of state government activities. Correct English mechanics, letterform, and sentence structure are emphasized. Students share the letters with a partner for peer editing. Teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students and parents/guardians discuss how understanding can peacefully resolve many home/family conflicts and plan a way to have discussions on family issues in an understanding way.
Responsibility: Reliability	Lesson 9	<p>The teacher writes the words “<i>responsibility</i>” and “<i>reliability</i>” on the board. He/she asks the students to work in pairs to complete the following chart:</p> <p>Times when I was reliable Consequences of my actions  (7-9 responses)</p> <p>Times when I was Unreliable Consequences of my actions  (7-9 responses)</p> <p>The students write a 7-sentence to 9-sentence paragraph summarizing the data and expressing their opinions about reliability.</p>	The students share their charts with the rest of the class while the teacher completes a summary chart on the board recording the students’ data. The teacher highlights some of the student responses, and then students summarize important reasons for being <i>reliable</i> . The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students discuss their charts with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to tell them of one example for each part of their chart, which reflects something that involved a home or job situation. The students and parents/guardians discuss the similarities between their responses.





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Responsibility: Accountability	Lesson 10	The teacher writes, “American citizens are endowed with certain rights.” The class determines 3 to 7 rights granted to them. The teacher leads a discussion of responsibilities related to rights (Children have the right to be educated. Children must accept responsibility for their education by obeying policies and regulations of the school system, preparing for class, studying, etc.)	The students write a 5- to 7-sentence paragraph responding positively or negatively to the following statement: “All rights bear responsibilities.” Students must support their positions. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students discuss their paragraphs with parents/guardians. The students ask their parents/guardians to discuss their views on the rights of American citizens and how they are held accountable for those Constitutional rights.
Responsibility: Self-Control	Lesson 11	The teacher writes the following words “ <i>self-control</i> ” and “ <i>budgets</i> .” The students, working in groups of four, are given the following instructions: 1. Brainstorm about the factors one must weigh in developing a personal budget. 2. Formulate and compose a list of 5 things that you want to do this weekend and the approximate cost of each. 3. Prioritize the items according to their importance to you. 4. Discuss the <i>self-control</i> that will be required to stick to your proposed budgetary plans.	After discussing the budgets orally, students legibly write a 5-sentence paragraph on the role of <i>self-control</i> in making their budgetary decisions. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students discuss their budgets with their parents/guardians. The students ask their parents/guardians to share 2 instances when <i>self-control</i> was needed to stick with budget plans at home.
Responsibility: Dignity	Lesson 12	The teacher writes the word “ <i>dignity</i> ” on the board and asks students to volunteer their understanding of the word. When a definition is clear to the students, he/she divides the class into four groups. Two of the groups must create scenarios for pantomime that show <i>dignified</i> behavior while the other two groups create scenarios for pantomime that show <i>undignified</i> behavior.	The students will present their pantomimes to the rest of the class. The teacher instructs the students to legibly write a 7-sentence to 9-sentence paragraph comparing and contrasting the two behaviors portrayed in the pantomimes. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students discuss their pantomimes with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to compare <i>dignified</i> behavior to <i>undignified</i> behavior displayed at work, in the community or in other situations.





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Caring: Kindness	Lesson 13	The teacher writes the word “ <i>kindness</i> ” on the board. The teacher divides the class in 4 groups and instructs the students to list “ <i>acts of kindness</i> ” that they have read about or experienced. The teacher directs the groups to prioritize their lists and write a short poem using the top prioritized “ <i>act of kindness</i> ” as the theme.	The students read their poems of “ <i>acts of kindness</i> ” for the rest of the class. The students write a 5-sentence to 7-sentence paragraph expressing their opinions about the effects of <i>acts of kindness</i> on others. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students discuss “ <i>acts of kindness</i> ” with their parents/guardians. The students ask their parents/guardians to give examples of “ <i>acts of kindness</i> ” that they have experienced at work, in the community or in other situations.
Caring: Empathy	Lesson 14	The teacher writes the word “ <i>empathy</i> ” on the board. He/she asks the students to volunteer their understanding of the word. With teacher guidance, a definition is established. When the definition is understood, the teacher instructs the students to write a 2-paragraph story using the following situation as the basis for understanding. “You saw an old woman with two small children looking for food in a trash dumpster.” The teacher guides the students toward expressing their feelings, finding something positive about the situation, possible outcomes, etc. The teacher reminds the students to use correct English mechanics.	The students read their stories and discuss <i>empathy</i> . The teacher leads a discussion about <i>empathy</i> and asks students for other situations where <i>empathy</i> should be exhibited. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their paragraphs with their parents/guardians. The students ask their parents/guardians to share their feelings about showing <i>empathy</i> for others in certain situations.
Caring: Sharing	Lesson 15	The teacher writes the word “ <i>sharing</i> ” on the board and asks students to volunteer their understanding of the word. With teacher guidance, a definition is established. The teacher instructs the students to write a 2-paragraph story about the benefits of <i>sharing</i> using the following theme: “ <i>Sharing is fair.</i> ” Students are reminded to use correct English mechanics and to write legibly.	The students share their stories with the rest of the class. The teacher leads a discussion of fairness in <i>sharing</i> and how it affects others. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share with their parents/guardians their stories explaining the importance of <i>sharing</i> . The students and parents/guardians make a list of how they can “ <i>share</i> ” more at home and in the community.





