

SASO MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTER EDUCATION LESSON

TOPIC: CARING & COMPASSION

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Note to Teacher: This lesson encompasses two of the Six Pillars of Character: 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 SASO DVD of Halimah Bashir (*Volume I. 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. They are interchangeable and should be determined by the teacher.

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

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you define caring? How do you define compassion?
2. Why is it important to be a caring and compassionate person?
3. Are you a caring and compassionate person? Give examples.
4. Could you be more caring and compassionate? Give examples.
5. Who is an example of a friend or family member who is caring and compassionate?
6. Who is an example of someone in the media (e.g., a celebrity) who is caring and compassionate?
7. Is it possible to be caring and compassionate toward some people and not toward others?
8. Is it easy or difficult to be caring and compassionate?
9. Is there an advantage to being a caring and compassionate person?
10. Is there a disadvantage to being a caring and compassionate person?

Scenarios: What would you do?

1. Your grandmother is elderly and lives by herself in your hometown. What would you do?
2. You are at the mall and someone in a wheelchair is having difficulty getting through a door. What would you do?
3. 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?
4. Your friends tend to make fun of 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 definition.
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. Discuss a time in your life when you were not caring and compassionate. What happened and how did you feel?
5. Discuss a time in your life when you were caring and compassionate. What happened and how did you feel?
6. What could you do in your school to be a more caring and compassionate person?
7. What could you do in your community to be a more caring and compassionate community?
8. What could you do in your family to be a more caring and compassionate family?
9. Discuss why being caring and compassionate are important.
10. Discuss someone who is well-known because he or she is caring and compassionate.
11. Discuss whether or not respect is related to compassion.
12. Discuss what, if anything, keeps you from being more caring and compassionate.
13. Is forgiveness related to compassion? Give examples.
14. Write a nonfiction or fiction story about caring and compassion.
15. Write a poem or song about being caring and compassionate.

16. 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, 16th President of the United States).

Quotations about Caring and Compassion:

1. 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)
2. 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.)
3. Without a rich heart, wealth is an ugly beggar. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
4. Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive. (Dalai Lama)
5. Now that I understand that I'm an addict, I definitely have compassion for my mother. I get it. (Eminem)
6. Compassion is not weakness, and concern for the unfortunate is not socialism. (Hubert H. Humphrey)
7. Computers are magnificent tools for the realization of our dreams, but no machine can replace the human spark of spirit, compassion, love, and understanding. (Louis Gerstner)
8. Compassion will cure more sins than condemnation. (Henry Ward Beecher)
9. I would rather feel compassion than know the meaning of it. (Thomas Aquinas)
10. 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)
11. And as I've gotten older, I've had more of a tendency to look for people who live by kindness, tolerance, compassion, a gentler way of looking at things. (Martin Scorsese)

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. Wisdom, compassion, and courage are the three universally recognized moral qualities of men. (Confucius)
15. The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others. (Albert Schweitzer)
16. It is much easier to show compassion to animals. They are never wicked. (Haile Selassie)
17. 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)
18. 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.)
19. Man is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. (William Faulkner)
20. Some people are filled by compassion and a desire to do good, and some simply don't think anything's going to make a difference. (Meryl Streep)
21. I believe we are still so innocent. The species are still so innocent that a person who is apt to be murdered believes that the murderer, just before he puts the final wrench on his throat, will have enough compassion to give him one sweet cup of water. (Maya Angelou)
22. Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace. (Albert Schweitzer)
23. The ideas that have lighted my way have been kindness, beauty and truth. (Albert Einstein)
24. There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. (Edith Wharton)
25. You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
26. It is not until you become a mother that your judgment slowly turns to compassion and understanding. (Erma Bombeck)
27. The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your own arm. (Swedish proverb)

28. If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion. (The Dalai Lama)

29. Compassion is the basis of morality. (Arthur Schopenhauer)