The newspaper is a valuable source of information for students. Reading a newspaper each day keeps people informed about major issues and events that affect their lives. Helping students use a newspaper also teaches them an important skill for lifelong learning. A newspaper does not have to contain a youth feature to be fun for students. In fact, many students relish the opportunity to relate to “real world” issues. The topics in any day’s newspaper can excite students and motivate them to read and learn. The Unit 1 activities in this section make it easy and fun for teachers to introduce the newspaper to students. The activities that follow for Units 2, 3, and 4 focus on the themes of “Kindness Within” and “Recognizing Kindness” and offer “A Plan of Action.”
Newspapers are full of things students like: movies, sports, science, art and more. Newspapers are also the first rough draft of history. News events today will shape the lives of students for years to come. These activities will help your students get to know the newspaper in a fun way.

**Activities**

1. **It’s About Me!**
   Getting to know the newspaper can help students get to know themselves better, too. Have your class start by searching the newspaper for words, pictures, articles or ads that can express each child’s individuality. At the end of class, ask them to cut out the words and images for a poster titled “It’s About Me!” Hang the posters around the classroom.

2. **In the Mood**
   Challenge students to examine the newspaper for pictures that express moods or emotions. Have them identify each mood and label the pictures. Follow up by having them create a collage with the pictures, or by writing an “emotion poem.”

3. **Messages**
   Newspapers are about communication. And they can provide materials for even the youngest students to communicate kindness toward others. Have students cut out letters and glue them on paper to send a message to a friend.

4. **Comic Plays**
   Students can practice their verbal skills by taking turns reading the comic strips aloud with expression. Encourage them to really “ham it up.”

5. **TV Time**
   Direct students to the television schedule in the newspaper. Using the “TV Time” worksheet on the opposite page, ask them to fill in the watch faces showing the times of their favorite programs. Then have them write a schedule for their personal television viewing for that day. It may be fun to have students rank the programs from most to least favorite. Get them to discuss what their choices say about them.

6. **Healthy Habits**
   Advertisements can be a source of much information in the newspaper. Ask your students to find five ads that are about healthy products. Have them write a sentence about each ad telling why the product is good for you. Then ask them to find ads showing products that may not be healthy. Are there more ads for healthy or unhealthy products?

7. **Occupational Hazards**
   Ask students to scan the listings for job opportunities in the paper. Have them select one occupation and write the pros and cons of that particular job. Then ask them to list all the jobs they would consider as potential career choices. A good extension activity would be to have each student write a cover letter about him/herself to the potential employer.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
The things you like say a lot about you. That’s true in music, in sports, and in the TV shows you watch. Turn to the television listings in today’s newspaper. Using the watch faces below fill in the times and titles of your favorite shows. What is the earliest? The latest? The longest? Compare your favorite shows with those of your classmates. Do you all like the same things? What do your choices tell you about yourself?

1. Name of Show: ____________________________
2. Name of Show: ____________________________
3. Name of Show: ____________________________
4. Name of Show: ____________________________

Earliest show? ____________________________
Latest show? ____________________________
Longest show? ____________________________
Kindness gets its start within each individual. It is the core idea in all great religious teachings. As educators, we need to teach our children that being kind to others is, or should be, a natural way of life. We commit acts of kindness because the act of giving to others is personally rewarding and because it is the right thing to do.

Activities

1. **Shopping Spree**
   
   Have each student pretend to have received $1,000 to buy gifts for family members and friends. Ask students to look through the advertisements in the newspaper to make their selections. Then have them complete the worksheet titled “Shopping for Kindness” to show the results of the shopping spree.

2. **Winning Is an Attitude**
   
   Direct students to the Sports section of the newspaper. Have them look up the standings for professional, college, or high school sports. Ask them to write a letter to a last-place team offering words of encouragement and support. They may want to share personal experiences about when they felt unable to reach a goal. Mail the letters to the coach of the team.

3. **Helping the Homeless**
   
   Ask students to look through the food ads and create a menu for the people at a homeless shelter. Have them write descriptions of their creations, stressing adjectives that will make the dishes sound appealing. It may be helpful to begin with a discussion of the basic rules of good nutrition.

4. **Wonderful Weather**
   
   Your environment can affect how you feel. Have students find the weather report in the paper. Then ask them to select the five cities that they think are having the most pleasant weather. Locate those cities on the newspaper weather map, or on a map in your classroom. Explore how the environment around your students makes them feel.

5. **Kindness Wanted**
   
   Ask students to look through the Classified ads in the newspaper. Then challenge them to make their own Kindness Wanted Advertisement. They should include detailed descriptions of the kind acts that would be most beneficial. They might also identify jobs that require kindness.

6. **Smiles Are Contagious**
   
   Divide the class into small groups and have each group search the newspaper to find people who are smiling. The groups can cut out the smiling faces and count them. Show the class how to graph the results for each group. Then get them to make some math observations: which group found the most smiles; what was the difference between the most and the least; what was the total number of smiles found.

*Includes activity sheet for students.*
Today is your lucky day! You have just been handed $1,000 to spend. You’re going shopping with the help of the ads in today’s newspaper. But this will not be an ordinary shopping trip. You will be using your $1,000 in the most imaginative way you can to make the most people you like happy. What will you buy your family and friends? Add up your choices as you go along. Try to get as close to $1,000 as you can without going over.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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**Total Amount Spent:** $
Sometimes we need to look closely or search a little deeper to find the kindness that exists in the world. Not all acts of kindness are big acts. Many are small actions and gestures. Every day acts of kindness big and small are reported in the newspaper. The following activities will provide opportunities to experience the newspaper with an eye for kindness in the news.

**Activities**

1. **Comic Kindness**
   Have students find and read the comics page in today’s newspaper. Ask them to look for characters doing kind things for each other. Then ask them to find characters whose acts are not as kind. Have the class rewrite the dialogue in the bubbles so that the characters are talking about a kind act, or being kind.

2. **A Kindness Web**
   Direct your students to search the different sections of the newspaper to find four acts of kindness. Then have them complete the worksheet titled “A Kindness Web” by writing down the acts and what made them kind. Finish by having them number the acts on their worksheet in order of importance to them personally.

3. **The Worth of Pictures**
   Photographs can be a powerful tool of communication. Ask students to search the newspaper for photographs showing such different ways of being kind as sharing, loving, giving, cooperating and helping. Have them clip the pictures and mount them on a bulletin board or poster. See what other ways of being kind they find on their own.

4. **Sequencing Events**
   Have students browse through today’s paper and find an article about someone doing a kind act. Ask them to read the article and list the sequence of events as they happened. They may describe one event in each paragraph.

5. **Classifying the Movies**
   Direct students to the movie page(s) and have them read the titles. Based on the title, ask them to decide which movies would be classified as “kind” and which would be “unkind”? Get them to write a reason for each movie selection.

6. **Graphing Kindness**
   Ask your students to find an article in the newspaper that looks interesting. After they have read it, ask them to list the characters in it and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 in order of kindness. Ten is for the most kind. Using the worksheet titled “A Kindness Graph” have them show their ratings visually. Then ask them to write a brief explanation for their ratings.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
No matter where you live, acts of kindness can link us to each other. In this activity you will get to make a Kindness Web woven like a spider web. In the center of the web is the phrase “Acts of Kindness.” In the four circles surrounding the center write four kind acts you found by searching the newspaper. In each circle, write why you picked that act. Then number the four circles in order of importance to you personally.
In this activity you are going to get a chance to rate the kindness of people in the news. Read an article in the paper and write down the characters in it. Now rate their kindness on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most kind and 1 the least kind. Chart your findings on the Kindness Scale below. Make a bar or line graph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Character</th>
<th>Rating (1-10)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Kindness Scale**

- Really Kind
- Kind of Kind
- Really Unkind
To keep the kindness spirit alive, children should be encouraged to think about how they can make personal contributions to the kindness effort. Here are suggestions for making kindness an integral part of the classroom climate.

Activities

1. Happy Headlines

Have students rewrite a headline from the front page so that it has a kind message. Discuss the use of antonyms to make the task easier. Have the class create a list of antonyms on a classroom bulletin board.

2. Racial Harmony*

Race relations are a major news story this year. Ask students to search the paper for an article about racial conflict. Have them read the article, then using the worksheet titled “Racial Harmony” ask them to write out the five Ws—who, what, when, where and why. Encourage them to list ways that kindness can be used to resolve the differences.

3. Lend a Helping Hand

See if students can find someone in the newspaper for whom they would like to do a kind act. When they have made their selections, ask them why they chose this person and what they would do to help. Have them write a short story about it.

4. Kind Advice

Learning to give advice to others in a kind way is an important “helping” skill. Direct students to an advice column in the newspaper. Discuss the difference between giving advice to others in a kind way, and in a way that can hurt feelings. Brainstorm some questions and have them practice writing tactful, kind advice.

