

## TEACHING GUIDE



**For use with  
Program 5**

## CARING

**In the Children's Video Series**



THIS PROGRAM TEACHES CHILDREN:

- What caring is all about and what caring people do.
- That we become caring people by doing caring things.
- That caring builds good relationships.
- That serving the community feels good and helps other people.

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### HOW TO BE A CARING PERSON

Treat people with kindness and generosity.

Help people in need.

Be sensitive to people's feelings.

Never be mean or hurtful.

Remember - we become caring people by doing caring things.

### THE STORY

#### **Act 1**

When Burna backs out of a community service project so she can play soccer, her friends accuse her of being selfish and uncaring.

#### **Act 2 - The Thinking Place**

Upset about what her friends think of her, Burna goes off to a gazebo in the park, called "The Thinking Place," where she has an imaginary dialogue with two park statues - Socrates and Diotima. The statues help Burna see herself for who she really is and think clearly about what it means to be a caring person.

#### **Act 3**

Burna decides to participate in the service project and discovers how satisfying it is to give of herself to help somebody else.

**Use Popcorn Park videos  
to facilitate character education,  
social and emotional development,  
and critical thinking in your students.**

**Character Education:** means helping students *know* what is right, *care about* what is right, and *do* what is right. These videos and their follow-up activities promote all three aspects of the process.

- **Knowing:** Popcorn Park videos portray issues of right and wrong in terms of concrete behaviors which young children can recognize and understand.
- **Caring:** These videos depict good character in a context that makes it desirable to young children, i.e. the reward for having good character is that we have better friendships.
- **Doing:** Popcorn Park videos emphasize that character is expressed in what we do, not how we think or feel. The stories are designed to inspire action.

**Social and Emotional Development:** The stories in these videos are rooted in inter-personal relationships. The videos, together with the discussion questions and other follow-up activities, will help your children:

- Understand and identify feelings.
- Recognize the difference between thinking, feeling, and acting.
- Understand how their actions affect other people's feelings.
- Develop empathy - the ability to take someone else's perspective.
- Handle their relationships with other people in a positive way.

**Critical Thinking:** These videos explicitly encourage thinking as a means of problem-solving, and help kids learn to think through situations where personal feelings present an obstacle. Some of the critical thinking skills modeled in these stories are:

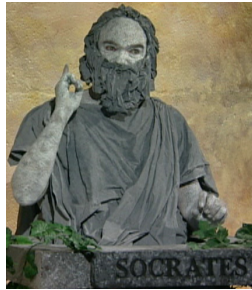
- Thinking clearly and honestly about a problem.
- Sorting out issues.
- Using questions to drive thinking and problem-solving.
- Asking the right question.

## The Thinking Place

The second act of each video takes place in *The Thinking Place*, a gazebo in the park populated by two statues - Socrates\* and



Diotima\*\* - who come alive in the presence of anyone with a thorny problem and a good imagination. The story's main character arrives here confused and conflicted, bringing to life the two statues, who coach him/her in critical thinking and problem solving. Their guidance empowers the character to do the right thing in Act 3.



### Socratic Method

True to his nature, Socrates' approach to thinking is, well, Socratic. He never tells anyone what to do, he just asks questions. Lots of good questions. And by asking the right questions he artfully guides the character to a clear understanding of what

must be done. But that only solves half the problem.



### Emotional Intelligence

As we know, there is a difference between knowing what to do and having the will or ability to do it. Often, emotional and interpersonal concerns are actually the biggest part of the problem, and this is where Diotima comes in. Diotima deals with

the human dimension and sparks the insight that eventually helps the character carry out the right decision.

\***Socrates** is credited with being the first person to apply serious critical thinking to questions of morality and conduct.

\*\***Diotima** was a legendary Greek priestess and teacher who taught Socrates the connection between love of people and love of wisdom.

For guidance on conducting Socratic discussions in your classroom, please visit [www.goodcharacter.com/popcornpark](http://www.goodcharacter.com/popcornpark).

