

Garden of Responsibility

We often think of personal responsibility as only affecting ourselves. However, our choices can and will influence others and the world around us. This project uses science and garden skills to teach responsibility and perseverance through growing a flower and waiting for the beautiful results!

Integrity Sub-Concept(s)

Responsibility, Perseverance, Kindness

Project Timeframe

25-30 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ Small plastic cups or paper egg cartons work
- ☐ Potting soil + spoons for potting
- ☐ Fast-growing seeds (zinnia, sunflower, beans, grass, and herbs like basil are quick sprouting)
- ☐ Watering can or cup
- ☐ Paper for tracking growth

Note: This is a great opportunity to link up with your science unit for a combined lesson.

Context:

Explain to students they are each going to grow their own plant, which requires responsibility to plant and care for it properly and also perseverance to wait for it to grow (or to not give up if something goes wrong).

If blending this with a science unit, explain how plants grow and what they need to thrive and develop - soil, water, light. You might also discuss the plant life cycles, photosynthesis, and the benefit of plants in the environment.

NOTE: If you have a school garden and the season is right, you could plant seeds in the garden instead of in pots inside. Or, transplant your seedlings to the garden when you are done with them in the classroom.

To begin this project, set up different stations:

- **Pot Station:** Pick (and decorate, if desired) your pot. If growing grass, students might want to draw a face on their pot so the grass will look like hair sprouting out.
- **Soil Station:** Students use spoons to fill up their cups with soil. Lay newspaper out under the soil bags to catch spills.
- **Seed Station:** Students plant seeds as directed.
- **Water Station:** Students give their seeds their first drink of water.

Once potted, have students note what they planted, the date and time of planting, and also where the pots will sit in the classroom. They can track how much light the plants are getting throughout the day and should note each time they water their plant.

Have students observe their plants each day and document things like:

- Visual appearance - any new growth? Healthy color? How many sprouts?
- Height of sprouts and change over time - how much did your plant grow this week?
- Any challenges they faced and how they solved them.
- Questions they have about their plant or successes they are seeing. You can use your closing meeting each day or at the end of the week to discuss progress, celebrate successes, and answer questions.

Eventually, when the plants reach a certain height and can safely go home, send the plants home with the students, crediting their careful, responsible work in helping give back to nature and grow something beautiful to share and enjoy at home.



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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.

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