FOOD for THOUGHT

Marcos PRODUCTS, INC.

"Tasty" Guidance Lessons To Help Students In Grades 3-8 (Literally!) Internalize Social, Emotional, & Academic Skills

Written By
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Food for Thought

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Introduction

With all of the demands on the classroom schedule these days, it is difficult to find time to include guidance and character-education lessons into the curriculum. While all would agree that teaching character- and life-skills is important, presenting those skills in a brief, yet memorable way can be a challenge. *Food for Thought* was created to answer that challenge.

Food for Thought addresses a wide range of social, emotional, and academic skills that educators may wish to emphasize throughout the school year. This program includes the following benefits:

- **Flexibility and Individualization:**

  Food for Thought provides a high level of flexibility for educators. Each lesson can stand alone to teach an individual concept, and the lessons need not be taught in any particular order. This gives educators the flexibility to choose which skills are pertinent and applicable to their learning community. Lessons are designed to facilitate a short, but thought-provoking discussion, then to progress into an activity involving social and cooperative learning. A tasty snack, related to the lesson, is served to reinforce the main concepts addressed. The *Discussion Points/Questions* section of each lesson is meant to be used as a guide to facilitate meaningful conversation and sharing, but does not have to be strictly followed. The main points to be discussed are in capital letters, followed by a suggested script for each point. Facilitators may use flexibility in following the guide, choosing what is most applicable to the particular age, development, and dynamics of the group.

- **Cooperative/Social Learning:**

  The cooperative learning aspect of each lesson fulfills multiple goals. Students begin to practice and apply the skills taught in the lesson in a safe and comfortable environment, while also getting to know and enjoy their peers, an opportunity for which the regular classroom schedule does not always provide time. Most of the cooperative learning activities ask that the students make positive declarations about themselves and their abilities. Making those declarations in front of other students provides a sense of accountability. Later, students may hold each other accountable to what they have proclaimed that they will practice.

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Goal Setting

SET YOUR OWN COURSE

Purpose:

In this lesson, students will:

- ✔ Internalize the concept that they are responsible for their own lives.
- ✔ Practice setting goals.
- ✔ Recognize resources and tools needed to accomplish their goals.
- ✔ Engage in personal reflection, whole group discussion, and positive peer interaction in small groups.

Materials Required:

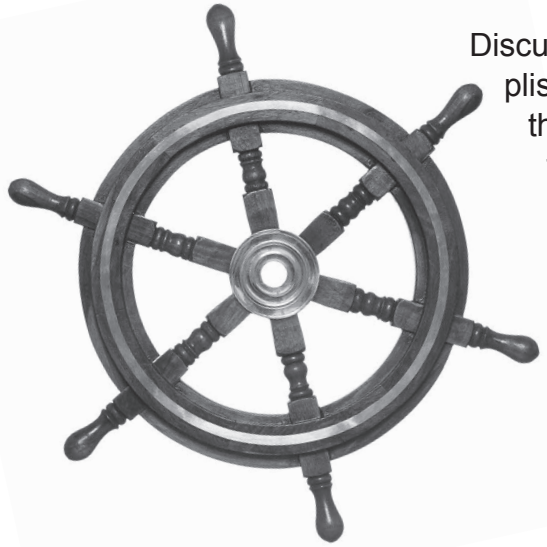
- ☐ Optional: Picture of a boat's wheel (page 25) or other nautical item to use as a prop
- ☐ Cap'n Crunch™ cereal
  or
- ☐ Healthier alternative: Apple sailboats (apple wedges with a toothpick and cheese slice sail)
- ☐ Napkins, plates, or coffee filters to set food on
- ☐ Optional: Materials to make posters: paper plates or poster board, glue, markers, scissors, etc.

Lesson:

DISCUSSION

Optional: Display the picture of the boat's wheel or other nautical prop. Then begin the lesson by saying:

"You are the captain of your own ship! You get to determine your own course in life. In order to do this, you have to decide where you want to go, and then make sure that your ship stays on course. The process of setting and accomplishing goals is a lot like the process a ship's captain has to carry out to have a successful journey on the high seas."



Discuss what a ship's captain and crew have to do to accomplish their goals, and what students have to do to accomplish theirs. Ask the students how a ship's captain accomplishes the following steps out at sea, and how the students might accomplish similar steps related to setting goals.

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DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS:

1 DETERMINE YOUR DESTINATION

Explain to the students:

> ***"A ship's captain must know how to plan a voyage, set a course, and navigate to a specific destination. Likewise, you must know how to plan the steps and set a course for achieving and reaching your goals."***

Then ask:

> **"*What goals would you like to set a course for achieving?"*** (Ask the students to describe specific goals they would like to achieve.)
>
> "***Why would you like to accomplish those goals?"*** (Students may realize that they are basing their motivation for accomplishing certain goals solely on peer, family, or other pressure.)

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Then say:

> ***"A ship's captain must prepare well to reach his or her destination, and you must prepare well to achieve your goals."***

2 SETTING THE COURSE

Tell the students:

> ***"Sailors plan a voyage using a chart (map), the stars, and electronic equipment. You should plan your course by asking: 'What does it take to accomplish my goals?' "*** (Allow the students to name example goals and describe what it takes to accomplish those goals.)

3 ALL HANDS ON DECK!

Tell the students:

> **"*A captain must have a crew. You will likely need a crew, too."***

Then ask:

> ***"Who can help you accomplish your goals?"*** (Pause for responses.)

