

# Strategies for Self-Discipline

This lesson reviews the definitions of responsibility and self-discipline and gives students an opportunity to identify personal responsibilities they have at home, at school, and to themselves/others. Additionally, the lesson explores some of the small things that can happen to prevent us from fulfilling our responsibilities. Students will reflect on these obstacles and then determine one thing they can do (for each area) to retain self-discipline.

## Kindness Sub-Concept(s)

Self-discipline

## Lesson Timeframe

25-30 minutes

## Required Materials

- Paper
- Writing utensil
- NOTE: Students will be asked to return to these lists in another lesson of this Unit, so they will want to keep track of them or you may want to collect them.

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.  
See last page for details.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Identify personal responsibilities at school, home, and to self/with others.
- Develop self-discipline strategies to help ensure students can better fulfill at least one responsibility.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

As a teacher you are responsible for the safety and education of dozens of children. How do you prepare for school each day? Every teacher is required to provide some type of lesson plans as proof of planning, but effective planning goes much further than this. Mapping out a unit based on the number of in-class days coupled with allotted time constraints can completely change the original lesson. Oftentimes our planning gets shorter and shorter the longer we have been teaching. However, each year we receive a completely new set of students. This week, set aside some extra time to evaluate your current class. What special needs do they have (both strengths and weaknesses) that require a different approach than past years? If this is your first year teaching, try categorizing your students by learning style rather than academic level. You may begin to appreciate each student a bit more, which ultimately leads to a teacher that responds with kindness rather than frustration during this trying time of the year!

### Tips for Diverse Learners

- Students with limited writing or language skills could draw pictures of their responsibilities. You could also reduce the number of responsibilities in each column from 3-5 to 1-2.



## Share

5-7 minutes

*In this unit, we are going to talk about responsibility and self-discipline. I know these are concepts you are all familiar with. So, let's get creative in how we review these definitions. Can someone act out what the word responsibility means? It can be very simple; we'll see if we can understand what you are doing.*

Invite a student or two to act out their definitions.

*Good! Now, let's talk about something that is maybe a little less familiar: self-discipline. This is also harder to act out because self-discipline often takes place inside of us, in our minds, in our hearts, and in our "guts." So, let's take a little different approach to define self-discipline. First, I will give you the definition and then I want everyone to think about one word that represents self-discipline for you. Here is the definition: Self-discipline is controlling what you do or say so you don't hurt yourself or others.*

*Think of one word that represents self-discipline for you. I will give you 30 seconds to think of your word and then we'll go around and share our words.*



## Inspire

5-7 minutes

*Now, I want you to make three lists of all the things you are responsible for: at home, at school, for yourself and for others. What are you responsible for with regard to how you treat your body, your mind, and those around you?*

*Create three columns on your paper (you can do a tri-fold to create spaces for columns) and label them at the top: Home, School, Community. Try and get 3-5 things down on each list under each heading, and it's okay if some of the things overlap.*

*Remember that sometimes our responsibilities aren't huge. They can be as simple as brushing our teeth, helping watch a younger sibling, getting to school on time, etc.*



## Empower

10-15 minutes

*Now, I am going to say some choices or situations, and I want you to decide if any of them would prevent you from completing any of your responsibilities. Take a red crayon or your pencil or a marker and cross off a responsibility that would be negatively impacted by what I am saying. So, for example, if I said, "You and your friends hang out after school until dark without permission from your parents," is there a responsibility that this choice would prevent you from completing? If so, you would cross it off your list.*

*Listen to the following choices or situations and if you hear one that would negatively impact your ability to fulfill one of your responsibilities, cross that responsibility off the list.*

- You overslept.
- You left your homework on your kitchen table.
- You changed seats and moved from the front of the bus to the back all throughout the bus ride to school.
- You sometimes run in the hallways at school.
- You were daydreaming during class.
- You rarely eat all your lunch.
- You procrastinate (which means you wait until the last minute to do things).
- You sometimes argue with your parents and/or siblings.

Look at your lists. Did you have to cross many things out? Notice that most of these things are probably things we have all done (or maybe regularly do). And each one on their own may not seem like a big deal, but put them altogether and you might find it hard to fulfill your responsibilities!

Now I want you to write down one thing in each column that you will do to help you stay disciplined to fulfill your responsibilities (even if you didn't cross off any of your responsibilities!). We will all have things at some point that could prevent us from keeping up our end of the deal. For example, if you struggle with sleeping in too late and that prevents you from getting to school on time or eating a good breakfast or even just getting out the door without being stressed out, in one of your columns you might write, "I will go to bed five minutes early tonight and set my alarm in the morning." This strategy will help you remain self-disciplined to prioritize a good night's sleep and to get up on time.

The idea is to give yourself at least one strategy to help you be more disciplined and responsible, no matter the obstacle.



## Reflect

5 minutes

Have everyone come back together and share one self-discipline strategy they will try and what they think it will help them with. Sometimes students don't realize the negative impact of a negative habit (even a fairly benign habit like sleeping in or running in the hall). When students see how such behavior can impact them in other areas, they are more likely to take steps to address those behaviors.



## Extension Ideas

- Ask students later in the week if they have been using their new self-discipline strategy. Also, praise students when you notice them implementing their strategy at school.
- Collect student lists and strategies and email the strategy to parents (individually); this might provide additional support and encouragement at home, which can spill over into school behaviors.



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AS A RECOMMENDED  
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL  
AND EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>