

# leadworthy<sup>®</sup>

## Character Lessons

Scope & Sequence for First Grade



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# How to Use Leadworthy® Character Lessons IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Our K-12 Leadworthy Character Lessons are intentionally designed to support the work you are already doing to build a positive school culture that inspires and empowers students to lead with heart.

Each 30-minute lesson aligns with our Capturing Kids' Hearts® EXCEL Model™. Lessons are grade-level specific, progressive, systemic, and easy to use with minimal preparation. Each month, we provide four lessons. These lessons can be taught once a week in a single sitting or as five different mini-lessons throughout the week — teaching one piece of the EXCEL lesson plan each day.

These lessons also intentionally support and reinforce state and nationally-recognized student needs and skills, including:

- 21st Century Learning Components
- College and Career Readiness Skills

Using our own research on leadership development and the recommendations for character education at the state and national levels, we identified nine initial character traits to grow leadership skills of students.

**Empathy**  
**Self-Direct**  
**Teamwork**  
**Responsibility**  
**Respect**  
**Kindness**  
**Courage**  
**Perseverance**  
**Integrity**

The recommended teaching calendar (seen below) aligns directly with the monthly themes, resources, and dashboard you see in CKH.org.

In addition to weekly lessons, you will also have access to a monthly service-learning lesson. These monthly lessons are not required but provide you with opportunities to integrate service-learning components and projects on campus that align with and support monthly themes.

Service-learning lessons can be used:

- by one class or one grade level
- by multiple classes and grade levels
- or campus wide.



## What You Need to Know to Get Started

### STEP 1:

Choose your structure.

- Whole Lesson Approach: Teach one 30-minute lesson each week.
- Mini-Lesson Approach: Teach a mini-lesson (5–7 minutes) each day using the Capturing Kids' Hearts® EXCEL Model™. For example: Engage on Monday, X-plore on Tuesday, etc.

### STEP 2:

Choose when and where to use these lessons.

- In Elementary:
  - Morning Meeting
  - Social Studies
  - Enrichment
  - End of the day
- In Secondary:
  - Advisory
  - Homeroom
  - Social Studies
  - English

### STEP 3:

Embrace the monthly theme.

- Reinforce the monthly theme through morning announcements, social media posts, and communication with parents and staff members.
- Send home the monthly family newsletter to spotlight the theme and character trait at home.
- Celebrate students and teachers who model these traits each month.

### STEP 4:

Assess your students' progress.

- Teacher Guiding Questions: Use these questions to measure your students' development for each Leadworthy character trait before and after a unit.



LEADWORTHY®  
**CHARACTER TRAITS**  
Recommended Calendar

August / September  
**EMPATHY**

October  
**SELF-DIRECT**

November  
**TEAMWORK**

December  
**RESPONSIBILITY**

January  
**RESPECT**

February  
**KINDNESS**

March  
**COURAGE**

April  
**PERSEVERANCE**

May  
**INTEGRITY**



# FIRST GRADE

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER

## EMPATHY

Understanding and feeling what others are experiencing.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will build better relationships by recognizing and respecting the feelings of others.

### Why Focus on Empathy?

- Empathy builds positive classroom culture. Empathy empowers students to learn to understand each other to build trust and safety in the classroom.
- Empathy strengthens community. Empathy helps students strengthen their relationships with classmates, other students and adults at school, and at home.
- Empathy prepares your students to be leaders in their community. The best leaders understand the people they lead and are able to show they care.

### Empathy in Action:

- Take a different perspective. When you take a different perspective, you put aside your own feelings and reactions to see the situation through another's eyes.
- Put aside judgment. Take a pause and rather than express conclusions about a situation based on what you see, step back and consider other things you may still need to know or understand.
- Communicate that you understand. Instead of giving advice, respond with reflective phrases like, "It sounds like you..." or "I hear that you..." to express that you understand and care.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Have you noticed improvements in students recognizing and respecting each others' feelings? Provide 2-3 examples.
- Are students more apt to share their own feelings with others? Provide 2-3 examples.



## UNIT OVERVIEW: EMPATHY

### **WEEK 1:** **WHAT IS EMPATHY?**

- Students will learn how to communicate empathy with a friend.