## How to Use This Video

Popcorn Park videos are structured in **three acts**. We strongly recommend that you **stop the video** after each act and conduct a class discussion (the breaks between acts are clearly marked in the video). Pages 7-8 of this guide provide **discussion questions** that will help you engage your students in **meaningful reflection** about what they have just seen, exercise and train their thinking skills, and give you a way to assess and reinforce their understanding of the important ideas before proceeding. Breaking the video up in this way may be especially advisable for the younger grades. It is not necessary to show the entire video in a single day.

In addition to the discussion questions, this guide also provides **writing assignments, group activities**, and a **parents' take-home page** to maximize the impact and usefulness of the video. **You may have to rephrase some of this material to suit the age level of your children.**

- If you would like to teach your kids the **songs** from these videos, you'll find the lyrics (and much more) on our character education website at **<[www.goodcharacter.com/songs.html](http://www.goodcharacter.com/songs.html)>** The song lyrics are also in a PDF file on this DVD.

- This video series was produced in association with **Character Counts!** For more "Six Pillars" related activities and materials, please visit their website at **<[www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)>**

- The **Character Education Partnership** outlines *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* on their very useful website at **<[www.character.org](http://www.character.org)>**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### ***Question to ask before showing the video:***

1. If I told you I thought you were a very caring person, what would that mean? What is a caring person?

### ***Questions to ask after showing Act I:***

2. Summarize what happened in the video so far. What do you think of Burna?

3. Burna's friends gave several reasons why it would be a good thing to read to the kids from the homeless shelter. What were those reasons. Did they seem like good reasons to you?

4. (*For pre-readers*) Do you like it when people read to you? When you become a good reader do you think you'll be willing to read to younger kids? (*For competent readers*) When you were younger did you like having people read to you? Would you be willing to read to a younger child?

5. When Burna found out their project was going to be reported in the newspaper, why did she suddenly get excited about reading to the kids? Was that a good reason? Why not?

6. What made her change her mind? (*It conflicted with her soccer game.*) Do you think that was a good reason?

7. Burna made up several excuses for not wanting to read to the kids. What were her excuses? Why did she make up excuses instead of just telling her friends the real reason - that it conflicted with her soccer game? Do you think Burna felt good about her reason? Why not?

8. Burna's friends accused her of being selfish. What is selfishness? Do you think Burna is selfish? Is there something wrong with being selfish?

9. Burna says she's as caring as the next person. Do you think she understands what it means to be a caring person? What would you tell Burna right now about caring?

10. What do you think will happen next?

***Questions to ask after showing Act II:***

11. Burna entered The Thinking Place repeating over and over "I am not uncaring!" Why did she do that? Do you think she really believes it?

12. Burna is very upset that her friends think she is selfish and uncaring. Why does that bother her? Would it bother you if your friends thought you were selfish and uncaring? Why?

13. Socrates says "it's precisely by asking the right questions that we are able to find the right answers." What does that mean? How can asking a question help you figure things out?

14. Socrates' big question is "How do I know when somebody really cares?" How would you answer this question? How can answering that question help Burna understand what caring is all about?

15. Why did Diotima ask Burna if she knew any caring people? *(To get Burna to identify what caring people do.)*

16. Burna gave two examples of caring people. What were they? *(Nubbs shared his lunch. Essie made a new kid feel included.)* How do these actions demonstrate caring? *(In both cases they were being kind and helpful. Nubbs was being generous. Essie was showing concern for somebody's feelings.)*

17. Burna said "I don't know what I'd do, I just know how I'd feel. Isn't that what caring is all about?" How would you answer Burna's question? Is caring only about how you feel, or does it involve something else?

18. Socrates said Burna taught him that we become caring people by doing caring things. What does that mean? Do you agree? What is the difference between feeling bad for somebody and doing something to help?