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Caring: Compassion	Lesson 16	The teacher writes the word “ <i>compassion</i> ” on the board and asks students to volunteer their understanding of the word. With teacher guidance, a definition is established. The teacher directs the students to write a 2-paragraph letter to “a friend who is sad because his/her mother is sick and is in the hospital.” The teacher reminds students to be <i>compassionate</i> and caring, as well as to use correct letter format and English mechanics.	The students share their letters and give brief explanations of the <i>compassion</i> that their letters expressed. The teacher leads a discussion of why it is important to show <i>compassion</i> for others and why it is important in their daily lives. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their paragraphs with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to relate times when their parents/guardians showed or received <i>compassion</i> at work or in other circumstances.
Trustworthiness: Honesty	Lesson 17	The teacher writes the following chart on the board.  Honest Actions Dishonest Actions  He/she instructs the class to list actions in each category that could affect them positively. The class is then divided into two teams. Each team will select a category and defend its position. The class orally analyzes each group’s responses.	Based on the activity, students support the statement “Honesty is the best policy” in a 5-sentence to 7-sentence paragraph. The teacher reminds the students to write legibly using correct English mechanics. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their paragraphs with their parents/guardians. The students ask parents/guardians to tell about the effects of a dishonest act that they have experienced. They further discuss how honesty affects their families.
Trustworthiness: Integrity	Lesson 18	The teacher asks the class to reflect on a recent political election. He/she elicits several names of various leaders and writes the names on the board. The students are instructed to complete the following chart: Names of leader Position held Evidence of integrity	Students are divided into groups and instructed to choose a leader from the list who best exemplifies integrity. A spokesperson from each group will present the choice and justify it to the class. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students discuss their choices of leaders with their parents/guardians. The students ask parents/guardians to tell about what integrity means to them and how it affects them at work. They further discuss how <i>integrity</i> affects their families and their daily lives.





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Trustworthiness: Integrity	Lesson 19	The teacher writes the following sentence on the chalkboard: “Some government officials do not possess integrity.” The teacher divides the class into groups of 3 to 5 and presents the following issue for group discussion: How has the lack of integrity shaped public perception of government employees over the last decade?” Students are directed to discuss and write two examples of corruption in government and then state the effect that this has had on their perceptions.	The students present their examples to the rest of the class. The teacher summarizes using the student responses. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students ask their parents/guardians to give them an example of a politician who was convicted of crimes while in office and to discuss how it made them feel as voters.
Trustworthiness: Dependability	Lesson 20	The teacher writes the following sentence on the chalkboard: “No one is an island. We all depend on each other.” The students are divided into groups of 3 to 5 and directed to compose a flowchart to accurately depict how we are dependent on each other in our daily lives.	The students share their charts with the rest of the class. They write a 3-sentence to 5-sentence paragraph highlighting their favorite-charted scenario. The teacher collects the papers and reviews student work. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students share their charts with parents/or guardians. Together they create a chart showing dependability at home.
Trustworthiness: Loyalty	Lesson 21	The teacher writes the word “loyalty” on the board. She/he tells the class that sometimes loyalty and honesty conflict. The teacher gives the following scenario: Your best friend is planning to cheat on a test that he/she did not study for. You know about this. Working in pairs, the students write a letter to “Dear Abby” explaining the situation, their feelings about the situation and what they plan to do about the situation.	Students share their letters with the class. The teacher creates a chart on the board, listing student actions and feelings for each solution discussed. The teacher leads the class in a discussion of the final chart. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share the scenario with their parents/guardians. They solicit responses from their parents/guardians on solutions to similar problems at work or at home.





