

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

for use with
Program 5

The CARING Connection

In the Video Series



Created and Produced by
Elkind+Sweet Communications, Inc.
in association with Character Counts!
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HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups, or view it at home.

This video, along with the facilitator's guide and website, is designed to help teachers engage students in classroom discussion and other activities leading to deep, meaningful reflection about the kinds of people they are and want to be.

Have a great discussion!

Thoughtful, reflective discussions are essential to getting the most out of these videos. You will find some very fruitful facilitation techniques, including **Socratic Method**, at our special character education website at <www.goodcharacter.com>. The questions in this discussion guide begin on page 7.

www.goodcharacter.com provides a wealth of helpful material including questions, assignments, and activities for special topics such as **sports, workplace readiness**, and others. Please utilize this very valuable resource.



WHAT IS CARING?

In this program caring means:

- 🍏 Be sensitive to people's feelings.
- 🍏 Treat people with kindness and generosity.
- 🍏 Think about how your actions will affect others.
- 🍏 Never be mean or hurtful.
- 🍏 Help people in need.
- 🍏 Always remember - we become caring people by doing caring things.

PROGRAM CONTENT

Shiv, a twelve year old boy, is presenting his classroom video blog on the topic of caring. Through a combination of skits, group discussions, commentaries, and short documentaries, Shiv's blog reveals a variety of ways young people can, and do, make a difference for their friends, families, and communities through simple acts of caring. Shiv's blog includes two inspiring documentaries about two very caring kids—Nick and Kassandra.

Part I – The Power of Caring

Shiv starts his blog by sharing a story about an interaction he had with his younger brother the previous day, when he realized he had behaved in a way that gave his brother the impression Shiv didn't care about him. He says it dawned on him he has the power to make someone happy or miserable just by showing that he cares. Sometimes it takes nothing more than a look, a gesture, or a comment. Imagine if we all took more time to think about our impact on other people. He closes his introduction by saying how he hates the way teenagers are often portrayed as selfish and self-absorbed, and asks the question, "Do you really think that's true?"

Part II – Group Discussion:

Are kids selfish?

- Some kids are conceited and do nothing and don't think of anyone else.

- Some are, some aren't. You can't judge a book by its cover.
- I think it's half and half. Some like to give, some are selfish sometimes but also like to help other people.

- I think everyone is selfish at times. It's not only the kids. Adults are selfish too.

Shiv comes back and agrees that kids aren't any more selfish than adults. Then he tells us that there a lot of things kids do to show they care. They may be little things, but they do make a difference.

What can kids do to be Caring?

- Donate money to street beggars.
- Caring is not just being generous; it's also being loving.
- For example, my mother is very caring and always goes out of her way to make sure all her kids are taken care of before herself.
 - Someone who cares is always there for you.
- My mom got in a really bad car accident. My best friend stayed with me in the hospital 24/7 while I was so scared I was going to lose my mom.
- My sister and I go caroling every Christmas. We performed where my grandma stayed when she was sick.
- Yeah, we go and sing to the older people who are just left there to die and make them smile and that is the best feeling.

Back to Shiv: Shiv talks about what a powerful thing it is to be able to make others feel good and how amazing it is that it so easy to do. You just have to show you care. Shiv uses Nick's story as an example.

Part III—Documentary:

Nick's Story

We see a short documentary about Nick, a thirteen-year-old boy who has an artificial leg. He lost his leg to bone cancer when he was just five years old. He shares his story, his love of sports, and how his experience with cancer changed him. He talks about how great it was to see how much people cared and did for him when he was sick and now he wants to return the favor. He visits other cancer patients to show them there is life after cancer and to honor that fact that everyone has a story. They just need someone to hear it. Nick also teaches other young

people with artificial limbs how to snowboard. He is now committed to a life of service. He ends by explaining that when you help someone, you also help yourself. It simply makes you want to do it again and again.

**Part IV—Group Discussion:
What Motivates you to Give?**

- In my school we raise money for people with cancer. You get prizes.

- It shouldn't be about prizes but that does motivate some people.

- Sometimes when you give, you don't get anything out of it except that you feel good inside. That is the best gift.

- At Christmas, my church gives meals to homeless people. You may not have helped out in Africa, but you have made someone's life a little better.

- Another way to change the world is you tell somebody that you did a great thing and felt good about it and that will make others want to do it, too. And then their friends will want to do it, and their friends will want to do it, and so on...

Back to Shiv: He says that a lot of people go out of their way to help others even if they don't know or see the people they are helping. Take Cassandra, for example. . .

**Part V—Documentary:
Kassandra's Story**

We see a documentary about Cassandra, who is now thirteen and runs an organization she started when she was ten years old called "Good Night, Sleep Tight." It started when she read a story about foster children who had to carry their belongings from home to home in plastic bags and often lost things. It struck her that she lived in a community where people just want more and more, and these foster children were doing all they could just to save the little they had. Good Night, Sleep Tight benefits

foster kids by giving them designed pillowcases stuffed with gifts that will help them when they feel lonely or sad. Her main desire was to help foster children feel that someone cares about them.