### **WEEK 2:** **RESPOND WITH EMPATHY**

- Students will learn to identify feelings in others and respond with empathy.

### **WEEK 3:** **COMMUNICATE EMPATHY WITH FRIENDS**

- Students will learn how to communicate empathy with their friends nonverbally by using the Sharing Feelings signal.

### **WEEK 4:** **IDENTIFYING AND UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS**

- Students will practice identifying emotions in others and responding to them with empathy.

### **SERVICE LEARNING:** **OUR ANIMAL COMMUNITIES**

- Students will discuss and analyze the needs of animals in shelters and will complete a service project focused on collecting items, such as beds and toys for animals living in shelters while awaiting adoption.



# FIRST GRADE

OCTOBER

## SELF-DIRECT

Lead yourself to who you want to be.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will exercise self-control and demonstrate doing what is right, no matter who is watching or listening.

### Why Focus on Self-Direction?

- Self-direction strengthens relationships. Self-direction helps to grow social skills and develop meaningful and positive relationships with others.
- Self-direction teaches personal responsibility. Learning to self-direct teaches students to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Self-direction helps us to regulate emotions. Self-direction empowers students to regulate their impulses and emotional responses to situations and circumstances in life.

### Self-Direction in Action:

- Practice goal setting and action planning. When we establish goals and develop action plans, we learn to take intentional steps to successfully achieve goals.
- Monitor and adjust. Provide students with regular feedback and opportunities to self-assess progress toward goals so they can adjust and make improvements in their behaviors.
- Reflect and evaluate. Facilitate discussions and reflection to prompt students to examine what they do, think, and say against their goals and vision for their life and learning.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What skills have you observed students using to exercise self-control?
- Are you noticing an improvement in students taking the initiative to do the right thing with less adult re-direction?



# FIRST GRADE

NOVEMBER

## TEAMWORK

Work together to reach a goal.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the purpose of collaboration and will demonstrate their understanding with their peers and within their community.

### Why Focus on Teamwork?

- Teamwork improves communication. Teamwork helps us improve our verbal and non-verbal communication skills, conveying that we care and have a relevant message.
- Teamwork builds interpersonal awareness. Growing a great team requires us to first build strong relationships through a better understanding of ourselves and others.
- Teamwork celebrates diversity. Teamwork thrives from diverse ideas that come from a mixture of different genders, cultures, expertise, experiences, and problem-solving approaches.
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### Teamwork in Action:

- Call them a team — not a class or a group. A group consists of many different people. A team, however, has a common purpose and a shared responsibility for success.
- Require teams to set expectations and manage their own behavior. Do not tell teams what type of behavior is expected. Rather, let them decide for themselves using a Social Contract.
- Teach and encourage affirmations. Giving affirmations helps connect the team and builds trust, promotes engagement, and boosts a positive culture.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- During student collaborations, have you observed improvements with students listening and affirming each other, and doing their part on a given group task?
- Can you list at least three students who have shown significant improvement in displaying teamwork?



## UNIT OVERVIEW: TEAMWORK

### WEEK 1: WHAT IS TEAMWORK?

- Students will define teamwork and state why it is important to work together as a team.

### WEEK 2: HELPING OTHERS

- Students will explain the importance of doing their part and helping others.

### WEEK 3: GRATITUDE & TEAMWORK

- Students will learn that being a great teammate includes expressing gratitude and recognizing other people's contributions.

### WEEK 4: WORKING TOGETHER IS BETTER

- Students will work as a group and demonstrate teamwork skills, such as listening, following directions, supporting others, taking turns, and giving best effort.

### SERVICE LEARNING: EMPTY BOWLS

- Students will learn more about hunger in their community, state, and country, and will work as a team to complete a service project focused on creating hunger awareness and providing support.



# FIRST GRADE

DECEMBER

## RESPONSIBILITY

Own your thoughts, words, and actions.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will learn that when they do their part, they are helping themselves, their family, their school, and their community.

