

Choosing to Help Others

OBJECTIVE

To understand the importance of helping others and to realize your capacity to positively influence another human or animal. To be able to analyze a situation and make a choice that's compassionate and responsible.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will work together in "communities" to analyze a variety of situations they could possibly be faced with as a community member. Each community will present their ideas to the class in the form of an essay.

MATERIALS

- 🐾 Sample situations copied for groups

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 What does it mean to be a member of a community? How do the choices we make affect the other members of our community?
- 🐾 Think of a time when you were in need of someone's help and support. How did that assistance boost you in your time of need?
- 🐾 Think of a reason why an animal may need your help and support. Are there any situations that you have encountered where a companion animal (pet) or a wild animal has needed assistance?
- 🐾 Sometimes we're faced with making compassionate and responsible choices to benefit the lives of others, humans and animals, alike. What does it mean to be compassionate and responsible?

Procedure

Students will break into four community groups. The teacher will present each community with a situation for each group to analyze and decide what types of choices they could make together that would be most compassionate and responsible. Each group will write an essay about these choices and present it to the rest of the class.

Post-Discussion

- 🐾 What factors did you consider as you analyzed the situations?
- 🐾 How did each community group reach its conclusion?
- 🐾 What are the similarities between the various situations?
- 🐾 What can we do individually and collectively to act responsibly in our community? How do we mobilize others to help us so we can all work together toward this effort?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Discuss what types of situations the students feel they need to make choices about, regarding people and animals in the community. What can the students do individually and as a class to remedy these situations?

1. Choosing To Help Others...

There are several stray cats that live in the alley behind your house. Some of your neighbors have been feeding them but no one has taken responsibility for them. You notice that their fur is matted, they have cuts and bruises and sneeze a lot. You wonder how they will survive and if there's something you can do to help these cats. What kind of choices can you make to better this situation?

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2. Choosing To Help Others...

In your apartment building there is an elderly man who lives by himself. You've often seen him walking his dog and chatting with the other neighbors. You notice that the last few times he's been out, he had a cane and looked very tired. You hear his dog barking frequently from his apartment and you see the local grocery store delivering groceries to him. You feel that there's something you can do to help this man and his dog. What kind of choices can you make to better this situation?

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3. Choosing To Help Others...

There's a boy in one of your classes that constantly brags to the other students about doing strange things. One day you hear him telling a classmate that he swung his cat over his head, and threw it out his bedroom window. This conversation disturbs you and you wonder whether or not it's true. What can you do to make sure that this cat is not suffering and that the boy is getting psychological help? What kind of choices can you make to better this situation?

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4. Choosing To Help Others...

After school you work at a yogurt shop with a friend of yours. You take turns ringing up the customers and collecting their money. The week before spring break, the manager of the shop asks if you'll both work the evening shift and close up the shop every night that week. This includes counting the money and depositing it in the bank every night. The first night, your friend tells you that she's going to borrow \$20 from the store to buy a c.d. and that she'll pay it back tomorrow. The next day she "borrows" another \$20 and doesn't pay back the money. You feel uncomfortable about this and wonder what you can do to help her understand the seriousness of stealing. What kind of choices can you make to better this situation?