

## SASO MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTER EDUCATION LESSON

### TOPIC: BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE!

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**Note to Teacher:** This lesson reinforces one of the Six Pillars of Character: Responsibility. Specifically, it emphasizes pursuing excellence—i.e., do your best, be prepared, stay focused, work hard. It offers the teacher guidelines to follow after students have viewed the SASO Vignette featuring Michaela Ashford.

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 certain activities are more appropriate for different age groups. The teacher will determine and select content for specific ages.

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.

#### **Discussions Questions: Vocabulary and Concepts**

1. When should you start thinking about your future and what you want to do? Why?
2. What are your goals in life? Why are those your goals?
3. What is the **most important** goal in your life? Describe what you plan to do in order to achieve it.
4. How do you feel when you do something wrong and your parent or teacher corrects you? Give an example of how you handle that situation.
5. Do you work hard? Give an example of how you work hard.
6. Who is your role model? Why? Does your role model work hard?
7. What does it mean to focus on something? Give an example of a time when you focused on something.
8. What or who inspires you to do something or to improve? Give an example.
9. What is an example of something you can do to become a better student in the classroom? (There may be many examples.)
10. Why is learning important?
11. Why is practicing something important? What do you practice (e.g., sports, music, painting, dance, etc.)?
12. What is your favorite subject in school? Why?

13. Who is one of the smartest people you know? Describe that person.
14. In school, do you ask the teacher questions when you do not understand something? Why or why not?
15. At home, do you ask your family members when you do not understand something? Why or why not?
16. If you fail at something, what do you do? Do you accept the failure; or, do you try again?
17. Is failure important in the learning process? Why or why not?

**Scenarios: What would you do?**

1. You want to become a better athlete. For example, you want to practice and play basketball every day. However, your friends are not interested in sports and want you to go to a movie with them during your practice time. What would you do?
2. Your friends say terrible things about you and to you because you spend more time practicing your sport than you spend with them. What would you say to them?
3. Your friends are bullying one of your classmates and you join them and bully also. The next day, you admit to yourself that bullying is never okay. What would you do?
4. Your dream is to become a medical doctor someday, but your friends and family don't believe that you will ever achieve that dream. What would you do?
5. You have practiced to become the best athlete (or dancer, etc.) that you can be; however, your performance is poor during the game (or meet, recital, etc.). What would you do?

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

1. Give an example of ...or write about a time...when you were bullied.
2. Give an example of ...or write about a time... when you bullied someone.
3. Give an example of ...or write about a time... when you focused on something and achieved it. How did you feel?
4. Give an example of ...or write about a time... when you focused on something and did not achieve it. How did you feel?
5. Give an example of ...or write about a time... when you worked hard. Did it pay off?
6. Give an example of ...or write about a time... when you followed your dream. Describe it.
7. Give an example ...or write about a time... that you did not let your friends persuade you to do something.
8. Give an example ...or write about a time... when you felt good about your accomplishment.

9. Write a poem or song about focusing on your dreams.

10. Write a poem or song about being the best you can be.

11. Select one of the quotations (brainyquote.com) below and explain what it means.

a) “It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light.” ~Aristotle

b) “Live life to the fullest, and focus on the positive.” ~Matt Cameron

c) “I don’t focus on what I’m up against. I focus on my goals and I try to ignore the rest.” ~  
Venus Williams

d) “The game has its ups and downs, but you can never lose focus of your individual goals and you can’t let yourself be beat because of lack of effort.” ~Michael Jordan

e) “We focus so much of our differences, and that is creating, I think, a lot of chaos and negativity and bullying in the world. And I think if everybody focused on what we all have in common—which is—we all want to be happy.” ~Ellen DeGeneres

f) “Focus on being balanced—success is balance.” ~Laila Ali

g) “You can do anything as you have the passion, the drive, the focus, and the support. ~  
Sabrina Bryan

h) “The thing you have to be prepared for is that other people don’t always dream your dream.”  
~Linda Ronstadt

i) “Always be prepared to start.” ~Joe Montana

j) “Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me.” ~Carol Burnett

k) “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.” ~Charles R. Swindoll

l) “It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.” ~Confucius

m) “If you can dream it, you can do it.” ~Walt Disney

n) “Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines.” ~Robert H. Schuller

o) “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” ~Benjamin Franklin

p) “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.” ~Walt Disney

q) “The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.” ~Thomas Paine

- r) “There is no passion to be found in playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.” ~Nelson Mandela
- s) “A somebody was once a nobody who wanted to and did.” ~John Burroughs
- t) “You can’t build a reputation on what you are going to do.” ~Henry Ford
- u) “Learn from the past, set vivid, detailed goals for the future, and live in the only moment of time over which you have any control: now.” ~Denis Waitley
- v) “Blessed are the hearts that can bend; they shall never be broken.” ~Albert Camus
- w) “The most worth-while thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others.”  
~Robert Baden-Powell
- x) “My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.” Maya Angelou
- y) “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”  
~Maya Angelou
- z) “It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.”  
~Harry S. Truman