5. Organizations*

Divide students into small groups and have them search the newspaper for the names of organizations that provide help to society. On the worksheet titled “Doing Good” have them chart the services each organization provides. Then ask them to write a letter to one of the organizations asking what volunteers can do to help more.

6. Interviewing

Get students to find a person in the paper who has done something kind for others. Now have them make a list of five questions they would like to ask that person in an interview. Divide the class into pairs. Students in each pair can interview each other about a kind act they have performed.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
Race relations are a major news story this year. Search the paper for an article about racial attitudes or relationships. After reading the article list the story’s 5Ws—who, what, when, where and why. Finish by listing ways kindness can be used to resolve the differences. Draw a peaceful picture of your solution on the back of this sheet.

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

My Solutions:
There are many ways a community offers kindness to its residents. Divide into small groups and search the newspaper for organizations that provide help to society. In the space below chart the services each organization provides. Then write a letter to one of the organizations asking what volunteers can do to help even more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(date) ____________________________

(name) __________________________________

(organization) ____________________________

(address) __________________________________

(city, state, zip) __________________________________

**Dear** __________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
The “Random Acts of Kindness” movement began when a writer named Anne Herbert reached her limit for bad news about random acts of violence—and decided people needed to hear more good news about “random acts of kindness and senseless beauty.” The movement has now been adopted in schools across the country. It grows each time a child acts more kindly toward another. These activities have explored ways for students to expand the kindness in their lives. Here are some suggestions for extending the message.

1. **Newspapers**

   In small groups students can create their own Kindness Newspaper to recognize the kind acts of their classmates. Distribute the newspapers to other classrooms.

2. **Class Partnerships**

   Each student can partner up with a student from another class and read a book or an original story to their “buddy.” Start a letter writing campaign so students can stay in touch with each other. Make it a regular event.

3. **Spread the Word**

   Create a Random Acts of Kindness bulletin board in the main hallway of your school and ask the principal if he/she will announce students’ kind acts over the public address system each morning. Recognize students for their academic achievements over the P.A. system; birthdays, too. Everyone likes to be recognized.

4. **Video Kindness**

   Divide the class into small groups and have them write skits to depict kind acts. Let the students perform the skits and videotape them so they can watch themselves. It’s always exciting—and great fun—to see yourself on television.

5. **Keep It Alive**

   There are many instances in everyday life that would benefit from a Random Act of Kindness. Encourage your class to write cards to schoolmates when they are sick. Set up a clothing bank for needy students or donate clothes to a shelter. Visit a local hospital and have the class sing songs for the patients. See if students would like to volunteer their time in a soup kitchen, clean the neighborhood, or visit a senior citizen home and keep in touch with letters or phone calls. Make a commitment to kindness.
The Unit 1 activities in this section introduce the newspaper to younger students. The activities that follow for Units 2, 3 and 4 focus on conflict resolution and the interrelated themes of self esteem and violence prevention.
Activities

1. Scavenger Hunt
Send your students on a scavenger hunt. Photocopy and distribute the worksheet titled “Searching the Paper”. Have students look through the newspaper for the items on the worksheet.

2. Heads Up!
Students can get a great sense of the newspaper by simply reading the headlines. Headlines are actually short summaries of the stories. Have students select five headlines from today's paper and prepare a brief summary of what they think each story is about, based on the headline.

3. Quick Index
The index can be a great tool for moving around the newspaper quickly. Ask students to clip the index from today’s newspaper. Then ask them to write the page or section where they will find: a food item, a TV show, a used computer for sale, a comic, a sports team.

4. Buy Me!
Choose an interesting product or service advertisement in today’s newspaper. Allow your students to use the information in it to write a television or radio script to advertise the product or service.

5. Weather Watch
Locate the weather map and discuss the weather in various parts of the country. Have students write a forecast for the next day’s weather, based on the map.

6. Metric Measures
Students can measure five photos in the newspaper. This will give them practice with basic units of measurement. It can also provide a fun and easy way to introduce geometric concepts. What makes a square? What makes a rectangle? Then have them measure the width and depth, and add up the four sides to find the perimeter. See if they can find pictures with similar perimeters, but different shapes. Have them measure corner to corner and see how dividing a square or rectangle that way creates two triangles.
One great way to get to know your newspaper is to go on a scavenger hunt. See if you can find each of these items in today’s paper. Next to each item write the page number on which you found it.

- a picture of a person wearing glasses
- a map
- an advertisement for a car
- a picture of an animal
- a weather report
- a television listing
- the name of your city
- a picture of an athlete
- an action word
- the name of a television star
- the name of the newspaper
- a cartoon
- a story about another country
- a letter from a reader
- a movie review or ad
The better you feel about yourself, the more success you can have in dealing with other people—and with problems that arise between you. Helping students understand more about themselves and their values enables teachers to assist students in building self esteem. Children with low opinions of themselves more frequently resort to violence as a method of communication. Children with higher self esteem are more willing to experiment and devise creative solutions to problems. It follows, then, that prior to any discussion of conflict resolution it may be helpful for students to work through some self esteem builders.

### Activities

1. **All About Me**

   Ask students to cut out the letters of their first names from newspaper headlines and paste them on a piece of paper. Then have them cut out words or pictures that describe them. A variation of this activity would be to have them cut out pictures of things that they like. Have them make a collage titled “All About Me.” Hang all collages on a bulletin board.

2. **Human Traits**

   On the worksheet titled “Personalities” you will find a list of 17 human traits arranged in alphabetical order. The task is for students to arrange traits in the order of importance to each of them personally. This will enable students to focus on a personal view of what is important about a personality. It will clarify weaknesses and strengths they may have.

3. **Discussion**

   After students have completed the worksheet titled “Personalities,” have them divide into small groups for discussion. This will give them a chance to view the diversity of values.

4. **Finding Traits**

   Ask each student to choose five of the traits listed on the “Personalities” worksheet. Then have each of them find someone in the newspaper who illustrates each characteristic. See if they can find one individual who personifies all five of the traits they chose.

5. **Acting Out Strips**

   Students can also skim the comic sections for characters who possess these traits. They can act out strips that show how the characters exhibit some of these traits.

6. **What Is Important in Life?**

   Realizing what is most important in life is an important part of feeling good about oneself. When a student can focus on what is really important, he or she is better able to avoid getting involved in conflicts about unimportant issues. The worksheet “What’s Important” will help clarify what is really significant for students. A good follow up to this activity is to allow students to rank the stories on the front page of the newspaper in order of importance to them. Have each student rank the stories from most important to least important and then discuss the results with the class. It is important for all opinions to be valid.
Here is a list of 17 words describing people and their personalities. Using numbers, rate them in order of importance to you. Study the list carefully. Then place a 1 next to the quality that is most important to you. Place a 2 next to that which is second most important to you. The quality that is least important to you should be number 17. There are no right or wrong answers. Can you find people in the newspaper who exhibit these personality traits?

**Ambitious** (hard-working, aspiring)

**Capable** (competent, effective)

**Cheerful** (lighthearted, joyful)

**Clean** (neat, tidy)

**Courageous** (standing up for your beliefs)

**Forgiving** (willing to pardon others)

**Helpful** (working for the welfare of others)

**Honest** (sincere, truthful)

**Imaginative** (daring, creative)

**Independent** (self-reliant)

**Intellectual** (intelligent)

**Logical** (consistent, rational)

**Loving** (affectionate, tender)

**Open-minded** (open to new ideas)

**Obedient** (respectful)

**Polite** (well-mannered)

**Self-controlled** (restrained)
Knowing what is really important in life will help you avoid getting into conflicts about things that aren’t important. Here is an exercise you can do to find out what you really value. Use the list below and mark a V next to items that are very important to you. Put an I next to those things that are important (but not very important) and an N next to those things that are not important to you. Then from the list of things that are very important to you, circle two things that are the most important to you. Then put together your own list of favorite activities from the newspaper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being the best in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having time alone</td>
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<td>Helping at home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating healthfully</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having lots of toys/games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicing my religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being with my friends</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wearing nice clothes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Riding my bike</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being with my family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winning at games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being with people who like me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being physically fit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being trusted by my friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching television</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling happy</td>
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An activity sheet for students
There are many different ways to handle conflict. A person may compromise, cooperate, compete, avoid or give in. Discuss and define each of these styles with your students.

**Activities**

1. **Survey**
   
   Survey the class to see which style each student feels he/she uses most often. Graph the results of the survey on the board.

2. **Work in Small Groups**
   
   Students can work in small groups to complete this activity. Assign each group one of the conflict styles and have them find a story in the newspaper showing that form of conflict resolution. If a story cannot be found, students can also skim the comic section. Have each group write a summary of the conflict and the way in which it was resolved. Then ask them their opinions about whether that conflict style was the best one for the situation. Get the students to role-play the situation as it happened and again as they would have preferred to see it happen.