19. Based on what Burna has just learned, what do you think she is going to do in the next act?

***Questions to ask after showing Act III:***

20. How did Burna feel after she read to the little boy? Why do you think she felt that way? Did the experience of reading to the little boy change Burna in any way? Describe how Burna changed.
21. What do you think Burna learned from this experience?
22. Do you think Burna made a difference to the little boy? Describe it.
23. What things could you do (or, have you done) that would help somebody who needs it?
24. How do you feel when people show that they really care about you?
25. Do you consider yourself a caring person? In what ways are you a caring person?
26. What was most meaningful part of this video to you? What did you learn from watching this video?

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a summary of the story in the video. What events made Burna change her attitude?
2. Read a story, or watch a movie or TV show, and write about how the characters treated each other. In what ways were they caring or uncaring? What affect did their behavior have on each other? Give some specific examples.
3. Describe the most caring thing anyone has ever done for you. How did it make you feel? What effect did that have on you?
4. You have the power to make other people feel good through a simple act of kindness. Think of something you can say or do for another person that would make that person happy. Perhaps it's a simple compliment. Perhaps it's offering to do something helpful for that person. Do it, and then write about how you think it affected the other person. How did it make you feel? Was it worth doing? What would happen if you made a point of doing something like this every day?
5. If you ever had an experience doing community service, write about what you did and what you got out of doing it.
6. Imagine that someone gives you a lot of money on the condition that you have to spend it all to help other people. What would you do with it, and why? What effect would it have on the people you would be helping?
7. Publish a class book on how to be a caring person. Draw pictures of caring behaviors and write descriptions of them.

## 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. The kids can act them out themselves or use puppets. First have them role-play the uncaring behavior, and then the caring behavior. Have the group analyze each of the role-plays.
3. Bring in (or have the children 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.
4. Have your students research community service activities in your town that are open to kids their age. Then have them choose one activity and get involved. Consider having them volunteer to be "reading buddies" or "playground buddies" to younger children. A popular activity for younger children is to visit senior citizens. For some helpful project ideas, visit <[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)> and click on "*Service Learning*" or on "*Opportunities for Action*."
5. Ask your students to list different things that kids at your school do which are either caring or uncaring. Discuss how they feel about these things. Brainstorm ways to make your school environment more caring. Create a list of recommendations. Design a poster that lists these ideas.
6. Group discussion: Imagine that someone gives you \$20,000 but you have to spend it all to help other people. What would you do with it, and why? What effect would it have on the people you would be helping?

(Copy this page and send it home to the parents.)

## PARENTS' PAGE

Dear Parent,

Your child has just viewed a video entitled "***The Six Pillars of Character: CARING***" featuring the **Popcorn Park** Puppets. This video teaches children lessons about caring and selfish behavior, and shows how being a caring person leads to good friendships and positive interpersonal relationships.

**Here are some things you can do to reinforce the message of this video and our related learning activities.**

- Ask your child to tell you about this video program and what he or she learned from it.
- Talk with your children about the importance of doing things for other people. Remind them often that they have the power to brighten another person's day through a simple act of kindness.
- Participate in a community service project with your children.
- Try to find things that you can do together to make a difference in someone else's life.
- Catch your child being caring, that is doing something kind and generous for another person.
- Watch a television program together, and talk about the various ways in which the characters acted uncaring or caring towards one another.
- Remember that you are a powerful role model for your child. If you are kind and helpful to other people, that is what your child will learn from you.

**goodcharacter.com**

**Free Character Education Resources at  
www.goodcharacter.com**

This content-rich website offers free character education resources, organized by topic and grade level, for K-12 teachers, coaches, and youth group leaders. You'll find curriculum materials, discussion questions, writing assignments, group learning activities, opportunities for student action, and lots of teacher support material. Many teachers have found this to be an excellent place to start for immediate implementation of a character development unit for any grade level.

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This video series was produced in association with  
**CHARACTER COUNTS!™**

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



**CHARACTER COUNTS!**  
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www.charactercounts.org

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