### Why Focus on Responsibility?

- Responsibility teaches resilience. It is not possible to persevere and achieve our dreams without taking personal responsibility seriously.
- Responsibility empowers us to own our actions. There is great power in being able to make conscious, calculated choices to reach goals and manage those things in our control.
- Responsibility teaches us to manage our time and resources. Responsibly organizing and prioritizing needs is an executive function of the brain that improves with practice.

### Responsibility in Action:

- Give students roles and responsibilities. When students have a leadership role in class, they are accountable for contributing positively to the classroom culture.
- Empower students with self-management tools. Provide students with tools to help manage stress and impulsivity while motivating them to meet goals.
- Clearly communicate consequences. Empower students to make choices and experience the consequences of their actions, both positive and negative.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Based on student roles and responsibilities within your classroom community, are students more apt to follow through on assigned tasks/classroom jobs?
- How have students shown responsibility within their classroom community? Provide 2-3 examples.



## UNIT OVERVIEW: RESPONSIBILITY

### WEEK 1:

#### DO MY PART

- Students will learn what responsibility means and identify ways to be responsible at school and home.
- Students will make commitments to being responsible.

### WEEK 2:

#### SELF-EVALUATION & GOAL WRITING

- Students will acquire skills to self-evaluate and write goals.

### WEEK 3:

#### WANTS VS. NEEDS

- Students will consider responsible decision-making with wants versus needs.

### WEEK 4:

#### GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Students will consider their responsibility to their community and world.

### SERVICE LEARNING:

#### CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- Students will discuss, analyze, and bring attention to democratic responsibility through participation in a service-learning project.



# FIRST GRADE

JANUARY

## RESPECT

Give honor and value to ourselves and others.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will demonstrate acts of goodwill toward themselves, others, and the community.

### Why Focus on Respect?

- Respect contributes to a positive culture. People feel safe, supported, and engaged in the context of thoughtful social, emotional, civic, and intellectual interactions.
- Respect decreases conflict. Respect helps us and others to be able to express ourselves without fear of being judged, humiliated, or discriminated against.
- Respect encourages empathy. Respect helps us to understand each other and put ourselves in someone else's shoes.

### Respect in Action:

- Teach students words have power. How we talk to others and ourselves can motivate or discourage, connect or destroy, and hurt or heal. We should choose our words with care.
- Create opportunities for group decision-making. Open dialogue engages students in a process where compromise is crucial to making decisions.
- Vary protocols for classroom sharing. Frequently use open-ended questions, partner sharing, and small-group activities to connect and promote understanding between students.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What actions have you observed students participating in to show that they are mastering the concept of respect?
- Are you noticing that students are more apt to take risks? For example, responding to questions that are posed even when they aren't completely sure if they are right or wrong?



## UNIT OVERVIEW: RESPECT

### WEEK 1: WHAT IS RESPECT?

- Students will learn the meaning of respect and identify ways to show respect with their words and actions.

### WEEK 2: RESPECT AT HOME AND SCHOOL

- Students will determine ways to respond respectfully when they are upset.

### WEEK 3: RESPECT, GRATITUDE, AND KINDNESS

- Students will identify ways to show respect to the classroom, their classmates, and the school.

### WEEK 4: RESPECTING DIFFERENCES

- Students will learn how to be respectful in all situations, even when others are disrespectful.

### SERVICE LEARNING: RESPECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Students will determine ways to contribute to community recycling efforts and will be encouraged to become responsible for their choices.
- Students will examine how they can take responsibility for reducing their impact on the environment through recycling.
- Students will use their knowledge to educate others in their family, school, and community.



# FIRST GRADE

FEBRUARY

## KINDNESS

Be appropriately friendly and compassionate to others.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will learn to increase their desire to make themselves and others feel better.

### Why Focus on Kindness?

- Kindness boosts positive emotions. Acts of kindness create neural pathways that enhance feelings of wellbeing and the natural flow of feel-good endorphins and neurotransmitters.
- Kindness is self-replicating. When we perform an act of kindness, it is likely to encourage others to act in a similar way.
- Kindness reduces stress and anxiety. Kindness promotes positive relationships with other people. When you build healthy connections with other people, it helps decrease anxiety.