3. **Scavenger Hunt**
   
   Have students work in pairs or small groups to search the newspaper for:
   - A picture of people getting along
   - A headline that uses a synonym for conflict
   - A map that shows a trouble spot
   - An advertisement for an item that can be used with another person
   - An organization that encourages people to work together

   Afterward, have students analyze the effectiveness of their group dynamics. How well did they get along? Were there any conflicts in the group? How were they resolved?

4. **Sequencing Events**
   
   In this activity students will be asked to search the newspaper for a conflict (or the teacher can paraphrase a conflict situation). Ask students to list specific events from the conflict and place them in sequential order in the graphic organizer on the worksheet titled “Breaking Down Conflict”. This activity may be completed as a class with the events listed on the board. Or the students can sequence the events independently and then complete the graphic organizer.

5. **Identifying the 5 Ws**
   
   Have students skim the newspaper and select an article about a conflict or problem. Ask them to read the article to determine the Who, What, When, Where and Why of the story. Each of the 5 Ws can be underlined in a different crayon.

6. **Questioning**
   
   As a follow-up to the 5 Ws, ask students to find a conflict situation in the newspaper. Then have them identify one of the main participants in the conflict and write 5 questions they would ask that person to help resolve the conflict.
BREAKING DOWN CONFLICT

Think about the specific events that are a part of the conflict in the newspaper. In each circle write a phrase to describe one event. Be sure that the descriptions are written in the order in which the events happened.
No one can escape conflict. Conflict is a normal part of our lives. It can be as small as an argument or as big as a war. It occurs whenever people live, work, or play together. The reason is simple - different people have different needs. And when those needs clash, they become conflict. These activities will help students reflect on ways to solve problems and conflicts without violence.

### Activities

1. **Brainstorming**
   
   Together as a class, locate a news article in the newspaper that interests the students and involves a problem or conflict. Have the class brainstorm possible solutions to the problem or conflict. List all of the ideas on the board. Don’t judge or comment about the solutions. Accept all answers as valid. Then as a class, choose one “best” solution and rank the other possible solutions in order of most to least desirable. Have students complete the worksheet titled “Solving Conflict.”

2. **Predicting Outcomes**
   
   Completing the worksheet “What Comes Next?” will enable students to develop stronger decision-making skills by looking at problematic situations and predicting outcomes. Tell the students that weighing the possible outcome of a situation can help a person be prepared for whatever choice he/she decides to make. This activity will help your students to predict outcomes and balance the pros and cons of each resolution.

3. **Creating a Dialogue**
   
   Tell the students about the importance of talking about a problem in order to find an effective solution. Then have students skim the newspaper for a conflict or problem. Get them to identify the people in the situation. Then have them create their own dialogue for each person. The dialogues may be read aloud with different students reading the parts.

4. **Writing Advice Columns**
   
   Direct students to an advice column in the newspaper. Ask them the purpose of the column. Ask students to select a classroom rule and think of a situation in which the class rule was broken. Have students write advice letters to provide alternative actions to violating the rules, or for dealing with those who violate the rules.

5. **Cooperation**
   
   Ask students to find pictures of three famous people in the newspaper. Have them cut the pictures out and paste them on a sheet of oak-tag. Get them to explain why cooperation is important for each individual. Then have each student pick an adult who lives or works near their home or school. Ask them to list reasons cooperation is important in that person’s life or work. Make a class list of as many professions as possible in which cooperation is important.

6. **Help Wanted**
   
   Help students find the Classified section of the newspaper. Have them skim the want ads and find different jobs that require the ability to resolve conflicts. Ask them to write their own want ad for the ideal conflict resolver. What characteristics and skills would be necessary? The ad can be designed to resemble a wanted poster.
1. Summarize the problem that you have chosen:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. List three possible solutions:

1. ________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Then list the pros and cons of each solution:

1. pro:________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

1. con:________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

2. pro:________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

2. con:________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

3. pro:________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

3. con:________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

4. Circle your solutions in order from most to least desirable:

1-2-3  2-3-1  3-2-1

1-3-2  2-1-3  3-1-2
Look in the comic section for a strip that shows a conflict. Write down four possible ways to solve the conflict. Then write the best outcome and the worst outcome that could result from each solution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Solution</th>
<th>Best Outcome</th>
<th>Worst Outcome</th>
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The power to choose something besides conflict is inside every one of us—even if the people around us are in conflict. The way for students to get that power is to learn to handle thoughts and feelings before they become problems. These activities have explored ways for students to deal with things that can lead to conflict. Here are some suggestions for extending the anti-conflict message in your school.

**Peace Police**

Establish a Peace Police Force in the school. Give volunteers a sash (it can be made from a colorful sheet or fabric) and have them design it on their own. Then get the class to create signs throughout the school to promote the idea of solving problems in a peaceful way.

**Day of Peace**

Brainstorm ideas for a Day of Peace in your class or school. Make posters announcing the day. Write a letter to invite a local police officer or religious leader to speak to the class about how he or she deals with conflicts on the job. Write letters, cards or poems to friends, classmates or family members. Visit a local hospital and sing songs or bring sweet treats.

**Conflict Files**

Have each child select an ongoing local issue or a major world conflict and follow the progress every week in the newspaper. Ask students to keep a file of articles and, for homework each week, write a short response as to how the problems are being resolved. The students may make an oral report at the end of the year.

**Peaceful Problem-Solver Bulletin Board**

Create a Peaceful Problem-Solver Bulletin Board in your classroom or school. When a child helps to resolve a problem, tack his or her name, the date and a description of the peaceful action to the display. Ask the principal to include these accomplishments in morning announcements.

**Family Interviews**

Ask students to interview family members about their methods for solving problems. Have them write each family member’s quotes on a page and beside the quotes draw a picture of the family member. Staple the pages together to make a booklet.

**Problem-Solver Book Log**

Have the children keep a log of all the books they read. In most of the books the characters will experience a problem and a resolution. Ask students to jot down the problem and the solution for each book. For additional fun, students could do the same thing for their favorite television shows.
The Building Character activities in Unit 1 explore issues of character and community. The next three Units build on that knowledge and examine responsibility, resourcefulness, caring and kindness.
**ACTIVITIES**

1. **Character Issues**
   *Skill: identifying significant characteristics of an effective citizen*
   
   Brainstorm a list of character issues important to your class such as honesty, fairness, respect, courage, etc. Have students find an example of a person in the newspaper exhibiting each of the traits.

2. **Community Service**
   *Skill: research an issue of interest and defend a position on that issue*
   
   Kids who feel a stake in their communities are more likely to want to be good citizens. As a class project, skim the newspaper for stories of happenings in your community that students think are important. Have students discuss what impact each story has on them personally.

3. **Character in the News**
   *Skill: writing for fluency*
   
   Strong character development is essential to a good story. The newspaper is a terrific source of interesting people to write about. Have the students find someone in today’s newspaper who would make a good character to write about. They can write that person’s name on a web graphic organizer. Then, on each line, they can write a fact about that person or a quote that tells something about his or her appearance or personality. On the back of this sheet, the students can write a paragraph with a vivid description of that character.

4. **War and Courage**
   *Skill: evaluating impact of significant international events*
   
   The newspaper regularly reports on military conflicts around the world. Of course, these are prime examples of courage in people’s lives. Have students find a story of a military conflict and analyze how courage is shown by each side.

5. **Helping the Homeless**
   *Skill: using strategies to develop vocabulary*
   
   Direct the students to look through the food ads and create a menu for the people at a homeless shelter. Have them write descriptions of the creations, using vivid language to make their dishes appealing.

*Includes activity sheet for students.*
CHARACTER in the NEWS

Strong character development is essential to a good story. The newspaper is a terrific source of interesting people to write about. Find someone in today’s newspaper who would make a good character to write about. Write that person’s name in the circle below. Then, on each line, write a fact about that person or a quote that tells something about his or her appearance or personality. On the back of this sheet, write a paragraph with a vivid description of that character.
Respect begins with respect for self. Only if we respect ourselves can we learn to respect the values, feelings and differences of others. Honoring others is essential to building good character.

**Activities**

1. **Acrostic Respect**
   
   *Skill: writing poetry*
   
   An acrostic is a poem created by taking a word and starting each line of the poem with the different letters of that word. Using the “Acrostic Respect” activity sheet, have students write an acrostic for the word RESPECT, using words they find in the headlines of the newspaper.

2. **Respect for Women**
   
   *Skill: examining data to determine adequacy of evidence*
   
   Ask students this question, “Are women treated with as much respect as men?” Encourage discussion of this question and then have them analyze the stories in today’s newspaper to support their position. If they think women are treated equally, have them find stories that illustrate respect for women. If they feel women are not treated equally, have them find stories to show that.

