thesevenproject
SUPPLEMENTAL CLASSROOM DISCUSSION
LIFE 24/7

The Seven Project is a multimedia, speaker-driven school assembly. The Seven Project Assemblies entertain and captivate audiences all across the United States. Seven addresses real-life issues and situations students face every day. The Seven Project Discussion Guides culminate the Seven Project experience by creating intensified discussions about student life.

The activities and discussions in these guides are designed for use in single classroom settings or as entire school or community-wide campaigns. The Seven Project offers these guides as tools for use at the discretion of local school educators and administrators in part or entirety. The Seven Project and your school: *building students' hope…one issue at a time.*

CHARACTER

For Grades 6-12. Students will begin to define good and bad character and the importance of having good character and learn skills on how to develop character in their lives.

Objectives:
- Define good and bad character in general terms.
- Understand the importance of character in life.
- Learn life skills for students to develop good character.

Materials Needed:
- Copies of the *Does Character Really Matter? a*nd *Developing Character* for every student.

Discussion:
1) What issues/messages from The Seven Project School Assembly stood out to you the most? Why?
    Transition: "In our classroom time today, (principal's name) and I felt it was important that we follow-up on one of the topics: character, since this is something we deal with at our school."
    *Distribute **Does Character Really Matter**. Have students read the statistics.*
2) Do these statistics represent your thoughts about character? Why? What IS character?
3) Is character really important? Is character only important for a select few; leaders, politicians, government, or is it important for everyone?
4) Why is character so important?
5) What are some examples of good and bad character?
6) What causes people to develop bad character? How would having bad character affect you?
7) How would having good character affect you?
8) How would our school be different if we focused on developing good character?
    *Reference **Does Character Really Matter**.*
9) Do you agree with these being some of the top character traits you should develop? Are there any character qualities not listed that you believe should be? What are they?
10) What are some things we can do to develop good character in our lives?
    *Distribute **Developing Character**.*

Extensions and Adaptations:
- Have students sign pledge cards as commitments to striving to become better students and better people by focusing on developing good character. The cards could be displayed for others to see; classroom, school hallway, library, city hall.
- In specified classes, students could learn character development curriculum. *Character Counts* has a number of outstanding resources (www.charactercounts.com).

Online Resources:
Character Counts
www.charactercounts.com

Good Character.com
www.goodcharacter.com

Relevant National Standards
McREL establishes the following National Standards at www.mcrel.org

Thinking and Reasoning
- Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning
- Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques
- Applies decision making techniques

Life Skills
- Working with others: Contributes to the overall effort of a group
- Working with others: Displays effective interpersonal communications skills

Language Arts – Listening and Speaking
- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools

Does Character Really Matter?
- 97% of middle and high school students think it's important for them to be people with good character: *Josephson Institute of Ethics, "The Ethics of American Youth," 2000*
- *76% of middle schoolers and 65% of high schoolers say their teachers set a good ethical example: Josephson Institute of Ethics, "The Ethics of American Youth," 2000*
- 28% of middle schoolers and 41% of high schoolers are willing to lie if it would help them get a good job: *Josephson Institute of Ethics, "The Ethics of American Youth," 2000*
- *95% of middle schoolers and 94% of high schoolers feel it is important for people to trust them: Josephson Institute of Ethics, "The Ethics of American Youth," 2000*
- 98% of middle schoolers and 69% of high schoolers are satisfied with the ethics and character of their generation: *Josephson Institute of Ethics, "The Ethics of American Youth," 2000*

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The Importance of Character

"There is no substitute for character. You can buy brains, but you cannot buy character." – Robert A. Cook

Character will set you apart from others. *People will take notice when you exhibit good character. When someone turns in a lost wallet or purse with money, people are surprised.*
Character builds trust. *Deep relationships function on trust. People can trust you when you choose integrity over image, truth over convenience, honor over personal gain.*
Character raises your standards. *Character gives you a measuring stick to know right from wrong, good from bad.*
Character gives strength in tough, difficult times. *When the tough times come, character has the unique ability to carry the person through.*
Character improves your influence in others' lives. *People will not blindly continue to place their confidence in people they cannot trust. Character gives others the ability to trust you.*

6 Character Qualities Worth Developing

These are the six foundational qualities from **Character Counts**

Trustworthiness - Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable — *do what you say you'll do* • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — *stand by your family, friends and country*

Respect - Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Responsibility - Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — *consider the consequences* • Be accountable for your choices

Fairness - Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly

Caring - Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

Citizenship - Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

theseven**project** SUPPLEMENTAL CLASSROOM DISCUSSION LIFE 24/7

Developing Character

Make a commitment to develop good character.

Begin to know your values.
Talk issues and beliefs over with parents, clergy or other trusted adults. Why do you believe in those values? What makes them right or wrong?

What you do.
Your character will be defined by what you do, not just what you say or believe. The secret to developing good character is in your daily routine and actions. Who you are in private determines who you are in public.

Dream.
Set goals and dreams for your life.

Where are you right now on the following character traits? 1=poor, 10=strong:

Trait										
Trustworthiness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fairness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Caring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Citizenship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What is one thing you can start right now to improve each of the traits?
> *Trustworthiness*
> *Respect*
> *Responsibility*
> *Fairness*
> *Caring*
> *Citizenship*

Find good friends.
Develop friendships with others who have the same passion and values as you. Encourage and hold each other accountable to keep growing and developing.

Yearn to learn.
Read biographies about great historical leaders. Often you will see their character come through the situations they faced.

Admit mistakes.
> • Come clean and admit it.
> • Ask forgiveness and apologize.
> • Accept responsibility; no excuses, no blaming others.
> • Face the consequences; avoiding them only makes you weak.
> • Start again and move on!