### Kindness in Action:

- Celebrate small things. Start each day with Good Things as a class. Publicly and privately affirm kind and thoughtful actions and attitudes.
- Create opportunities for students to regularly affirm each other. Once a week, dedicate time for students to write notes of affirmation to classmates and school staff members.
- Model kindness. Be mindful of body language, tone, and mindset. Kindness is learned by example!

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Have you noticed an increase in positive self-talk among your students? Can you provide examples?
- When students put forth effort and are unsuccessful with a particular task, how do they respond? Do you hear them saying things like, “It’s okay — maybe next time!” Or “I tried my best. I’ll just practice a little more.”



## UNIT OVERVIEW: KINDNESS

### WEEK 1:

#### 28 DAYS OF KINDNESS

- Students will brainstorm ways to be kind to other people to begin a month of kind actions.

### WEEK 2:

#### KINDNESS AND CARING

- Students will learn how kind actions can make others feel cared for and valued.

### WEEK 3:

#### KINDNESS AND AFFIRMATIONS

- Students will use kind words to write affirmations to classmates.

### WEEK 4:

#### BUCKETS OF KINDNESS

- Students will celebrate their achievements during the month.

### SERVICE LEARNING:

#### PROJECT KINDNESS

- Students will discuss and analyze the impact of kindness on themselves, their school, and their community.
- Students will complete a service project focused on cultivating kindness in their school and community.





# FIRST GRADE

MARCH

## COURAGE

Develop strength to face something difficult.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will develop skills that will equip them to overcome difficult, uncomfortable, and uncertain situations.

### Why Focus on Courage?

- Courage encourages engagement. Courage helps students raise their hand, participate, try new things, and voice their opinions.
- Courage builds self-confidence. Courage is the choice to act. By doing something, students increase their belief in themselves and their ability to do difficult or challenging things.
- Courage can help reframe a negative. When something does not go as planned or a student gets upset about a mistake or failure, courage can help them reframe the event in a positive light.

### Courage in Action:

- Provide leadership opportunities! Students can learn and demonstrate leadership by teaching and mentoring others, classroom roles and responsibilities, or community outreach.
- Encourage discussion and debate. Foster curiosity and empower students to formulate ideas and engage in respectful discourse and conversations.
- Celebrate failures. Create opportunities to reduce fear of failure and celebrate when students try something new, even if they are not successful the first time.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are students relying more on each other, thus creating a more student-centered learning environment? (i.e., Asking a group mate for help, reminding each other of school and classroom expectations, etc.)
- Are students taking the initiative to problem solve, requiring less adult intervention? (i.e., Disagreements with classmates, suggesting ideas, etc.)



## UNIT OVERVIEW: COURAGE

### WEEK 1:

#### **SUPER COURAGE**

- Students learn what it means to be courageous and have the courage to believe in oneself.

### WEEK 2:

#### **COURAGE AT SCHOOL**

- Students will learn to identify and act with courage at school.

### WEEK 3:

#### **KINDNESS IS COURAGEOUS**

- Students will discuss how to be courageous in difficult situations.

### WEEK 4:

#### **PEER PRESSURE**

- Students will learn to recognize and avoid peer pressure.

### SERVICE LEARNING:

#### **COURAGE IN OUR COMMUNITY**

- Students will define and give examples of the common good.
- Students will identify characteristics and actions of everyday people who are making a difference for the common good.
- Students will recognize and celebrate everyday heroes in the community.



# FIRST GRADE

APRIL

## PERSEVERANCE

Give extra effort to make it through to the end.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will learn to apply and maintain effort while working toward a goal.

### Why Focus on Perseverance?

- Perseverance encourages positive self-talk and thinking. When faced with difficult tasks, perseverance helps students reframe with positive thoughts, such as “I’m not good at this YET!”
- Perseverance develops empathy. Students gain a better understanding of who they are and develop more empathy and compassion for others who may struggle to reach a goal.
- Perseverance sparks personal growth. Pushing through complex tasks builds resilience and helps students discover how capable they are.