3. **Respect in Jobs**
   
   *Skill: recognizing that money is a medium of exchange*
   
   Often, money is used to measure success. Do your students think that money can reflect any aspects of character? Using salary as a measure, which jobs in the Help Wanted ads would students say are the most respected?

4. **Women at School**
   
   *Skill: writing persuasive texts*
   
   Do the students feel that women are respected at your school in the jobs they do? Ask the students to read some letters to the editor to see how they are written. Then have them write a letter to the editor telling how they think women are treated in their school community.

5. **Peer Pressure**
   
   *Skill: understanding how economic decisions are influenced by the culture*
   
   One key character quality is the ability to withstand peer pressure and be self-assured enough to not always go along with the crowd. Some students feel a great deal of pressure to wear only the right labels and to dress a certain way. Have class members work in small groups to create an ad campaign for a no-name, low-priced sneaker. The campaign should focus on having the strength of character to be independent and not care about the name on the shoe. After seeing how display ads in the newspaper are designed, have them create a display ad for this shoe.

*Includes activity sheet for students.*
An activity sheet for students

Acrostic Respect

An acrostic is a poem created by taking a word and starting each line of the poem with the different letters of that word. In the space below, write an acrostic for the word RESPECT, using words you find in the headlines of the newspaper. Your poem does not need to rhyme.
Learning to be responsible begins in early childhood and continues throughout a person’s life. Being resourceful enables a person to be more responsible and tackle more of life’s challenges independently.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Group Responsibility**
   
   **Skill:** developing ability to participate productively in groups
   
   Responsibility is important to the function of groups in our society. Have students find pictures of various groups in the newspaper and write how being responsible is necessary to the healthy functioning of each group.

2. **Presidential Responsibility**
   
   **Skill:** describing how public agenda is shaped by political leaders
   
   Part of being responsible is keeping promises. When he was campaigning, the President made many promises. Based on what your students see in the newspaper, do they think he made good on what he promised? Have students discuss the current activities of the president with their parents. After a few weeks of reading stories in the newspaper, ask them to write a paragraph on whether they feel the president is a responsible person.

3. **Be Resourceful**
   
   **Skill:** making choices
   
   Discuss the meaning of resourcefulness with your students. Then challenge them to see just how resourceful they are. Using the “Be Resourceful!” activity sheet, have them imagine that they need to survive alone with just five items from today’s newspaper. Which five items would they choose and how would they use each?

4. **Resourceful Planning**
   
   **Skill:** understanding that individuals must make choices from limited resources
   
   Making the most of the money you have requires resourcefulness. Ask students to pretend they are hosting two out-of-town friends for the weekend. They have $100 to spend entertaining these friends. With the entertainment listings from the paper, have them plan a weekend’s entertainment, being as resourceful as they can with their money. Compare weekend plans as a class. Post some of the most creative ideas on the board.

5. **Hall of Fame and Shame**
   
   **Skill:** making choices by analyzing consequences and solutions
   
   The way sports figures or entertainers behave often makes news. Sometimes the behavior is good. Sometimes it is not. Using the “Hall of Fame and Shame” activity sheet, have students choose sports or entertainment stars from the newspaper for a character Hall of Fame and a character Hall of Shame. Ask them to write a reason for each choice.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
Imagine you need to survive alone with just five items that you can find pictured in today’s newspaper. Which five items would you choose? How would you use each one? Be sure to include the page number where you found the items.

ITEM #1

I would use to

ITEM #2

I would use to

ITEM #3

I would use to

ITEM #4

I would use to

ITEM #5

I would use to
The way sports figures or entertainers behave often makes news. Sometimes the behavior is good. Sometimes it is not. In the spaces below, choose sports or entertainment stars from the newspaper for a character Hall of Fame and a character Hall of Shame. Write your reason for each choice inside the frame.
ACTIVITIES

1. Caring Acts
   *Skill: communicating care, concern and consideration*
   Caring about people brings us together. Instruct the students to use the newspaper to find people who have shown they care about others. The students can make a list of their acts and rank them in order of importance.

2. Racial Relations
   *Skill: evaluate situations involving conflicts*
   Race relations are an important issue in our country. Ask students to search the newspaper for an article about racial conflict. Have them read the article and identify the five W’s and an H - who, what where, when, why and how. Encourage them to list ways that kindness can be used to resolve the differences.

3. Be the Encourager
   *Skill: understanding that people are influenced by their experiences*
   Have the students turn to the Sports section and look up the standings for professional sports teams. Ask them to write a letter of encouragement to the last place team. They can share their own personal experiences and then mail the letters.

4. Holiday Character*
   *Skill: identifying and analyzing various causes*
   Many of our holidays celebrate aspects of character. Have students skim the newspaper for signs of any upcoming holiday. They can create a greeting card for that event, emphasizing the character traits being celebrated.

5. Graphing Kindness
   *Skill: collecting and organizing data*
   Have the students read an article from the newspaper and list the characters in it. They should rate the characters from 1 to 10 in order of kindness with ten being the most kind. Then they can make a “Kindness Graph” to show their ratings. Have them write 3 observations about their graphs.

*Includes activity sheet for students.

Being a caring and compassionate individual is a reward in itself because it makes us feel good just to do the right thing. We need to teach children that being kind to others is a natural way to live and our kind acts can be contagious.
Caring about people brings us together. In this activity use the newspaper to find people who have shown they care about others. Make a list of their acts and rank them in order of importance to you.

**Caring Acts**

1. .................................................................
   Rank: .............................................................

2. .................................................................
   Rank: .............................................................

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   Rank: .............................................................

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   Rank: .............................................................

8. .................................................................
   Rank: .............................................................

9. .................................................................
   Rank: .............................................................

10. .................................................................
    Rank: .............................................................

*Acts of caring*
Many of our holidays celebrate aspects of character. Skim the newspaper to find an upcoming holiday. Then make a greeting card showing how a character trait may be celebrated on that holiday. For example, Columbus Day celebrates the courage of the explorer. Veterans Day celebrates the perseverance of soldiers. Design your card in the space below.
Learning how to develop the qualities of respect, courage, responsibility, truthfulness, fairness, self-discipline and caring can pay big dividends for children in school and in life. These activities have explored ways students can use the newspaper to become more aware of the importance of character in their lives. Here are more suggestions for extending the lessons about character.

Character Leaders

Invite political, religious, coaching or community-service leaders to visit your class to discuss the importance of different character qualities. Or arrange a field trip to a community service agency so that students can see character qualities at work. Ask the students to make a list of things they would like to ask before meeting the leaders.

Write Your Leaders

Follow the news of your city, state legislature or Congress and have students write political leaders when issues of character come up or should be considered before official action. Ask if your class could meet with a political leader to discuss an issue that is important to them.

Character File

Create a class Character File with separate sections for courage, respect, responsibility, caring, truthfulness, self-discipline and fairness. Every time a student sees a story in a newspaper or magazine reflecting one of these qualities, clip it and add it to the file. By the end of the year you will have a great cross-section of examples for teaching character in the classroom.

T-Shirts

Create a T-Shirt design promoting character values. Have T-shirts printed for students in your class. Or sell them to raise money for a community service organization or activity.

Posters and Videos

Run a poster contest for the school, offering prizes for the best posters promoting character. Borrow a video camera and have kids write and film TV ads promoting character. Start with 15 second ads, then try 30 second ones. Show them at school. Alert local papers and TV stations about the video or poster project.

Caring Campaign

Pick a charity or community service effort that the class could work on as a class project. Volunteer to pick up litter, plant flowers, visit children in hospitals, make cards for senior citizens, etc. Have kids keep a Caring Diary of their efforts. Publish excerpts from the diary in a school newsletter or newspaper.
The Unit 1 activities in this guide make it easy and enjoyable for teachers to introduce the newspaper and to explore issues of self-esteem in the news. Units 2, 3, and 4 build on that knowledge with “Getting to Know You,” a group of activities exploring personal values and interests; “Honor Yourself,” a series on self-worth; and “Positive Emotions,” a collection designed to recognize the feelings that bring success and happiness.
Newspapers are full of things that kids love—sports, computers, music, TV, food and more. Newspapers also give students a way to explore their interests and values. These activities are designed to introduce the newspaper and to begin discussion of self-esteem.

## Activities

### 1. I Am a Child

Ask students to find a story in the newspaper that discusses a problem. As a class, read the story. Then have students try to come up with a solution. After that, challenge them to put themselves in a younger child’s place and think about how the solution might be different if they were that younger child. In what ways does their point of view change?

### 2. What’s in a Name?

Direct the students to find the letters of their names in the headlines of the paper and cut them out. Ask them to paste the letters vertically along the edge of a separate piece of paper. Then have them find words in the newspaper that begin with these letters that describe themselves. Direct students to paste the words next to the appropriate letters or write their own describing words to fit the letters.

