



When we calmly think about ourselves and others, we find that success comes from taking small steps one at a time towards the ultimate goal.

Month Six

Celebrating "Being One with the Universe"



As your students have explored their interactions with friends, classmates, family and their elders, they have learned about their place in their school and family world. This month, we add in care of the planet as we bring this program to a close.

We also need to bring up the importance of regret if a person hurts someone else emotionally or socially. We hope that your students are not having to deal with physical harm. That should be reported. If you suspect child abuse, you have an obligation to report. If it is a bullying situation that turns physical, do not hesitate to seek help from other adults you work with. The principal, guidance counselor and school psychologist are critical allies at a time like that. Some of the discussions in this curriculum might have uncovered important situations that must not be ignored. One of the most troubling is child exploitation. It is not often discussed but happens most often when a family member takes advantage of their relationship with a child. The research demonstrates that an uncle or cousin may find ways to enlist a young relative into serious sexual abuse. Another important thing that we hope you never have to know about is that older gang members use middle school aged students to carry their drugs. They know that if they are caught as adults, the consequences are dire. However, if they can entice a middle schooler to be involved in their trade, that young person will not serve the same penalty.

As a teacher, you may not be aware of these terrible things that our young people face. As you are their trusted adult ally, they will confide in you. The discussions you have already had as a result of the thought starters, safety cards and fractured fairy tales might have brought up these situations. You need to find out who to go to for help. Don't try to handle these kinds of situations alone.

Care of Our Planet

In these last few months, we have come a long way in setting up a culture of caring. To provide a better world for all, we now need to focus on the care of our planet. We are all responsible for leaving less of a carbon footprint so the next generation may enjoy verdant pastures and the animals that are in danger of extinction. Your students probably know about the problems that plastics pose for sea life. There are television commercials for filters that provide these images to sell their product. You can also easily find a you-tube video that demonstrates the pollution in the world. Together with your students you can determine activities that everyone can do to mitigate further destruction of the world around us.

One of the most invasive problems is the risk plastic poses to the environment. It breaks down into harmful chemicals and little bits of plastic are ingested by wildlife that mistake it for food. Plastics have been found in over 220 species. They also cause issues for humans that ingest food from the food chain. Micro-plastics have been found in bodies.

Litter Patrol Activity

You can decide which activities you would like to do with your class to promote care of our planet. One of the easiest is to pick up litter. You can choose the school grounds to patrol for litter with your class.



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If you do decide to implement this activity, please get sturdy waterproof gloves in order to protect your students and yourself from getting hurt. You can also create a picking stick from the chop sticks that come with take-out food. You will need a rubbish bag. Make sure you caution your students not to pick up broken glass, or metal that can be potentially harmful. You need to supervise the activity. Once they have the litter, you may be able to separate some of it for recycling to keep things out of a land fill.

Please always supervise children carefully and caution them not to pick up any broken glass or other potentially dangerous objects. Dispose of any litter you pick responsibly via an appropriate waste bin.

Before and after this activity you might want to brainstorm other ways that they can actively save the planet. Here are some suggestions:

- When buying things check to see if the packaging is recyclable
- Turn off the lights when you leave a room
- Unplug any electrical devices not being used
- Use LED lights instead of incandescent bulbs
- Filter water to put in reusable containers to avoid using throw away plastic bottles
- Use reusable grocery bags instead of plastic bags
- Use solar energy when possible
- Don't buy new clothes – go to resale shops, repair and mend instead of throwing away

Your class can come up with these and many more during a discussion.

Recycling Bottles and Cans and Paper

One very simple idea is to have your students collect plastic bottles and cans for recycling. They could set up stations around the school and monitor them. The proceeds could be donated to a local environmental organization. If your school does not recycle, your class could be the impetus for creating a movement to inspire students to collect from home and bring in to your class. You will need to research what recycling facilities are available for you to use. Just as important is the recycling of electronic equipment. That requires a special organization to accept used and broken electronic devices.

Food Waste

Another place where your students can make a difference is in the school cafeteria and at home. You can discuss the issue with your class. Our country produces more than 140 million pounds of waste a year going into landfills. That means every American throws away 4 ½ pounds of garbage every day.



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Challenge your students to see how they might limit the garbage that the school creates. What could they do at home to limit trash?

Compost

One activity that you might try is to set up a composting heap outdoors on the school grounds. This might need administrative permission and assistance from the custodial staff. Only plant-based waste should be put into the compost. There are sites on the internet that can provide specific instructions that you and your class can search for in order to do this project. There are benefits from doing this project in addition to saving the land fill from the food waste. If they use the compost to fertilize plants on the school grounds or in a garden you plant, they are experiencing first hand the cycle of life.

Final Visualization and Expression of Gratitude

As you conclude this program, it would be great to end with a final visualization experience. After that you can tell your students that the gift from Master Ted Sun is that they can always commune with the Sun through his guided visualization.

And the final end to this curriculum is the expression of gratitude for being a part of this universe. We must be grateful to mother nature and pledge to help care for our planet.

Have each student share out their gratitude with the entire class. Thank you for taking this journey. We hope that you and your class and their families all found benefit in these lessons and experiences.