### Perseverance in Action:

- Share stories and challenging experiences. Be vulnerable and share personal experiences of when you have struggled with a task or concept and had to work hard to push through.
- Praise effort and process, not intelligence or performance. Affirm students for the process they used to tackle tasks and point out how their abilities grow through their own hard work.
- Give your students the chance to struggle. Struggle builds self-confidence, independence, and perseverance. Resist the urge to intervene immediately and give students time to figure problems out.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- When you set classroom goals, are students eager and willing to put in the work to reach those goals? (i.e., once the classroom “kindness jar” is filled, students earn a popcorn party.)
- Are students more apt to ask for help rather than giving up when faced with a difficult task?



## UNIT OVERVIEW: PERSEVERANCE

### WEEK 1: NEVER GIVE UP

- Students will gain a better understanding of what perseverance is and will recognize some characteristics that may help them practice this trait.

### WEEK 2: NOT YET!

- Students will be able to reflect on the purpose behind persevering and the good that can come from pushing through.

### WEEK 3: BEST EFFORT

- Students will understand the relationship between effort and perseverance.

### WEEK 4: PERSEVERANCE AND EXCEL

- Students will reflect on what it means to EXCEL and persevere.

### SERVICE LEARNING: MARKET DAY PROJECT

- Students will discuss and analyze the needs and wants of classmates and will create a product and business plan focused on meeting these demands, while making a profit.



# FIRST GRADE

MAY

## INTEGRITY

Live with honesty and excellence.

## UNIT OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the importance of being honest and trustworthy in all situations, whether good or bad.

### Why Focus on Integrity?

- Integrity generates trust. When we are honest and follow through on promises, we gain the confidence of our team. Trust allows us to collaborate and achieve more together.
- Integrity encourages self-assessment. Integrity requires our regular self-assessment to align behaviors with our goals and self-beliefs.
- Integrity is essential in leadership. Great leaders decrease anxiety and build strong teams when they are honest, consistent, and responsible.

### Integrity in Action:

- Acknowledge and affirm acts with integrity. Publicly praise students who model acts of integrity, such as honesty and honor. Encourage students to identify classmates who show integrity.
- Use scenarios and role plays. Challenge students with real-life scenarios and situations that allow them to reflect, discuss, and choose the best next step or action.
- Create a culture of accountability. Invite students to give you feedback. Ask students to rate the class based on your Social Contract. Empower students with choice-based consequences.

### TEACHER GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are you noticing an increase in intrinsic motivation vs. extrinsic motivation? (i.e., A student notices trash on the floor and throws it away without telling you or asking you for a reward.)
- Are students taking more accountability for their actions; less blame on others?



## UNIT OVERVIEW: INTEGRITY

### WEEK 1:

#### HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

- Students will understand the definition and importance of honesty and truth, and how these virtues relate to integrity.

### WEEK 2:

#### BE TRUE TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Students will get the opportunity to dive deeper into the different aspects of integrity and develop their own action plan for integrity in their lives.

### WEEK 3:

#### DO THE RIGHT THING

- Students will have the opportunity to read or listen to a book and identify examples of integrity.

### WEEK 4:

#### BE LEADWORTHY

- Students will reflect on what they have learned about integrity and put what they have learned into action.

### SERVICE LEARNING:

#### LEADERSHIP PROJECT

- Students will discuss and analyze the qualities of a leader and will discuss ways to promote, develop, and celebrate leadership on campus.



Leadworthy® Character Lessons  
UNIT POSTERS

CONNECT  
WITH  
HEART



Empathy  
Understand and feel the heart of another

leadworthy

THINK,  
CHOOSE, ACT



Self-Direct  
Lead yourself to who you want to be

leadworthy

BETTER  
TOGETHER



Teamwork  
Work together to reach a goal

leadworthy

DO YOUR  
PART



Responsibility  
Own your thoughts, words, and actions

leadworthy

honor  
you-  
honor  
me



Respect  
Act with thoughtfulness

leadworthy

SPARK  
THE  
HEART



Kindness  
Be friendly and compassionate

leadworthy

STEP  
UP



Courage  
Develop strength to face something difficult

leadworthy

FINISH  
STRONG



Perseverance  
Give extra effort to make it through to the end

leadworthy

BE  
LEADWORTHY



Integrity  
Live with honesty and excellence

leadworthy



