



characterfirst.
education



elementary
curriculum

Sensitivity



SECTION 1 Introduce Sensitivity

This curriculum offers approximately 3 hours of instruction, divided into 3 sections. Each section can be broken into smaller pieces if you prefer short lessons. For additional resources, visit www.CharacterFirstEd.com.

3 WAYS TO BUILD SENSITIVITY:

Educate

Focus on sensitivity for a period of time. Use the lessons in this curriculum to talk about sensitivity and why it matters. Look for ways to emphasize sensitivity in other subjects such as math, reading, language, history, social studies, science, music, health, and athletics.

Evaluate

Think about daily decisions in the light of good character. Ask yourself and your students, "Is this the right thing to do?" Use the "I Wills" on page 4 as behavioral objectives, and refer to these standards when correcting negative attitudes and behavior.

Celebrate

Catch people doing good and point out the character qualities they demonstrated. Children thrive on sincere encouragement, so don't overlook the little opportunities to praise each day!

© Copyright MMXVIII by Character First, a division of Strata Leadership LLC. All rights reserved. No portion of this work may be copied or distributed for personal or commercial use without the publisher's written consent.

Dr. Virginia Smith, president, Character First Ed.
Allison Fahrenbruck, writer
Ashley Glueck, layout and design

www.CharacterFirstEd.com
877.357.0001
Printed in the U.S.A.
Item: 5234

DEFINE SENSITIVITY (Discussion, 15 minutes)

Point out and discuss key words in the definition. Review and commit the definition to memory. Use the Sensitivity Character Card (sold separately) to remind or reward students who learn the definition.

Definition: *Carefully using my senses so I can better respond to the people and situations in my life*

Sensitivity comes from the Latin word *sentio*, meaning "to sense; to perceive," as in a sense of touch.

In the human body, the five senses are used to help us stay aware of our surroundings; enjoy things like food, flowers, and sunsets; and alert us to danger. Our senses help us survive. When a nerve senses pain, it sends an urgent signal to the brain so that the body can respond quickly and appropriately. A sensitive person also uses the five senses to learn about the people and situations around them in order to have a helpful and kind response.

Sensitivity looks beyond one's own needs to the attitudes, needs, and emotions of others. It uses the body's senses to determine what responses are most appropriate. Two of the most important aspects of sensitivity are listening and looking. Watching facial expressions and body language can help a sensitive person trace outward signs to the possible inward causes. A listening ear will often bring more comfort than the greatest plans and explanations of how to solve the problem. Practicing sensitivity will help you look beyond what is obvious so that you can see things from a different perspective and understand more about a person or situation.

Related concepts:

Boldness, kindness, focus, carefulness, empathy

Discussion:

- What does being insensitive to other people look like?
- Can you think of ways that you can be sensitive to the feelings of your friends? Family? Fellow students?
- How do you think showing sensitivity is beneficial to you as a student? A person?
- How will practicing sensitivity at school help you show sensitivity to others for the rest of your life?



**Make decisions based on principle;
implement decisions with sensitivity.**



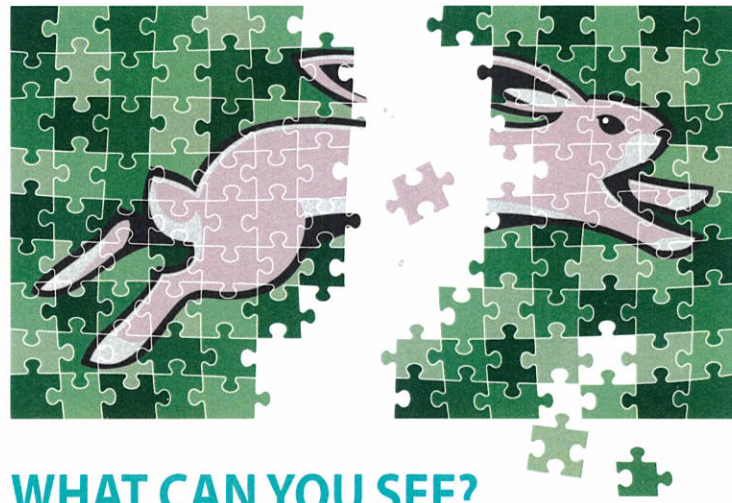
Additional resources at
www.CharacterFirstEd.com

ADOPT A FRIEND (Project, 20 minutes)

As a class, “adopt” someone who is presently in the hospital, in a nursing home, or who is ill. Write encouraging notes or make small gifts to give to the person.