### 3. Numbers, Numbers, Numbers*

Numbers are everywhere in the newspaper. Using the “Numbers, Numbers, Numbers” activity sheet, have students go through the paper and find numbers that are important to them. Numbers to find may include their age, street number, telephone number, zip code, lucky number, favorite time of the day, and birth date. What other numbers are meaningful in their lives? Have them exchange sheets with a classmate to explore the importance with others.

### 4. All I Want... All I Need

Ask students if they know the difference between the things they want and the things they need. What are their basic needs? Are there some things they need that are not objects but feelings? Can something that they really need be a want for someone else? Have the students look through today’s newspaper for pictures of 3 things that they need and 3 things that they want. Which are easier to find in the paper? Why do they think that is so? Make a bulletin board display or poster of the class needs and wants.

### 5. How Are You?

Talk with your students about the way they feel today. Then ask them to find a picture in today’s comics that shows someone who feels the same way they do. Have them cut it out and write an explanation of their choice. Finish by having students take turns looking at each person’s pictures and guessing how each person feels.

### 6. Health Is Wealth

Some people say having your health is more important than having money. Ask the students if they agree with that. Then ask students to look through the newspaper for advertisements for products that help people stay healthy. Direct each to make a chart that shows the item and how it helps us stay healthy. Ask them to put a star next to those items that they believe are very important for good health.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
Numbers are everywhere in the newspaper. Go through the different sections today and see if you can find numbers for the categories below. Cut the numbers out and paste or tape them in the spaces below. Next to each, write the page number(s) where you found the numbers. For extra fun, in the last space write out a number that is meaningful to you. Exchange this sheet with a classmate and see if he/she can find the number in the newspaper. Then have the classmate write three ideas on the back of this sheet guessing what the number means to you. Did they guess correctly? Did anyone get it right on the first guess?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address Numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
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<td>(last 4 digits)</td>
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<td>Zip Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucky Number</td>
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<td>Favorite Time of Day</td>
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<td>Day of Birth</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Meaningful Number</td>
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<td>(no more than 5 digits)</td>
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**Activities**

1. **What Do You Like To Do?**
   Have students scan the newspaper to find pictures of things they like to do. Using the “What Do You Like To Do?” activity sheet, have them write down the activities in a list. Have them check the appropriate box next to each activity. On the back of the worksheet have them write one thing that is good about being alone sometimes, and one thing that is good about being with other people.

2. **Epitaph**
   Explain to the class that an obituary is a notice of death with a brief biography of the person who has died. Then explain how an epitaph is usually a sentence or phrase that highlights a person’s life. Read an obituary from the newspaper with the class. Then instruct students to write an epitaph for their own life as they have lived it until now.

3. **Head in the Clouds**
   Have the class turn to the weather report, and ask them to look for words and symbols that could also describe how they feel today. Discuss how adjectives that offer physical description can also be used to describe moods. Then have students look at the weather map to find a place where the weather suits their mood. Ask them to draw a picture of themselves enjoying a vacation in this place.

4. **Self-Esteem Steps**
   Have students take steps to getting to know themselves. Using the “Self-Esteem Steps” activity sheet, have them find and cut out pictures or words in the different categories and stick or write them on the steps shown. Ask them to rank the items in order of importance to them and place them that way on the steps. The most important item should be at the top.

5. **Interest Inventory**
   As a class, select several articles that are from different sections of the newspaper. Read each of the articles and have students rate them according to their interest level. Students should award 1 point for “very boring” and 10 points for “very interesting.” Ask students to record the information from this interest inventory in a bar graph. Then let students repeat the activity on their own, evaluating different sections of the paper, rating stories in one section, rating the photos or rating the ads.

*Includes activity sheet for students.*
Scan the newspaper to find pictures or articles about things you like to do. In the spaces below, write down the activities in a list. If you like to do the activity by yourself, check “alone”. If you like to do the activity with others, check “with people.” Then, on the back of this sheet, write one thing that is good about being alone sometimes, and one thing that is good about being with other people.
Here’s a chance to step up your self-esteem. Go through today’s newspaper and cut out pictures or words that describe your answers for the list below. Rank the items in order of importance to you and place them that way on the steps. Your most important item should be on the top step.

- A word that you think describes you
- Someone you would like to meet
- Something you’d like to own
- Your favorite sport
- Your horoscope for today
- Place you’d like to visit
- Car you’d like to buy
UNIT 3: Honor Yourself

Each human being is unique. Although no one is perfect, every individual is special in his or her way. How we think and feel, what we believe, how we act, and what we have experienced add up to create the type of person we are. To be happier and more successful, children need to respect and honor themselves. These activities are designed to help them do that.

Activities

1. Comic Characters
   Have students turn to the comics and select a character that they like. Ask them to cut out and paste the character on a sheet of paper, or draw or trace the character. Ask the students to then draw themselves having a conversation with the comic character. In dialogue bubbles, ask students to write three good things they would say about themselves. Then have them write an appropriate response from the comic character they chose from the newspaper.

2. 3-2-1 Action
   Ask students to find an interesting action photograph in the Sports section. Have them cut it out and paste it on another sheet of paper. Then challenge them to imagine they were the person featured in the picture when it was taken. Have them describe what they heard, saw, and felt as the scene unfolded. Then have them tell what happened after the picture was taken.

3. Reward Yourself
   Have the students think about the kind of people they are. Then ask what kind of reward they think they deserve. Direct them to the “For Sale” section in the Classified Ads. Have them write an ad for something they would give themselves as an honor. Encourage the students to use as many descriptive words and details as they can. They should also explain why this item would be a good way to reward themselves.

4. Job Resume
   Explain to the class that a resume is a summary of a person’s experience that is written as part of a job application. Then have the students look through the Help Wanted ads to find a job that they would like to apply for right now. Direct them to write a letter to the employer explaining why they would be good at the job. Next have students look through the ads for a job that they would like to do in the future. What experiences do they think they should get to make them candidates for the job? Finish by having students write resumes to fit that future job.

5. Tonight’s Guest Star*
   Direct your students to the television grid in the newspaper. Have them pretend that they can appear as a guest star on the show of their choice. Using the activity sheet titled “Tonight’s Guest Star,” ask them to write a brief synopsis of the program highlighting their appearance—and the kind of role or character they would play. Be sure that they include the name of the show, and the time and channel it is on.

6. All the Senses
   Some things appeal to the senses, and others do not. Have students search the newspaper to find examples of something that appeals to their sight, hearing, feeling, taste and smell. Ask students to pick two senses they feel would best reflect the kind of people they are. Have them explain their reasons to the class.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
Your feelings about television say something about your interests and values. Find the television grid in today’s newspaper. Pretend that you can appear as a guest star on the show of your choice. In the space below, write a brief plot outline highlighting your appearance—and the kind of role or character you would play. Be sure to include the name of the show, the time and channel it is on, and whether it is a talk show, game show, cartoon, comedy or drama.

Name of Show: .................................................................

Time: ................................................... Channel/Network: ..............................................

Type of Show: ...................................................................................................................

My Episode Title: .................................................................

Plot Outline: ................................................................................................................................
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45
Positive emotions have great value. If you learn respect for yourself, you can understand that everyone is worthy of respect. People who understand their value develop positive self-esteem. They set goals for themselves, because it is a satisfying experience to reach those goals. They make the right personal choices, because they take charge of their lives. People who have high self-esteem are high achievers. They also are positive role models for the rest of society.

## Activities

1. **Emotions**
   
   Ask students to think about how they feel today. Then have them skim the newspaper to find a picture of a person who is experiencing a similar emotion. Ask students to write a brief comparison between the emotions of the person they selected and their own emotions. What similarities and differences do they see?

2. **About Face**
   
   **As a class, read an article from the newspaper that involves several different people. Using the “About Face” activity sheet, ask students to list all the people mentioned in the article. Next to each person have the students write down which emotion they believe the person in the story is experiencing. Then have them draw a picture showing how each person feels.**

3. **Whom Do You Trust?**
   
   What does it mean to trust someone? Ask students to search the newspaper for a picture of someone they feel they could trust. Then have them list the reasons why they believe they could trust this person. Challenge students to find a picture in the paper of someone who is not trustworthy. Ask them to list the reasons why this would not be someone they would trust. Finally, have them list five things they could do to build trust with another person.

4. **May I Help You?**
   
   People who are willing to help others with their problems can build their own self-esteem at the same time. The advice column is a good vehicle for helping others. Direct students to an advice column in the newspaper (Read the column in advance to make sure its material is appropriate.) Ask students to select one of the letters, read it and summarize the problem in a few sentences. Can they come up with different ways to solve the problem? Using the “May I Help You?” activity sheet, have them pick their best solution and write it as a reply to the person who wrote the letter. They should use the proper letter form. Then they can compare their solution with the suggestion in the newspaper.