Kassandra's father left when she was only ten days old and she has no contact with him. So, if anything ever happened to her mom she could end up in foster care, herself. This realization helps her relate even more to the kids she is helping. She has the help of the local Department of Social Services and does outreach and pillow case design parties with all levels of school-age children. Through her efforts she is both directly helping others and educating others about the issue of foster care. Good Night, Sleep Tight collaborates with other groups like the Girl Scouts and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Part VI—Conclusion:

Shiv concludes with the thought that real caring is not just a feeling inside, it's an action—something we do. The amazing thing is that even if we don't start out as caring people, we become caring people by doing caring things. So if we really want to make a difference in this world, it's simply up to us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask before showing the video:

1. Agree or disagree: Some people say that kids are selfish and self absorbed and don't care about anything but themselves.
2. How do you know if someone cares about you?

Questions to ask after showing the video:

1. At the beginning of his blog, Shiv says that he realized he had the power to make someone happy by showing he cared. Do you think everyone has that power?
2. How do you feel when people show that they really care about you? How do you feel when you do something really caring for someone else?
3. What makes people care about others?
4. What do think the world would look like if nobody cared about anybody else?
5. Agree or disagree: It's uncool to be a caring person. Why, or why not?
6. Who is someone in your life you think is very caring? How does he/she demonstrate that? How are you similar or different from that person?
7. What motivates you to give to others?
8. One student says that sometimes when you give you don't get anything out of it. Do you agree?
9. What are some things you've done alone or as a group that you feel improved the life of someone else. How did it make you feel?
10. In Nick's story, he says that when you help someone, you help yourself. What does he mean? Do you agree? How?

11. Cassandra said her story about starting “Good Night, Sleep Tight” all started with a book she read about foster care. Can you think of something you have read about that gives you an idea of how to help others?

12. Do you think the average 12-year-old could do the kinds of things Nick and Cassandra have done, or are they just special cases?

13. Can you choose to be a caring person, or do you have to be born that way?

14. Shiv says that even if we don’t start out as caring people, we become caring by doing caring things. What does he mean? Do you agree? Can you think of examples of how that would work? (*This also makes a good writing assignment.*)

15. Do you consider yourself to be a caring person? In what ways?

16. What does caring have to do with the quality of your character?

*For questions relating to **special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc.**, visit www.goodcharacter.com*

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Describe the most caring thing anyone has ever done for you. How did that make you feel? What effect did that have on you?
2. Share a time when you or someone you know made a difference in someone's life by showing that you (or he/she) cared? How did it make you feel?
3. Nick turned a difficult challenge in his life into an opportunity to help others. Can you think of someone in your life who has done the same thing? What was that person's challenge and how did he/she turn it into an opportunity to give back?
4. Research someone in history who dedicated his or her life to helping others. Write about when they lived, and give some examples of how they improved the world through their dedication.
5. Watch a movie or a TV program, and then write about how the actions of the characters demonstrated either caring or uncaring. Write a critique of an uncaring character, suggesting how he or she could have been a more caring person.
6. Imagine that you have just inherited \$20,000 and you want to spend it all to help other people. What would you do with the money, and why? What effect would it have on the people you would be helping?

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. What does it mean to be a caring person? Have your class brainstorm a list of do's and don'ts for being caring. Ask for specific examples of each behavior they identify. Compare their list with the one on page 2 of this guide. Hang the list up on the wall as a reminder.
2. Take some of the behavioral examples from activity #1, above, and turn them into role-play situations. First have them role-play the uncaring behavior, and then the caring behavior. Have the group analyze each of the role-plays.
3. Have students form small groups and come up with ideas similar to *Kassandra's* that address a need in their community. Then develop a step-by-step plan of how they might turn that idea into a reality. Give your project a name and a mission statement that starts with "Our project's goal is to show we care by _____."
4. Bring in (or have your students bring in) articles from newspapers and magazines describing situations that show caring and uncaring actions on the part of individuals, groups, or governments. Discuss these situations. In what ways do they demonstrate either caring or uncaring? Perhaps write a group letter to the people involved.
5. Have your students visit our special web-site **<www.goodcharacter.com>** and click on "[Opportunities for Action.](#)" There they will find opportunities to become involved in community service projects and other activities that involve acts of caring.

This content-rich website is loaded with free resources to help you do the job!

Please visit this website to find:

- * **Facilitation techniques** for conducting meaningful, productive classroom discussions, including **Socratic Method**.
- * **Additional discussion questions, writing assignments, and learning activities.”**
- * **Opportunities for your students** to become involved in activities and issues relating to the topics in these videos.
- * **Links** to key character education organizations and resources.
- * **Articles** and other writings on educating for character.
- * Special discussion guide supplements for use with **sports programs, workplace readiness programs,** and other areas of special interest.
- * **The Daily Dilemma** - an ongoing series of moral and ethical discussion starters from the case files of Charis Denison.

This video series was produced in association with
CHARACTER COUNTS!sm

The CHARACTER COUNTS! coalition is a consortium of the nation's largest and most influential educational and youth-serving organizations united in one over-riding mission: strengthening the character of America's youth.



CHARACTER COUNTS!
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