Points to ponder:

- Sensitivity is not simply noticing that others are having a difficult time and doing nothing about it. A sensitive person notices what is going on and finds a way to practically care for that person.
- Sometimes a small gesture is all that is needed to show you care—a smile can let someone know that you see them and are willing to be their friend, or a high-five can show you appreciate someone’s effort.



WHAT CAN YOU SEE? (Game, 10 minutes)

Use this activity to help students understand that sensitivity helps them to see a situation from someone else’s perspective.

Have two students sit opposite each other behind their desks. The view of the floor directly in front of them should be partially blocked. Use a puzzle or toy that can be broken into several pieces. Scatter the pieces on the floor so that they can see some of the pieces but not all of them. Have each of them explain to the other person what pieces they can see. Have both students try and figure out what the picture or item is.

In order to show sensitivity to another person it often requires communication. Listening to the other person explain what they can see helps you to be able to understand their perspective and know how to respond.

Sensitivity



Carefully using my senses so I can better respond to the people and situations in my life



SECTION 2 Practice Sensitivity



Praising Sensitivity

Part of sensitivity is being aware of things that are not easy to spot. Pay attention to students when no one else is watching and be aware of students who may need specific encouragement. Put yourself in the student's shoes. A kind word at an opportune moment can change the course of someone's day. When praising for sensitivity, use specific examples of the good choice they made.

Praise students for the following:

- Asking you or others how they are doing
- Giving a pat on the back, a smile, or other expressions of encouragement
- Helping a friend whose family is experiencing hard times
- Being considerate of those having a rough or discouraging day
- Giving a thoughtful gift to cheer someone up
- Listening fully to others



I WILL... (Discussion, 25 minutes)

1. Listen carefully to others.

A listening ear is one of the best therapies for a sad or discouraged person. Someone who will listen, without distraction or interruption, is a source of comfort and strength.

- Today, practice listening more than you speak.
- Did you learn or notice anything new about your friends and classmates?

2. Watch their body language.

Facial expressions and body language often communicate more than words can. It is important to pay attention to what a person's face, body, and gestures are saying when you are trying to understand them.

- Look around at the people in class. What do you think their faces are saying?
- What happens if you make a funny face?
- What can crossed arms communicate?

3. Notice their tone of voice.

The tone of someone's voice is how they say what they're saying. Are they loud? Quiet? Speaking quickly? Ignoring the tone of voice someone uses means you might miss an important part of what they are trying to communicate to you.

- How many different tones of voice can you think of?
- What emotions do you think those tones of voice correlate to?

4. Put myself in others' shoes.

Everyone has a story that has helped shape who they are. When you put yourself in someone else's shoes it leads not only to empathy and compassion, but also to better solutions in frustrating or difficult situations.

- How do you feel when someone tries to look at a situation from your perspective?
- Is there someone you don't understand well? Try imagining yourself in their place.

5. Show that I care.

Show others you care by an encouraging word, a written note, or a helping hand. Use your senses to help you identify the emotions and motivations of other students so you can show them you care in meaningful ways.

- What can you do today to show a friend or classmate that you care?
- How does learning to care for other people change you as a person?

BINOCULAR VISION (Craft, 20 minutes)

Binoculars are designed to focus on things too distant or difficult to see. In the same way, sensitivity focuses on the feelings and needs that are commonly overlooked. As a reminder to have the right focus, make binoculars with your students to concentrate their vision in the right place.

Give two foam cups to each student. Have them cut out the bottoms by poking through with a pencil and working it back and forth. Use doubled-over rolls of tape to stick the cups together.

Poke holes on the outside of the binoculars with the pencil. Cut a 2' length of yarn and use the pencil again to push the ends through the holes. Tie the ends in knots to anchor your strap. Use a permanent marker to write "See" on one cup and "Needs" on the other.

Supplies:

- Foam cups
- Yarn
- Tape
- Pencils
- Markers



I'M ALL EARS (Game, 15 minutes)

An important part of sensitivity is listening to other people. Use this game to help students practice listening carefully.

Gather several different kinds of balls (golf ball, tennis ball, softball, bouncy ball, marble, mini-basketball). Put all the balls in a large bag to conceal them. Take the bag to the back of the room and instruct students to face toward the front while you drop the balls one at a time. Ask them to raise their hand if they think they can identify the ball. Call on a volunteer to guess which ball was dropped.

Put the balls they guess correctly in one place and the ones they guess incorrectly in another. Repeat the activity to see if their ears were more sensitive to the sounds the second time through.

For more games to exercise your senses go to www.characterfirsteducation.com.

IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES (Exploration, 10 minutes)

Bring an assortment of shoes to class, and choose several volunteers to try them on for size. Bring unusual styles, if possible, and a variety of sizes. If volunteers are having trouble balancing or walking, have other students help them so that they can walk across the room.

Points to ponder:

- Just as shoes are different, students and their circumstances are different, too. Because people often judge only from their own point of view, it is hard for them to understand others.
- Your mind plays an important role in sensing the feelings of others. By trying to understand what it is like in their shoes, a sensitive person gains a whole new appreciation of others' circumstances.
- Remember—a sensitive person doesn't just see a person struggling and ignore them; rather, a sensitive person reaches out to see if they can help.

Supplies:

- High heels
- Work boots
- Slippers
- Loafers
- Ballet slippers
- Cowboy boots



LITERACY POEM (Literacy Connection, 15 minutes)

Teach this poem as a way to memorize the five "I Wills."

I will use my words and actions to show I really care.
And I'll learn to listen carefully to what others have to share.

I will listen to their tone of voice, and closely watch their face.
And I'll try to understand by putting myself in their place.

Before me lies an open map, the choice is mine to make.
I'll live a life of character, and that's the road I'll take!

SECTION 3 Sensitivity in Real Life

Richard Allen & Absalom Jones



In 1793, Philadelphia was struck with an epidemic of yellow fever. In the midst of the crisis, many fled the city instead of helping their friends and neighbors. The mayor asked two of the leading African American preachers in the area, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, for their help in treating the sick. They saw the need of the city and demonstrated heroic selflessness and service to the suffering people of Philadelphia.

Allen and Jones gathered their friends and neighbors and asked them to join them in helping the sick. Their friends agreed, and armed with water jugs, cool rags, and hearts of compassion, they spread through the streets and alleys to help whomever they could find. Some people were so sick that they were lying out in the streets and on the sidewalks. Allen and the others worked day after day, helping the sick. After four months, the city started to recover. Fewer people became sick, and those who had fled the city started returning home. The yellow fever was finally gone.

Their sensitivity to the sick and dying inspired them to get others involved so that they could help more people. When others suffered and were in need, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones refused to sit idly by and watch. They perceived a need and used their energy and time to help.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3p97.html>

Learn more about
Richard Allen &
Absalom Jones's
Sensitivity at
www.CharacterFirstEd.com.



THE SNOWSHOE RABBIT (Story, 20 minutes)

To fully experience this story, you will need the following props: two pretend eyes (either "googly" or cut from paper), a set of pretend rabbit ears attached to a headband, a pretend rabbit's nose with whiskers, a carrot, and a small blanket.

Deep in the forest, a small creature emerged from its hiding place just before sunrise. It nibbled at a small bush and sniffed the air with its nose. It smelled blackberries not far away. As it hopped over to the blackberry bush, a branch suddenly fell from a tree above. CRASH! The animal swerved around the branch and then froze stiff and listened. It sensed that danger was near.

Its suspicions came true when a "SCREECH" broke the silence. The little animal looked up to see the large claws of a hawk coming toward it! The quick-footed ball of fur dashed to its bushy hideout. It moved as fast as it could, trying to outrun the hawk. It jumped into the safety of a thick bush just before the hawk swooped down!

The animal just described to you not only hops around, but also has big ears and a small tail. Can you guess what it is? It is a snowshoe rabbit! It gets the name "snowshoe" from having such large feet. They help the rabbit hop around in the snow without sinking.

The snowshoe's technical name is the varying hare, because it varies in color with the changing seasons—white in winter and brown in spring and summer. It also has the attributes of a hare. It is bigger than true rabbits and is born with all its hair, both eyes open, and ready to run, hop, and play almost instantly.

The snowshoe rabbit uses its senses to stay aware of its surroundings. You and I must use our senses to help us make decisions, too. That's what we call sensitivity! Let's look closely at how the snowshoe rabbit uses its senses and see what we can learn. Who wants to help me? (Have one volunteer help with the rest of the story.)

Sight

The first sense is sight. Rabbits spot movement very well. The pupils of their eyes stay fully open at all times allowing as much light as possible into their eyes. What helps the rabbit see even more is the location of its eyes. Instead of being in the front of the face, like ours, the rabbit's eyes are placed on the sides. (Place eyes on the sides of the volunteer's head.) The snowshoe rabbit can see all around itself and learn necessary information.

We gain information with our eyes, too. Just by looking at people you can often tell how they feel and what they are thinking. For example, tell me how you think I'm feeling just by looking at my face. (Make a very sad expression.) What about this look? (Smile like you just won a contest.) How about now? (Look frustrated, pouting, or upset.)





