

# Our Caring Being

This lesson sets the stage for creating a ridicule free zone and developing classroom agreements in the next lesson by helping children identify positive and negative behaviors and how they effect their classroom and school community.

## What to Know:

Involving young people in creating ground rules or agreements for acceptable behavior helps them follow them. If everyone knows what is expected of each other and has both input and agreement with these community norms, then your classroom will be a more productive learning community. By including everyone in the decision making process, you will also lay the groundwork for participation in the democratic process.

As a group spends more time together, they will likely evolve in ways that will need to be reflected in your group agreements. Create structures for returning to your group agreements to revise, and allow young people to frequently recommit to, the agreements. Explore community responses for times when agreements are broken. As the class evolves into a caring community, these group agreements and norms, driven by caring and concern for each individual, are important structural supports to our common-unity.

## Objectives:

Participants will:

1. be able to identify what we say, what we do and how we behave when we are being supportive of each other: “put ups”;
2. be able to identify what we say, what we do and how we behave when we are treating each other in a negative way: “put-downs”;
3. explore group agreement about the ways that the group will treat each other and how the group will go about reminding each other not to engage in negative behavior; and,
4. set goals for increasing positive behaviors and decreasing negative behaviors in class.

## Common Core Standard Alignment

- Anchor Standards for Literacy: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 - Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- Anchor Standards for Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Anchor Standards for Writing: Range of Writing
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10 - Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3-Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric
- Anchor Standards for Language: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5-Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

### **Preparation and Materials:**

- Markers, tape and mural paper (1 per 4-6 students) or chart paper (several pages per 4-6 students)
- Miscellaneous art supplies for decorating their Caring Beings
- Signal bell or other way to note beginning and ending times
- Prepare an outline of the “Caring Being” before the lesson. You can either trace an outline of a student on mural paper or create a shape that will represent “Our Caring Being.”

### **Gather Together/Warm-Up/Bell Ringer: Play Mirrors (5 Minutes)**

Pair students and have them sit face to face (sometimes it helps to have students sit knee-to-knee). Silently, Person A will start to move his or her hands and change facial expressions while Person B reflects them with his or her own movements, as if they were their mirror image. After a minute, switch so Person A now reflects Person B.

Process: *“What did it feel like to do this activity? What was difficult? What was easy?”*

### **Main Activity: The Caring Being (10 Minutes)**

Introduce the lesson:

*“Today we are going to talk about how we are doing so far in creating a classroom where people feel welcome, safe, and valued. As we have worked on the DLAM project so far, let’s reflect back on some things we say or do that make our classroom the best possible place to be. We call these thumbs-up behaviors.”*

Brainstorm a list of “thumbs-up” behaviors that you have all seen in your classroom (or school). This can be done as a whole group “popcorn style,” or in a “pair-then-share” format. Record students’ ideas on chart paper. Ideas may include sharing, listening, waiting my turn, giving put-ups, helping others learn, supporting others when they are having

difficulty, etc. Remind students to not name names, but just explore behaviors. Feel free to include your own observations as you chart.

Introduce the “Caring Being” model you have created. Tell students that the Caring Being will help the class to explore how to behave toward each other in class.

Break students into small groups of 4-6. Give each group mural paper or several pages of chart paper (enough for a student to lay down on) and markers. If using chart paper, have each group tape it together to draw their own outline of a student. This outline will be called your group’s Caring Being.

Give the small groups five minutes to brainstorm and write inside their Caring Being any behaviors, feelings, put-ups they would like to have in their classroom going forward. On the outside, they should write any actions, feelings, put-downs they would like to see stopped in your classroom.

### **Integrated Arts: Caring Being Gallery Showing (10 Minutes)**

Have students name and decorate their Caring Being using miscellaneous art supplies. Hang the Caring Beings and have students do a gallery walk.

Process: *“What did you notice about the Caring Beings?”*

### **Our Class Caring Being (5 Minutes)**

Now as a large group record ideas and themes from the gallery walk on the Caring Being in front:

*“What are some of behaviors, feelings, put-ups you’d like to encourage in our classroom?”*

(chart the answers, grouping similar things)

*“What are some of the behaviors, feelings, put-downs, that we’d like to stop in our classroom?”*

(chart the answers, grouping similar things)

Discuss: *“How can we help each other act as Caring Beings?”*

### **Closing: If The Caring Being Could Talk (5 Minutes)**

Do a go-round and have each child complete the statement, "If 'Our Caring Being' could talk, it would tell us. . ."

## **Grade Level Modifications**

### **K-1:**

Without telling students exactly what they are for, have students work in small groups to create the outlines for the Caring Beings in a class period before this one. Set aside the outlines until the lesson. Keep students in the same groups for the lesson. You could also do one Caring Being as a whole class.

Have students dictate their ideas if needed. Alternatively, have students draw pictures to illustrate their ideas and then share with the group.

Follow the instructions for grades 2-5 for the rest of the activity.

### **6-12 and Adults**

Instead of brainstorming a list of thumbs-up behaviors to begin the main activity, have students in pairs explore the question: "Some ways our classroom has improved since we started this program include. . ." Have pairs report out and chart ideas or generate and project a [wordle](#) that captures key ideas and phrases of reporting to post in your classroom later.

Have students name their Caring Being anything they would like and use any shape they want to represent what they would like included and not included in their classrooms. Process by asking: "*How might changing our classroom in these ways effect the larger world?*" Otherwise, do activity as outlined.

## **Curricular Connections**

K-1 Literacy and Art: Gather art materials, paper bags and index cards. Read Leo Lionni's [It's Mine!](#) Ask students if they can make connections between the story and the discussions you have had around group agreements. Have students create frog puppets using the paper bags and art materials. Students write or dictate one group agreement suggestion for the frogs to follow on their island. Glue the suggestions onto the paper bags. Students can use the puppets to role play their suggestions a few at a time during a class meeting.

2-5 Literacy and Art: Read [Is There Really a Human Race?](#) by Jamie Lee Curtis. Ask, "*What does this book teach us about helping one another? What does it teach us about working together? Which of our group agreements can you see in action in the story?*" After you read the story, have students design their own book jacket for this story, including the blurb and review quotes.

K-5 Integrated Art: Gather 12 x 18" white or manila construction paper, waterproof black markers, and watercolor paints. Have student use markers to sketch out a picture that reflects how they feel about working to create a caring community in their classroom. The

picture can be of them or of something that shows how they are feeling (a mountain, a sun, etc.). Once the sketch is done, students use the watercolors to finish their piece of art.

**K-5 Music:** Pick a traditional melody, such as “Miss Mary Mack” or “Skip to My Lou,” or a current pop melody and have students change the words to reflect their new class agreements. For example, for “Miss Mary Mack” it might go something like: “We use put-up-ups, not put down-down-downs, we make our school-school-school, the best around-round-round!” Teach the clap pattern and have students do this in pairs as a reminder whenever you feel your class needs it.

**6-12 History:** Look at Gandhi as an example of social reform in India and the power of caring and nonviolence. Link this study to the film Gandhi starring Ben Kingsley.

**6-12 Creative Arts:** What song or piece of art would be a good one to be the anthem of your Caring Being? How might you spread the spirit of your classroom’s commitment to caring across your school? Across your community?