5. **The Making of a Role Model**
   
   Challenge students to choose a personality in the newspaper who is a good role model. How do they think they compare to that person? In what ways are they alike? How do the students believe they are different? Have students make a list of the characteristics that are similar and different from their role model.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
As a class, read an article from the paper that involves several different people. In the spaces below, list the all people mentioned in the article. Next to each person write down which emotion you believe each person in the story is experiencing. Draw a picture showing how each person feels.
An activity sheet for students

MAY I HELP YOU?

People who are willing to help others with their problems can build their own self-esteem at the same time. A newspaper advice column is a way people help each other. With your teacher, find an advice column in the newspaper. Select one of the letters, read it and summarize the problem in one or two sentences. Can your class come up with different ways to solve the problem? Pick the one solution you think is best and write it as a reply to the person who wrote the letter. Be sure to use the proper letter form.

Dear __________________________:

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Dear __________________________:

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Sincerely, _________________________
Learning how to develop positive self-esteem can pay big dividends for children in school and in life. These activities have explored ways students can build on their values, interests and strengths to become happier and more successful people. But more can be done. Here are some suggestions for extending the self-esteem lessons.

**Time Capsule**
It is traditional to pass down stories from generation to generation. Have students, or the class as a whole, look through the newspaper through the year for articles that show positive self-esteem or success. As they progress through the year, have them write notes on why they selected the different articles. At the end of the year, put the articles in a time capsule to be buried on the school grounds, or passed along to a younger class.

**Cartoons & Photos**
Organize a class scrapbook of comics, photos and editorial cartoons that show or comment on people’s behavior. Let students paste in items that reflect strong self-esteem or success. Review the scrapbook monthly, and at the end of the year. As a companion activity, students could clip cartoons, photos and comics that show negative behavior. Keep this scrapbook as a comparison.

**Biographies**
Create a Biography Anthology for the students in your class. Have each child write on a sheet of paper a few people in the classroom he/she would enjoy working with. Pair up the children and have each work on writing their biographies. Each child should prepare a list of questions to be answered by the partner to find out important information to complete a biography. Then they can interview each other. The interviewing process will take several sessions. Have the students write a biography of their partner based on the information.

**Family Tree**
The students can trace their roots by drawing their family trees. Ask them to include extended members of the family like grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. How many generations are they able to go back? Finish by having students draw their family trees. For fun, see if they can draw a “friend tree” in the same fashion.

**Timeline**
Create a class timeline covering positive events, or examples of positive self-esteem. The timeline could cover just the school year, or you could go back and cover the lives of students in past years as well. On the timeline mark important positive events for individuals or the class as a whole.

**Mentoring**
Create a partnership between your class and younger classes and have students mentor, tutor or show friendship to their younger peers. Pair up one older student with one younger so that they can develop a friendship. Plan events or field trips on which the two classes could go together.
The behavior that makes news—both good and bad—can be a provocative beginning point for discussing the need for optimism in life. The Unit 1 activities in this guide make it easy and fun for teachers to introduce the newspaper and optimistic behavior to students. Units 2, 3, and 4 extend that knowledge with “Be an Optimist,” a collection of activities designed to build optimism; “Surround Yourself With Optimists,” a series on the importance of friends in developing optimism; and “All We Need Is Optimism,” a look at optimism as it relates to current events.
Activities

1. Optimism in Sports
   Attitude is always a factor when participating in a sports event. Athletes who believe in themselves will usually perform better than those who don’t. Have students find an example in the Sports section of a player who is expressing optimism. What is he or she saying that indicates an optimistic attitude? How is optimism reflected in the athlete’s performance?

2. Television Watch*
   Ask students to look through the television section of the paper to find their favorite shows. Using the “Television Watch” activity sheet, have them make a list of characters who are optimists and another list of those who are pessimists. Then have the students write an example of a specific act or a statement that characterizes one TV character as an optimist or pessimist. Finally, ask students to pick which TV character they identify with most—and why.

3. Optimism Is Only a Word
   How many words are related to or similar to optimistic? Challenge students to search through their newspapers for words that have a connection to optimistic to create an Optimistic Kid word bank. Ask students to draw or paint a self portrait and use the words to make a personal optimism poster.

4. Successful Award
   Direct students to the comics and ask them to read and find characters who are optimists. Have them design a certificate of recognition for their characters, explaining why they picked each to receive the award. Then have them repeat the process for the pessimists in the comics.

5. Optimistic Advertising
   Advertisements try to show consumers why products or businesses are the best. Ask the class to scan the paper for ads that express a high level of optimism. What statements make the ad optimistic? What images? Using these ads as examples, have the students create their own advertisements that promote their class or school.

6. Make Three Wishes*
   Have the students scan the newspaper for stories that are thought-provoking or present problems that need solutions. Based on the articles in the paper, what three wishes would your students make that would change the course of events for the better? Using the “Make Three Wishes” activity sheet, have them list their wishes and explain why they made these choices.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
### TELEVISION WATCh

Look through the television section of the newspaper for your favorite television shows. In the spaces below, make a list of the characters who are optimists and a list of those who are pessimists. Then write an example of a specific act or a statement that shows one TV character to be an optimist or pessimist. Finally, tell which character on TV you identify with most—and why.

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<th>Optimists</th>
<th>Pessimists</th>
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Example of why (write character’s name) is a/an (optimist/pessimist)

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Who I relate most to...

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Why...

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52
What would you wish for if you had a chance to make the world better? Scan the newspaper for stories that are thought-provoking or that present problems needing solutions. Based on the articles in the paper, what three wishes would you make that would change the course of events for the better? In the stars on this page, write your wishes and explain why you made your choices.
People who feel confidence in what will happen, who project a hopeful outlook, who trust in the future and who expect the best possible outcome from events succeed because they are optimists. Optimism may come from a feeling of inner goodness we are born with, the experience of a caring and nurturing environment or a combination of the two. How we think and feel about life’s possibilities can go a long way toward determining how our lives unfold.

Activities

1. **Buying a Home**

A good way to get students thinking optimistically is to have them pick a “dream house” to live in. Have students check out the real estate listings in the paper and find a dream house for themselves. Tell them that money should not be a factor when making this purchase. Ask them to write a colorful description of the house they would be interested in, using vivid adjectives.

2. **Advice Column**

Newspaper advice columns offer recommendations and counseling to help people solve problems. Direct students to the advice columns in today’s newspaper. Have them rewrite a letter seeking advice, or an answer, so that it reflects an optimistic point of view. What course of action will they suggest? Urge them to think positive!

3. **Who’s Like You?**

Discuss with students whether they think they are optimists, pessimists or somewhere in between. Then ask them to find someone in the newspaper who has a similar way of looking at life or a problem in society. Ask students to detail why their point of view is like the person in the article. Are they optimists, pessimists or somewhere in between?

4. **Ranking Horoscopes*”

A horoscope is a forecast of the future based on the movement of the stars. Ask students to find their horoscope in the newspaper and read the predictions for their sign. Using the “Signs of Optimism” activity sheet on the next page, ask them to write out all the statements in their horoscope that express optimism. Then have them think of an event that happened today that would make the horoscope true. Challenge them to put all 12 of today’s horoscope predictions in order, with the most optimistic first and the least optimistic last. For fun, have them fill in the names of students born under each sign.

5. **Sunny Skies**

Have the class locate the weather forecast in today’s newspaper. Direct them to read the predictions for the extended forecast. Have the students rewrite the extended forecast for the next five days. If the forecast calls for bad weather, have them rewrite it so that it will be optimistic. If the forecast predicts good weather, have them turn it into a pessimistic forecast. Each forecast should include high and low temperatures, wind conditions, prevailing weather systems, and lots of descriptive adjectives.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
**Signs of Optimism**

A horoscope is a forecast of the future based on your birthday and the movement of the stars. Find your own horoscope in today's newspaper and read the predictions for your sign. In the space labeled “Optimistic Predictions,” write all the statements in your horoscope that express optimism. In the space below that, list an event that happened today that would make your horoscope true. In the list at the right, rank all 12 horoscopes in today's paper, with the most optimistic first and the least optimistic last. For final fun, fill in the names and birthdays of classmates next to the sign each was born under.

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**Optimistic Predictions**

My sign is...

write your sign here

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**Real Life Event**

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The people with whom we surround ourselves make a difference in how we feel about life. It is important to be able to find family members and friends whom we can trust and understand. It is important to have acquaintances who support our opinions and attitudes, or share our hopes and dreams. Who are the people surrounding students in today’s classes? Are students generally attracted to those who are optimists or to pessimists? How is their outlook on life affected by those people who are most involved in it? These activities will help students think about the people who have the greatest impact on their perspective.