Hearing

Another vital sense of the rabbit is its hearing. (*Place the rabbit's ears on the volunteer's head.*) By turning its long ears, the snowshoe rabbit detects faint noises and accurately determines the source of sounds. For survival, the rabbit's ears are most important.

If the rabbit in our story had not been listening carefully to its surroundings, it might have been hit by the falling tree branch or had a more difficult time getting away from the hawk. Being sensitive to people often means using your ears more than your mouth. We need to listen fully, letting others explain their situations and hearing not only what they have to say, but also how they say it.

Smells

Do you remember how the rabbit from our story found its food? (*Place the rabbit's nose and whiskers on the volunteer.*) With its nose! With its sense of smell, it can sniff out food and tell if something is good or bad, safe or dangerous.

Now, I don't suggest you walk up to people and sniff them. They'll probably think you're strange if you do! But just like the rabbit uses its nose to sniff out good or bad things to eat, we also have to determine what is right (good) and wrong (bad). You might call it "sniffing out" what is good.

Taste

The snowshoe rabbit is an herbivore. That means it eats plants, not meat. As the rabbit eats grass, berries, twigs, fruit, or vegetables, it uses its sense of taste. (*Give the volunteer the carrot to pretend to chew.*)

It is the tongue's job to sense whether something is sweet, sour, bitter, or salty. Often, a person's life can be described by one of these words. Sensitive people try to understand how other people are feeling by placing themselves in "other people's shoes."

Are they experiencing sweet joy or bitter hurt? Do they have sour frustration, or desperate need in the way that salt creates thirst? Being sensitive to how another person is feeling helps us to know the best way to respond.

Touch

The last major sense of the snowshoe rabbit is touch. If one of the young is injured, the mother rabbit cares for it by bringing food and providing shelter from the cold. (*Wrap the warm blanket around the volunteer.*)

When you sense a need, don't ignore the problem and hope someone else will take care of it. Do what you can to give an encouraging word or lend a helping hand. Use your senses to determine the need, and then take action!

Just like the snowshoe rabbit, we use our senses to play, learn, and interact with other people. Remember to use the things you learn through your senses (touch, sight, smell, hearing, and taste) to be sensitive to the people around you.

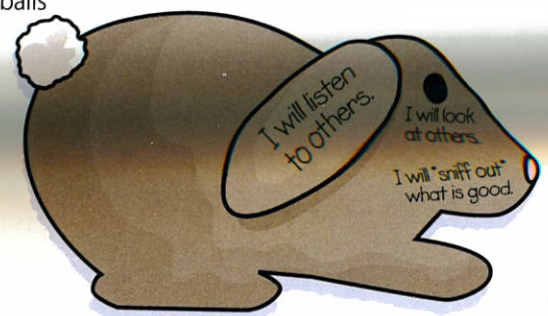
THE SENSE OF A RABBIT (Craft, 20 minutes)

Make a template by drawing the outline of a rabbit onto white paper. Copy enough rabbits onto brown paper to give one to each child.

Cut pink noses and brown ears in advance for the children to glue to their rabbits. Give each child a cottonball to serve as the rabbit's tail. Have them draw eyes on the sides of the head and write "I will look at others" next to the eye on one side. On the ear write "I will listen to others." Under the nose write "I will 'sniff out' what is good."

Supplies:

- Pre-copied rabbits
- Pink and brown paper
- Cottonballs
- Glue
- Pens



Family Connection

OVERVIEW: Sensitivity is carefully using my senses so I can better respond to the people and situations in my life.

A sensitive person listens carefully to those around them and looks for ways to help and encourage the people who need it. Stay aware of how other people are feeling and what is going on around you so you can show them you care!

Sensitivity

Definition: Carefully using my senses so I can better respond to the people and situations in my life

I WILL...

- Listen carefully to others.
- Watch their body language.
- Notice their tone of voice.
- Put myself in others' shoes.
- Show that I care.



The snowshoe rabbit changes color in response to changing amounts of sunlight.

CHARACTER QUIZ:

1. Sensitivity means always agreeing with other people: TRUE? or FALSE?
2. What is one of the most important things you can do to show sensitivity to other people? _____
3. What are the five senses? _____
4. What is the technical name for the snowshoe rabbit? _____
5. Why is sensitivity important? _____

This page may be copied and distributed for educational use.

© Copyright MMXVIII by Character First. 877.357.0001 www.CharacterFirstEd.com



characterfirst
education