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Fairness: Patience	Lesson 22	The teacher writes the word “patience” on the chalkboard. The class is divided into two groups. Group One is directed to design a scenario where a <b>lack of patience</b> is exhibited and what happened as a result. While Group One is doing this task, Group Two writes a 3-sentence to 5-sentence explanation of “patience”.	Students share their explanations with the rest of the class and discuss the scenarios previously presented. Students write a brief summary of the importance of patience. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	Students ask their parents/guardians to discuss with them a time when they used patience to solve a crisis or problem at work or at home.
Fairness: Justice	Lesson 23	The teacher writes the words “justice/fairness” on the chalkboard. She/he asks the students to think of a time when they were involved in a situation where they felt they or someone they knew were treated in an unfair way. The students are directed to write a short paragraph explaining the situation and how the perception of unfair treatment made them feel as an observer.	The students read their paragraphs to the rest of the class. The teacher leads a discussion concerning justice and fairness in daily school life. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students ask their parents/guardians to give them an example of a time at work or in daily life situations when they felt they were treated in an unfair way and if an attempt was made to correct the matter.
Fairness: Equality	Lesson 24	The teacher writes the following sentence on the chalkboard: “Social equality means having the same political, social and economic rights.” The teacher divides the class into three groups. Each group is assigned one of the categories in the chart below. Each group must list examples of equality in its respective category. Political Social Economic	Students present their section of the chart to the rest of the class while the teacher compiles a master chart on the chalkboard, incorporating all of the student’s responses. The teacher leads the class in a discussion of the final chart. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students ask their parents/guardians to give them examples of equality at home or at work.





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Fairness: Fair Play	Lesson 25	The teacher writes the words “fair play” on the board. The teacher divides the class into groups of four. One half of the groups writes and performs a 20-second pantomime to the following scenario: You were on a winning team that cheated to win. How did it make you feel? The other half of the groups writes and performs a 20-second pantomime to the following scenario: You were on the losing team and thought that the other team may have cheated. How did it make you feel?	Students perform their pantomimes for the class. Following the performances, each student writes a 4- to 6-sentence paragraph commenting on the performances and the outcomes of fair play. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share the scenarios with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to relate similar experiences that happen on the job or in the community.
Citizenship: Cooperation	Lesson 26	The teacher writes the word “cooperation” on the board. The teacher explains that “cooperation” means to work together for common purposes. The class is divided into two groups. The students are given the following scenario: The park must be cleaned up before the festival. One group will list and explain ways that cooperation can assist with the project. The other group will list ways that not cooperating can hinder the project.	Students will share their views with the rest of the class. The students will write a paragraph that compares and contrasts the two viewpoints presented. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share the scenarios with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to relate similar experiences that happen on the job or in the community.
Citizenship: Volunteering	Lesson 27	The teacher writes the word “volunteering” on the board. The teacher explains that “volunteering,” means to give or offer help. The teacher informs the students of a job or problem in the classroom or school and asks for volunteers to assist with the problem. The students are instructed to design a plan or schedule of how or when the students will work.	Students will share their plans with the rest of the class. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their ideas with their parents/guardians on volunteering. They ask their parents/guardians to design a similar plan of volunteering for the whole family.
Citizenship: Obeying Laws	Lesson 28	The teacher writes the words “obeying laws” on the board. The teacher explains that “obeying laws” is important to everyone. She/he explains to the students that, as good citizens, it is every person’s duty to follow the law. The students are instructed to compose a story about how the earth would be in the year 2010 if the people of the land broke the law about destroying endangered animals.	Students will share their stories and discuss different possibilities with the rest of the class. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their stories with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to give them a similar scenario involving the home.