Activities

1. **Pep Talk***

Have students turn to the Sports section to find the standings of the teams in professional sports. Ask them to pick out a last-place team. Now tell them that they are the head coach of this last place team. Their challenge: To give a pre-game speech encouraging the team to be optimistic. Using the “Pep Talk” activity sheet, have them write an outline for their pep talk, draw their team’s logo, and deliver their talk in front of the class.

2. **Sequencing**

Get students to look through the paper to find an article describing the process someone went through to overcome a problem. Did optimism play a role in the person’s ability to succeed? Ask the class to write a step-by-step outline of how the problem was solved.

3. **Successful Groups**

Many groups are formed to promote a better society. Ask students to search the paper for groups and organizations whose efforts reflect an optimistic attitude. Have them pick one and answer these questions: (1) What are the goals of the group? and (2) In what ways do they think the group is making a positive change? As a class, compare the selected groups to see how opinions vary.

4. **Don’t Give Up the Ship**

People who refuse to give up are optimists. They may also be the subject of a news story. Have students look through today’s newspaper for an example of a person who persevered to achieve a goal. Ask them to write out why they think that person was so determined and what makes some people more determined than others. Finally, have them write about a time when they were successful because they didn’t give up.

5. **Stocks**

Have the class turn to the stock market page. Ask students to select the five stocks that made the greatest positive gains for the previous day. If they were optimistic stock brokers, what advice would they give to their clients about the five stocks? What would they say if they were pessimists?

6. **Impossible Dream**

Is it possible to be too optimistic? Can students think of someone who believes he/she can achieve the impossible? Have them look through the newspaper for a story about someone who may be too optimistic. Ask them to determine if this person put himself/herself in a difficult situation by thinking only good things could happen. Ask them to make a chart to show what happened and what could have happened if the person had been more realistic.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
Turn to the Sports section and find the standings of the professional teams in your favorite sport. Pick out a last-place team in one of the divisions. Now get ready for a news flash: You have been named head coach of this last place team. Your challenge: To give a pre-game pep-talk encouraging the team to be optimistic. In the space below, write an outline for the speech, listing your main points and other arguments you would use to encourage the team. Draw the logo of your team on your coach’s cap. Then take turns delivering your pep talks in front of the class.

I. a. b. c.
II. a. b. c.
III. a. b. c.
Some people believe that we live in a world of hope, righteousness and success. Others think it is a place of despair, injustice and failure. Is life a glass that is half-filled or a glass that is half-empty? It is the way that we view our experiences that can make the difference. Just a little optimistic thinking can allow us to feel confident, build healthy relationships, develop initiative to achieve, and gain the ability to bounce back from adversity. Optimistic thinking is having faith in the world.

Activities

1. **Hot Spot**

Sometimes we call a place where trouble is brewing a “hot spot.” Have the class look through the newspaper and find a story that is about a hot spot. Have them find the name of the country (or countries) involved and locate it on a map or globe. Challenge them to determine the main problem and to propose a possible solution. Then have the students write a letter to the head of state that accentuates something positive that might occur as a result of the conflict.

2. **It’s the Law**

Many laws are written to prevent actions and activities that adversely affect society. Have students look through the newspaper for an article that discusses a law written to prevent certain actions. Articles about crimes may be good selections. Using the “It’s the Law” activity sheet, ask students to write the law that was broken and detail the positive behavior it is designed to promote. Then ask them to think of a way the law could be rewritten so that it looks at human behavior more positively and optimistically. Have them write laws or rules for their classroom that are expressed positively.

3. **Rate the Optimism**

Have the students read the stories on the front page of the newspaper. In small groups get them to rate the stories on a 1 to 10 scale with 10 being optimistic and 1 being pessimistic. Have them make a graph to illustrate their findings. Then ask students to write five observations about the information on the graph.

4. **A Question of Optimism**

What are the factors that are used to measure optimism? Direct students to find an article about a person who is prominent in the news. Tell students they are newspaper writers and have been assigned to interview the person. Using the “Question of Optimism” activity sheet, have them prepare five questions to ask the featured person in the story to determine their optimism.

5. **Identifying Problems**

Direct students to the section of the newspaper that features local news. Ask students to scan the local section to find out about the pressing problems in the region. For each problem, have them first list the optimistic view of the situation, and then list the pessimistic view. Have them explain both points of view.

*Includes activity sheet for students.*
Some laws are written to prevent actions and activities that are bad for society. Look through the newspaper for an article that discusses a law written to prevent certain actions. Articles about crimes may be good selections. Write the law that was broken and then state the positive behavior it is designed to promote. Is there a way the law could be written so that it looks at human behavior more optimistically and positively? Finally, can you write laws or rules for your classroom that are also expressed in positive ways?

**Broken Law**

**Positive Action This Law Promotes**

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**Rules for our classroom written positively...**

#1

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#2

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#3
A QUESTION OF OPTIMISM

What are the factors that are used to measure optimism? Find an article in today’s newspaper about a person who is prominent in the news. You have just been named a writer for the newspaper and your first assignment is to interview this person for a feature story. On the reporter’s notebooks on this page, prepare five questions to ask the featured person in the story to determine his or her optimism. Compare questions with classmates and discuss what the answers to the questions show about optimism.
How you look at the world is rooted in the temperament you are born with. Some people are “born optimists” and some people are not. But even if you were born with a pessimistic temperament, you can choose to look at things that happen to you in a more optimistic way. You can act in ways that will strengthen the optimistic side of your personality. These activities have explored ways students can build optimism. Here are some suggestions for extending the lessons throughout the year.

Heroes and Optimism
Have students collect pictures of optimistic heroes. They can use the newspaper, magazines or any other source that is available. Encourage the children to make collages of their photos, and to draw their heroes as well. Make a bulletin board displaying their choices.

Positive School Climate
Have the students in your class conduct a school-wide survey to find ways to improve the school climate. After tabulating the results, post suggestions on a bulletin board or chart the most common responses. See if some of the ideas can be implemented school-wide. Alert newspapers and TV stations of the survey and its results to bring your school positive attention.

Optimistic Awards
Optimism can be contagious. Help your class establish an Optimist of the Month award for members of your class or any other class that would like to participate. Have students vote to select a class optimist based on actions during the month. Have the names announced over the public address system or at an assembly. See how many classes you can get involved. Set a goal of getting the whole school involved by the end of the year. Again, alert the local news media.

A club for Optimists
Start an optimistic problem-solving club for your classroom or school. Let students identify some issues or activities that would help change pessimists into optimists in the school community. Sample ideas: Students could make cards for others who are sick or hold a bake sale to benefit a homeless shelter. Or they might “adopt” a student who is new to the school and help him/her settle in.

Optimistic Journal Writing
Help students keep an optimistic journal to focus on the good things that are happening in their lives or some of their hopes and plans for the future. Encourage them to use the newspaper as a source of optimistic news “prompts” for journal entries and then react to them in writing. Students may want to share their journals with others or may prefer privacy.
TOLERANCE

Contents

Unit 1 -
What's Coming?
Rights
Look at IV
State of Tolerance
Working Together

Unit 2 -
Same and Different
Opinions Matter
Six Degrees of Separation
Welcome to Our World
Globally Dependent

Unit 3 -
In Search of Peace?
Families of All Sorts
Call to Learn
Healthy Interactions
Eliminate the Negative

Unit 4 -
Identifying Stereotypes
Examining Labels and Why We Use Them
Understanding the Consequences of Intolerance

Tolerance and understanding are not a pleasant idea. They are not ideas that affect many students. The activities in this teacher's guide will help students to understand and overcome biases by dealing with issues of identity, diversity, culture, and human rights. Education is the medium for this change of heart. Only by learning more about themselves and others can students make connections with people that will not result in violence.

I will make you want students to think critically about the world and to act as responsible and informed citizens. I encourage them to read newspapers regularly, that will help them keep informed and be active participants in society - not just spectators. Helping students use a newspaper also teaches them an important reading/writing skill.

Unit One - Tolerance focuses on the rights and responsibilities of life in a diverse society and the meaning of diversity. Unit Two focuses on global interactions among people. Unit Three focuses on students' opportunities to examine this interaction among people of different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. I believe that these activities will be an important resource to speak openly about their thoughts, understand others' viewpoints,
UNIT 1: America the Beautiful

In our country, we have what are called Core Democratic Values—basic beliefs that unite all Americans and that are found in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and other important documents of our nation. These activities examine some of these values and can help guide us in lives of tolerance and understanding.

ACTIVITIES

1. What’s Cooking?

   Learning standard: analyzing visuals
   Core Value: diversity

   America is a country that has brought together different people and cultures. Some have described America as a melting pot, while others believe that a salad is a better metaphor. What is the difference between the two and which do your students feel is the better description? Have students write an essay under the heading, “America: Soup or Salad?” and explain their position. They should skim the newspaper for supporting details and facts.

