



ALABAMA 4-H
LEADING WITH
CHARACTER

School Staff

How You Can Incorporate *Alabama's*
Six Pillars of Character:

**Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility,
Fairness, Caring and Citizenship**



TRUSTWORTHINESS

Create a Climate of Trustworthiness in Your Classroom

- Show loyalty to your school and its people with administrators, fellow teachers, school staff, parents and students. Show loyalty in your words and actions. Deal with disagreements in an orderly, confidential way, not with gossip or hearsay.
- Have a *Thought for the Day*.
- Be cautious about making promises. Only make promises you have the ability and intent to keep.
- Keep your promises to students, parents and staff. If unforeseen circumstances prevent you from keeping a promise, explain and apologize openly. Don't blame others or make excuses.
- Be honest in your words and actions. Do everything possible to convey truth to the best of your knowledge.
- Give people the information they need to make the wisest decisions, regardless of what it costs you. Don't deceive with words or actions.
- Walk your talk. Live your beliefs. Be who you say you are.
- Establish classroom rules and school policies, which include honesty, promise keeping, loyalty and integrity.
- Decorate the classroom with words and definitions of trustworthiness, honesty, promise keeping, loyalty and integrity as reminders for classroom behavior.
- Recognize students daily for trustworthy behaviors with verbal praise, special opportunities, or tangible incentive.
- Encourage students to recognize and acknowledge trustworthy behavior in one another, and in community residents.
- Have an Honesty Hall of Fame, by adding school photos of students who show honest behaviors during the day.

Infusing Trustworthiness into Classroom Lessons

- Focus on trustworthiness for a full month in the classroom.
- Select a trustworthy character in literature and history and discuss the specific behavior, which reflects honesty, loyalty, integrity and promise keeping.
- Design a *Tower of Trust* in art class.
- Search for examples of untrustworthy behavior in literature. Rewrite the story, replacing untrustworthiness with behavior that is honest and loyal and reflects integrity or promise keeping.



- Include trustworthiness, trust, integrity, loyalty, candor, sincerity, integrity, honesty and promise as vocabulary words. Add lie, deceive, deception, deceit and betray. Use the words in spelling bees. Match words to definitions.
- Create plays or skits or puppet shows depicting trustworthy heroes.
- Write or select and perform choral presentations describing the elements of trustworthiness.
- Give credit for completion of trustworthiness checklist at home.

RESPECT

Creating a Climate of Respect in the Classroom

- Be polite to students, parents, faculty and staff.
- Celebrate the uniqueness of individuals in your school, and discuss ways in which you have a stronger class because of so many different abilities and traits.
- Define respect, dignity, privacy, courtesy, individuality and uniqueness and decorate the room with those words.
- Develop classroom guidelines for treating one another with courtesy, allowing others to maintain their sense of dignity and appreciating the individuality of others.

Infusing Respect into Classroom Lessons

- Focus on respect for an entire month.
- Prepare a *Radiating Respect* bulletin board with a big, shining sun. Add students' photos when they are caught being respectful to one another in class. Give them extra recess time or provide some other special privilege.
- Complete the weekly respect checklists at home for extra credit.
- Have a manners workshop. Then practice your good manners as you eat a special meal together.
- Videotape yourselves sharing a snack, playing at recess or eating a meal. Use the video to brainstorm on ways to show more respect to one another.
- Create skits, essays, poems and songs about the elements of respectful behavior.

FAIRNESS

Creating a Climate of Fairness in the Classroom

- Show fairness to students, parents and staff by establishing criteria and guidelines for grading and selecting.
- Decorate the room with definitions: equity, equality, criteria, standards, rules, and fairness.
- Announce rules, criteria, guidelines and standards in writing.
- Develop standards that are appropriate for varying age and skill levels.
- Give everyone the same opportunity to achieve the standard that is appropriate for his or her age level. Reward everyone equally who attains their respective standard.
- Let students determine some standards of behavior or achievement for various activities.