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<p>Citizenship: Patriotism</p>	<p>Lesson 29</p>	<p>The teacher writes the word “patriotism” on the board. The teacher explains that “patriotism” means the love of and devotion to one’s country. The students are given this statement: “I pledge allegiance to the flag...” and instructed to write a 5-sentence to 8-sentence paragraph explaining this statement and what the pledge means to them.</p>	<p>Students will share their paragraphs with the rest of the class. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.</p>	<p>The students share their paragraphs with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to explain what the Pledge of Allegiance means to them.</p>
<p>Citizenship: Sharing</p>	<p>Lesson 30</p>	<p>The teacher writes the word “sharing” on the board. The teacher explains that “sharing,” means to divide and distribute. The teacher divides the class into three groups. The groups are named: <b>Home, School, and Community</b>. The students are instructed to draw a scene centered on sharing at home, at school, and/or in the community according to their group title. If time permits, students can make their scene come alive through the presentation of a skit.</p>	<p>Students will exhibit their scenes (or perform their skits for the rest of the class). Each student writes a short paragraph explaining his/her favorite scene (or skit) and why it was the best example of sharing. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.</p>	<p>The students share their skits with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians if they are doing their “fair share” in the home, on the job or in the community.</p>
<p>Decision Making: Stakeholder</p>	<p>Lesson 31</p>	<p>The teacher writes the word “stakeholder” on the board. The teacher explains that “stakeholder” means to have a share or an interest in something. The teacher divides the class into small groups. She/he asks the groups to consider the following scenario: A big subdivision and shopping mall are being proposed for the swampy area leading into the town. The students are directed to decide who the stakeholders are and what their probable agendas are using the following chart (the teacher writes the headings on the board): Stakeholders Probable Agenda</p>	<p>Students will share their charts with the rest of the class. The teacher leads a discussion. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.</p>	<p>The students share their charts with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to explain how stakeholders affect the decision of their company or employers.</p>





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Decision Making: Self-Control	Lesson 32	The teacher writes the word “self-control” on the board. The teacher divides the class into two groups. One group is instructed to compose and perform a scenario where self-control was exhibited. The other group composes and performs a scenario where self-control was NOT shown or demonstrated. Each skit should not last longer than 20 seconds.	Students will perform their skits for the rest of the class. Each student writes a 3-sentence to 5-sentence paragraph summarizing the skits that he or she thought best portrayed the best way to handle a situation by maintaining self-control. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their class activity with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to relate a similar experience that happened at work or in the community.
Decision Making: Decisions	Lesson 33	The teacher writes the word “decision” on the board. The teacher divides the class into groups of 3 to 5. Each group will explain the decision-making process, using a creative form of choice (song, rap, poem, picture, skit). In their explanation, they must show a good decision and a bad decision. They have only 30 seconds to explain and/or demonstrate their decision-making process.	Students will perform for the rest of the class. Each student writes a 3-sentence to 5-sentence paragraph explaining which form of creative expression he or she felt explained the best way to make decisions. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their class activity with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians for examples of how they arrive at decisions they must make at work or at home.
Decision Making: Consequences	Lesson 34	The teacher writes the word “consequence” on the board and discusses its meaning with the class. The teacher divides the class into groups of 3 to 5 students. Each group will demonstrate the appropriate consequences of a broken rule (of its choice.)	Students will perform for the rest of the class. Each student writes a 3-sentence to 5-sentence paragraph describing his/her favorite scene and discusses the consequences. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their class activity with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to offer a critique of the consequences imposed for the rules/laws that were broken.





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Celebration	Lesson 35	The teacher writes the words “CHARACTER COUNTS! <sup>SM</sup> ” on the board. The teacher reviews the character pillars studied over the past year. She writes each pillar on the board: Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Caring, and Citizenship. She/he instructs the students to work with a partner and determine how they would handle the following situation: Imagine you are going to the store for your Mom. She asks you to pick up a few things and gives you the money. Your bill is \$16.54. You give the cashier a \$20. She gives you back \$4.45. What do you do?	Students write a paragraph that explains what they would do. The students are instructed to include an illustration in their work. The teacher will remind the students to use resources (dictionary, glossary, etc.) and to write legibly. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share paragraphs with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians what they would do in a similar situation.
Celebration	Lesson 36	The teacher writes the words “CHARACTER COUNTS! <sup>SM</sup> ” on the board. The teacher reviews the character pillars studied over the past year. She writes each pillar on the board: Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Caring, and Citizenship. Working in small groups, students choose a character trait and develop a character plan of action to improve the “character” of their school if put into effect the next school year.	Students will share their plan of action with the rest of the class. The teacher emphasizes the Character Home Activity.	The students share their action plans with their parents/guardians. They ask their parents/guardians to assist them with a character action plan for their home.

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SYSTEM

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