2. Rights

   Learning standard: interpreting the meaning of specific rights
   Core Value: equality

   Have students work together to compile a list of rights that belong to everyone in this country. List them on the board. Have students find stories in the newspaper pertaining to each of these rights. What do students think should happen when someone is denied his or her rights?

3. Look at TV

   Learning standard: identifying the challenges of diversity
   Core Value: diversity

   Television can be a mirror of our times. Have students check out the television listings to determine whether the programming offers a true cross-section of America’s population. Have students review the shows for prime-time (8 to 11 p.m.), viewing on the major (non-cable) networks and determine what percentage of shows include minority actors.

4. State of Tolerance

   Learning standard: writing poetry

   What is the state of tolerance among people today? Are we tolerant of each other’s differences?

   Encourage students to express their feelings about this in poetry form. Have them “find” words in articles and headlines from the newspaper to construct a free-form poem about our state of tolerance.

   See activity sheet.

5. Working Together

   Learning standard: representing content through summarizing
   Core Values: freedom of religion and diversity

   Can students find a story in today’s newspaper about people of different ethnic backgrounds working together to solve a problem? Have them summarize the problem and the solution. What are the consequences of different types of people working together?
What is the state of relations among people today? Are we tolerant of each other’s differences? Express your feelings about this in poetry form. Choose words from articles and headlines in today’s newspaper to construct a free-form poem about our state of tolerance. Write your poem in the space below.
UNIT 2: Around the World

ACTIVITIES

1. Same and Different
Learning standard: comparing places and cultures with the United States
Have students find an article about a foreign country in today's newspaper. What differences can they see between that country and the United States? Each student can create a Venn Diagram showing the similarities and differences.
See Activity Sheet

2. Opinions Matter
Learning standard: considering others' viewpoints
One way to help students stay informed about the world is to encourage them to read not just the news, but also the opinion sections of the newspaper. Editorial comments are given the prevailing thoughts and discussion. Have students write an analysis of today's editorial cartoon, then discuss their thoughts on prejudice in our society.

3. Six Degrees of Separation
Learning standard: exploring how world processes affect different world regions
It's important for students to understand that the world is a global community and that events around the world affect them, too. The more they know about the world, the better they can understand other people. Have them first read an newspaper article mentioning an event that affects their life. Then, have them draw a graphic organizer showing how the event is connected to others. They should then write a paragraph similar to "Six Degrees of Separation," where students can show how an event in one place affects something elsewhere, which in turn affects them.
See Activity Sheet

4. Welcome to Our World
Learning standard: describing cultures
Have students imagine that they are going to be part of a host family for a student coming from a foreign country. Each student should clip world news from the newspaper or create a brochure including a new person in your community. How can they help the student? They should include a paragraph listing how the local people and culture is directly a big part of your area.

5. Globally Dependent
Learning standard: explaining how events have consequences in different parts of the world
One reason people should try to get along is that they are dependent on each other. We are a world of global interdependence. Sometimes what that means and how students can examples in the newspaper.
Find an article about a foreign country in today’s newspaper. What differences can you see between that country and the United States? In the intersecting circles on this page, create a Venn Diagram showing the similarities and differences you found.
UNIT 3 Interactions

ACTIVITIES

1. Is Sexism Dead?
Learning standard: understanding discrimination and stereotypes associated with gender.
One prejudice that students often don't recognize is sexism. I have students define the term and list areas in which sexism might occur today. I ask students to find examples of sexism in today's newspaper. Allow time for them to discuss their conclusions.

2. Families of All Sorts
Learning standard: understanding the roles of families.
One thing that all people have in common is that we are all part of a family. But families are not all the same. Discuss the different meanings of the word "family." Have students find examples of different forms of families in today's newspaper.

3. Eat to Learn
Learning standard: employing multiple strategies to recognize words.
Some people like to explore other cultures by eating foods that are considered "exotic." Can your students find advertisements for restaurants serving ethnic foods? What are some of the words that indicate that the foods are from different cultures?

4. Healthy Interactions
Learning standard: discussing shared values in the human experience.
The comics often reflect our lived and times. Have students circle each strip that promotes healthy interactions among people. They can write a headline for each one, illustrating the theme of the strip.

5. Eliminate the Negative
Learning standard: portraying positive and negative images.
It helps to accentuate the positive when talking about people and their interactions. I encourage students to find photos and stories about people helping others and showing care and compassion. What are the admirable attributes or positive traits of the helpers and of the people being helped?
See Activity Sheet.
ACTIVITY Eliminate the Negative

It helps to accentuate the positive when talking about people and their interactions. Find photos and stories about people helping other people and showing care and compassion. Paste them below to make a collage. On another sheet of paper, write about the admirable attributes or positive traits of the helpers and of the people being helped.
UNIT 4 The Consequences of Intolerance

ACTIVITIES

1. Identifying Stereotypes

Learning standard: practicing effective listening and speaking skills

The goal of this activity is to identify the stereotypes and preconceptions that we hold in regard to people of other nationalities, races or religions. Begin with a discussion of the difference between stereotypes and generalizations. Generalizations are statements we all use to categorize individuals and groups. Stereotypes tend to use words like “many,” “most” and “often” and are not rigid or inflexible. Stereotypes imply that all members of a particular group act, look, or speak a certain way.

Divide the students into pairs and ask each pair to make two columns on a single sheet of paper. They should label the left column “United States” and should label the right column with the name of another area of the world, such as “Africa” or “Israel.” You may want to substitute the names of religious, racial, ethnic groups, or any other category that encompasses a large group of people.

The partners then take three minutes to brainstorm as many pairs of words as possible to describe the two places in groups. The words may include characteristics and similarities or may even be identical, but they must come in pairs. For instance, students might write “urban” under the left-hand U.S. column and “rural” or “agricultural” under the right-hand Africa column. They might also include “city” and “town,” “white” and “black,” or “bag” and “luggage,” and ask them not to be judgmental and to include all words that come to mind.

Newspaper Activity

Each pair should continue the lesson by making a collage to represent each column. They can use the newspaper to clip words and phrases for each column.

Finally, allow time for a class discussion of the pairs of words and the columns. Which thoughts are stereotypes? Which are generalizations? Which are factual? Where do the stereotypes come from?

2. Examining Labels and Why We Use Them

Learning standard: understanding culture and diverse places

This is an activity to help students place a name tag on the back of each student. For each tag, write the name of a country or a race or religion. Each student’s job is to go around the room and talk to other students with the goal of figuring out what the name of the student is. The rules are that no one may ask stereotypical terms or any actual country names, nor may they ask any direct geographical questions. Questions should focus on the people and the culture or heritage. For example, if the country tag says “Mexico,” students may not ask, “Are you from the south of the U.S.?” but they may ask, “Are you from the country where the Mayan Indians lived?”

After five minutes of interaction, allow students to guess at the identity of their tags. Ask the ones who guessed correctly to tell which clues gave it away. Write some of the clues on the board. It’s inevitable some name calling comes up among the clues that students remember. Often, slang terms and names just slip out, but these words do make the guessing easier. Help students to see how easily generalizations, or our stereotypes, can lead to name calling.

Newspaper Activity

Have students check the comic strips for any evidence of stereotyping. Is the stereotyping used for humor? Each student can choose one comic strip to analyze and write a description of how and why the stereotyping is used.

Activity Sheet
UNIT 4 (CONT.)

ACTIVITY

1. Understanding the Consequences of Intolerance

The goal for this activity is to show what happens when the results of the first two lessons in the tolerance program go unchecked—how names and stereotypes can lead to hatred and violence.

Place the students in nine random groups. Give each group a numbered index card with a single term on it. These are the terms:

1. Name calling
2. Stereotype
3. Prejudice
4. Enemy making
5. Racism
6. Scapegoat
7. Difficult sanction
8. Persecution
9. Genocide

Each group is asked to write a definition of the term on its card, and then to talk about and write down one historical or current example in which the term (or the idea behind it) is applied. Groups should skim newspapers to find current examples of the terms.

Each group should choose a spokesperson to come to the middle of the room and read the definition and the historical or current example. Write their responses on the board. As each spokesperson comes forward, they should begin to form a circle. Spokespeople should be called up in order as listed above so that the first one is from the name-calling group and the last one is from the genocide group. The result becomes apparent as the last spokesperson comes forward and everyone can see that “genocide” will have to stand between the persecution and name-calling spokespeople. Students can usually recognize how name-calling and stereotyping can lead to acts of violence, persecution, and even genocide.

Facilitate students’ understanding of this image by asking: What does the circle symbolize? Why do societies let intolerance progress? At what point is this circle do you think we are in the United States today?