

## **SASO: MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTER EDUCATION TEACHING GUIDE**

### **TOPIC: CARING & COMPASSION (Halimah Bashir SASO DVD)**

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**Note to Teacher:** This lesson encompasses two of the Six Pillars of Character (josephsoninstitute.org): Caring and Respect. Specifically, it focuses on the Golden Rule, tolerance and acceptance, courtesy, concern for others, and charity. It offers the teacher guidelines to follow after students have viewed the DVD of Halimah Bashir: Caring and Compassion.

Discussion questions, scenarios, and suggestions for writing and speaking assignments have been designed to develop student critical thinking, reflection, interaction, and creativity. Discussion questions and suggestions for writing and speaking assignments are interchangeable and should be determined by the teacher.

With regard to discussion questions and scenarios, teachers may pose questions to students individually or in small groups. With regard to the latter, a spokesperson for each group should be selected to summarize his or her group's discussion to the rest of the class.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How do you define caring? How do you define compassion?
2. What are examples of compassion?
3. Is it important to be a caring and compassionate person? Why?
4. Are you a caring and compassionate person? Give examples to support your answer.
5. Could you be more caring and compassionate? Give examples to support your answer.
6. Describe someone you know who is caring and compassionate.
7. Is it possible to be caring and compassionate toward some people and not toward others? Why or why not?
8. Do you have more compassion for certain types of people? Please explain.
9. Is there an advantage to being a caring and compassionate person? Please explain.

10. Is there a disadvantage to being a caring and compassionate person? Please explain.
11. Has there been a time when someone has shown caring and compassion to you? Please describe the situation and how that person's caring and compassion affected you.
12. Has there been a time when you have shown caring and compassion to another person? Please describe the situation and how your behavior affected both the other person and you.
13. Is there a difference between the way males and females show they care or are compassionate? Please explain.
14. Are caring and compassion related to age? Are they related to maturity? Can a child show caring and compassion? Please explain.
15. Do you expect some people to be caring and compassionate? Do you expect others not to be caring and compassionate? Please explain.

**Scenarios:** What would you do?

1. Your grandmother is elderly, unable to drive, and lives by herself in your hometown. What would you do?
2. You are seated on a crowded bus for a 20-minute ride. A pregnant woman, an elderly man, a young boy on crutches, and a woman holding a small child are standing. What would you do?
3. What could you do in your school to be a more caring and compassionate person?
4. What could you do in your community to be a more caring and compassionate person?
5. What could you do in your family to be a more caring and compassionate person?
6. Your friend or a family member is in the hospital. The individual is discharged but has to recuperate at home for several months. What would you do?
7. Your friends make fun of or bully a student in school who has a disability. What would you do?

**Writing/Speaking Assignments:** Students either may write a paper or give an oral presentation about the topic (length and guidelines to be determined by the teacher).

1. Discuss someone you know (or know of) who is a caring and compassionate person.
2. Define caring and compassion in your own words and give examples to explain your definitions.
3. Interview your family members and/or friends and ask them to define caring and compassion and to tell you about one time when they were caring and compassionate.
4. Interview your family members and/or friends and ask them to define caring and compassion and to tell you about one time when you were caring and compassionate.
5. Discuss a time in your life when you were caring and compassionate. What happened and how did you feel? What did you learn from the experience?
6. Discuss a time in your life when you were not caring and compassionate. What happened and how did you feel? What did you learn from the experience?
7. Discuss a time in your life when someone else was compassionate toward you. What happened? How did the person show compassion? How did it make you feel? What did you learn from the experience?
8. Is it important to show others that you care about them? Why or why not?
9. How can you show others that you care about them?
10. Write a nonfiction or fiction story about caring and compassion.
11. Write a poem or song about being caring and compassionate.
12. Discuss someone who is well-known because he or she is caring and compassionate.
13. Is respect related to compassion? Please explain.
14. What does prejudice mean? Is it related to caring and compassion? Please explain.
15. What is dignity? Is it related to caring and compassion? Please explain.
16. Is it possible to be caring and compassionate toward some people and not toward others? Please explain.

17. What, if anything, keeps you from being more caring and compassionate?
18. Is forgiveness related to compassion? Provide examples to support your answer.
19. Is compassion important in today's society? Why or why not?
20. Select one of the quotes about caring and compassion below and explain what it means. Or, find a quotation about caring and compassion and explain what it means. Identify the author of the quote and describe who that individual is (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States).

### **Quotations about Caring and Compassion:**

1. Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace. (Albert Schweitzer)
2. The ideas that have lighted my way have been kindness, beauty and truth. (Albert Einstein)
3. There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. (Edith Wharton)
4. You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
5. The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm. (Swedish proverb)
6. If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion. (The Dalai Lama)
7. How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong, because someday in life you will have been all of these. (George Washington Carver)
8. I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream -- a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege

and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where men will not argue that the color of a man's skin determines the content of his character; a dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone, but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity; the dream of a country where every man will respect the dignity and worth of the human personality. (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

9. Without a rich heart, wealth is an ugly beggar. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
10. I would rather feel compassion than know the meaning of it. (Thomas Aquinas)
11. I believe in human dignity as the source of national purpose, human liberty as the source of national action, the human heart as the source of national compassion, and in the human mind as the source of our invention and our ideas. (John F. Kennedy)
12. It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
13. If we make our goal to live a life of compassion and unconditional love, then the world will indeed become a garden where all kinds of flowers can bloom and grow. (Elisabeth Kubler-Ross)
14. Toleration is the greatest gift of mind; it requires that same effort of the brain that it takes to balance oneself on a bicycle. (Helen Keller)
15. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation for such a method is love. (Martin Luther King, Jr.)