Infusing Fairness into Classroom Lessons

- Focus on Fairness for an entire month.
- Have students create simple games employing fairness in the rules and procedures.
- Have teams of students make posters, displays or bulletin boards about fairness.
- Provide each team with different supplies for the project. Then discuss alternative, fair strategies for distributing supplies.
- Create essays; speeches, songs or puppet plays about fairness.



RESPONSIBILITY

Creating a Responsible Climate in the Classroom

- Be responsible yourself! Be accountable for your words and actions. Don't make excuses. Be punctual.
- Pursue excellence in all you do. Do your part and more. Develop classroom rules for responsible behavior.
- Decorate the room with words and definitions related to responsibility: accountability, self-control, excellence, and punctuality.
- List classroom tasks (cleaning erasers, taking messages to the office, distributing papers, etc.) on index cards. Shuffle the cards and let students draw assignments daily or weekly.
- Praise students for responsible behavior. Be specific. Recognize self-control, pursuit of excellence, doing your part, accountability and punctuality.

Infusing Responsibility into Classroom Lessons

- Search for specific examples of responsible behavior (pursuit of excellence, accountability, self-control, doing your part, punctuality) in reading assignments, literature or historical accounts.
- Spot irresponsible examples in literature and list ways in which the person or group could have behaved responsibly.
- List specific responsible behaviors on the board. List each student's name under the behavior you catch them doing.
- Focus on responsibility for an entire month.
- Encourage students to complete the daily responsibility checklist each week in the month.

CITIZENSHIP

Creating a Climate of Good Citizenship in the Classroom

- Prepare simple classroom rules for everyone (even teachers!) to follow.
- Create a list of classroom *community* responsibilities and privileges. Take turns with responsibilities.
- Select a citizenship emphasis month.
- Focus on citizenship-related words like rights, obligation, duty, pride, selflessness, heritage, law, government and others.
- Decorate the room with symbols of your community's heritage.

Infusing Citizenship into Classroom Activities

- Make a chronology of historical events in your community's past.
- Assign biographies of historical heroes.
- Create a Citizenship Hall of Fame, with students drawing pictures of local living role models, and displaying pictures and captions in the school hallway or library.
- Have students create skits or write poems depicting significant historical acts of good citizenship.
- Have a classroom election or referendum in which students vote on group decisions.
- Have a community heritage celebration.
- Prepare a mural of your community.
- Select a service project each week to improve your school or community.
- Invite community leaders to present and discuss community needs and issues. As a group, develop a plan to improve one situation.



CARING

Creating a Caring Climate in the Classroom

- Be kind to students, parents and school guests.
- Select at least one month to emphasize "Caring."
- When necessary, be firm but not harsh.
- Make your classroom an emotionally safe environment by establishing codes of conduct, which discourage sarcasm, name-calling, labeling or *put-downs*.
- Decorate the room with words related to caring: kindness, love, concern, warmth, friendliness, care giver, nurture, charity, support, encourage, give, provide.
- Encourage students to recognize and acknowledge caring behavior in one another and in community members.

Infusing Caring into Classroom Lessons

- Identify results of caring for the environment and failing to do so.
- Select caring characters from literature. Select uncaring and rewrite scripts to show caring instead.
- Develop finger puppets and puppet plays depicting caring plots.
- List opportunities to show caring in an active way. Select one project a week.
- Have *secret pals*, with students drawing names of classmates and leaving notes, favors or acts of kindness for one another without giving clues to whose name was drawn.
- Compile a *Random Acts of Kindness* list. Let students select a good deed to do anonymously during the week. Assign essays on how the good deed affects the doer, or have them report verbally on how the unnamed act affected the doer and the recipient. The deeds don't count if the recipient finds out who did them.
- Schedule a panel from the community to describe caring acts, which have affected their lives.
- Play *hugs tag* or musical chairs. Have students describe the feeling of being left out. Then discuss the importance of and ways to include more people in activities. Then play the game again, this time giving cheers and words of encouragement and praise to the people who must *sit-out*.
- Have students write and present simple songs about caring. An example for small children would be:
*Share, share, share your toys, every time you play.
The more you share yourself with friends,
more fun you'll have each day"*
(To the tune of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*).
- Encourage parents to observe behavior at home and to praise students for caring behavior.



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