4 HOIST THE SAILS

Tell the students:

> **"*Sailors must take stock of all of the equipment that they will need."***

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Perseverance

HIT THE TRAIL

Purpose:

In this lesson, students will:

- ✔ Compare persevering in goals or challenges to hiking a difficult trail.
- ✔ Recognize practical and emotional tools needed to persevere through challenges.
- ✔ Engage in personal reflection, whole group discussion, and positive peer interaction in small groups.

Materials Required:

- ☐ Optional: Walking stick or other hiking gear to use as a prop
- ☐ Prepared trail mix or ingredients to make trail mix (pretzels, dry cereal, dried fruit, chocolate pieces, marshmallows, etc.) Since peanut allergies are common, you might want to avoid peanuts as part of your trail mix.
- ☐ Napkins, plates, or coffee filters to set food on
- ☐ Optional: Materials to make posters: paper plates or poster board, glue, markers, scissors, etc.

Lesson:

DISCUSSION

Optional: Enter into the room using a walking stick or wearing/carrying other hiking gear. Then begin the lesson by saying:

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going! If at first you don't succeed, try, try, again! These phrases are all about perseverance. Hiking a trail to the top of a steep mountain is challenging, but the view from the top is worth the effort. One activity that requires a lot of perseverance is hiking. Other things that require perseverance are sticking with goals or making it through hard times."

"Let's talk about what helps a hiker persevere on a difficult trail, and what might help you persevere in achieving your goals or making it through hard times."

DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS:

1 PREPARATION

Tell the students:

"Before a hiker faces a hard trail, he or she must get prepared. You must also get prepared to face and overcome big challenges."

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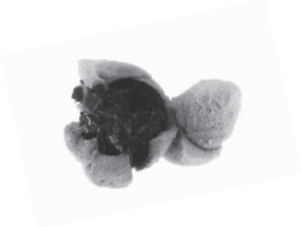

Anger Management

I'M ABOUT TO POP!

Purpose:

In this lesson, students will:

- ✔ Recognize potential outcomes of anger.
- ✔ List appropriate and inappropriate expressions of anger.
- ✔ Be encouraged to direct anger toward working for positive change.
- ✔ Engage in personal reflection, whole group discussion, and positive peer interaction in small groups.

Materials Required:

- ☐ Bag of microwaved popcorn (make sure that the cooked popcorn has pieces of fluffy well-cooked popcorn plus some burnt and uncooked kernels)
- ☐ Large glass bowl
- ☐ Napkins, plates, or coffee filters to set food on
- ☐ Optional: Materials to make posters: paper plates or poster board, glue, markers, scissors, etc.

Lesson:

DISCUSSION

Begin the discussion by saying:

"Everyone experiences anger. It is a normal reaction to injustice, frustration, stress, or disappointment. When a person is in a situation that angers him or her, it may feel like someone has turned up the heat, just like I did to this popcorn." (Pull out a bag of popped popcorn and pour it into a glass bowl.) ***"But we have choices about how to react when we start 'feeling the heat.' Let's talk about those choices."***

DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS:

1 REACTIONS TO THE "HEAT"

Present the following demonstration to the students:

BURNED: (Show the students a piece of burned popcorn.) Then say: ***"We can choose to burn ourselves up with anger and also burn those around us."***

Ask:

"Who wants to eat this burned piece of popcorn?" (Offer the piece of burned popcorn to the students.)

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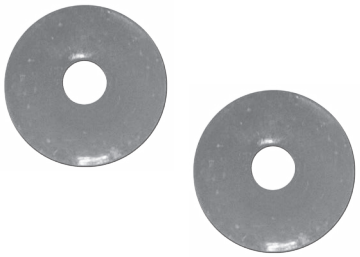

Where to Turn

WHO ARE YOUR LIFESAVERS?

Purpose:

In this lesson, students will:

- ✔ Recognize serious situations in which they or someone else needs help.
- ✔ Name appropriate community helpers whom they can turn to in serious situations.
- ✔ Engage in personal reflection, whole group discussion, and positive peer interaction in small groups.

Materials Required:

- ☐ Optional: Life preserver or picture of a life preserver (page 59) to use as a prop
- ☐ LifeSavers® candies
  or
- ☐ Healthier alternative: Sugar-free LifeSavers® candies or any snack in the form of a ring to represent life preservers (mini bagels, bagel crisps, cereal in the form of rings, etc.)
- ☐ Napkins, plates, or coffee filters to set food on
- ☐ Optional: Materials to make posters: paper plates or poster board, glue, markers, scissors, etc.

Lesson:

DISCUSSION

Begin the discussion by saying:

"Some problems in life aren't very big and just need simple solutions. Other problems, however, can be very big and serious. A problem becomes a big problem if someone is getting hurt or could get hurt. You need to know the people in your community whom you can turn to for help when faced with a big problem. These people can be your 'lifesavers.' " (Optional: Show the life preserver or the picture of a life preserver.)

"Let's name some things that count as big problems." (Help students name things like having a student bully them, being offered drugs or alcohol, having or knowing someone with a medical complication, observing violence or gangs in the neighborhood, being touched in unwanted ways, being threatened, being abused at home, being homeless, not having enough to eat, seeing someone get hurt because they were doing something wrong, etc.)

"Now, let's name some 'lifesavers' who could help us when we are faced with a serious problem."

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