

COURAGE TO CARE

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH SERVICE

Digital Binder

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TOUCHSTONES[®]
DISCUSSION PROJECT

About the Touchstones® Discussion Project

The Touchstones Discussion Project is a nonprofit organization founded on the belief that all people can benefit from the listening, speaking, thinking, and interpersonal skills gained by engaging in active, focused discussions. Since 1984, Touchstones has helped millions of students and others develop and improve these skills in school, work, and life. For more information about the Touchstones Discussion Project, visit www.touchstones.org.

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Worksheet for Lesson 1

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Identify the behaviors below that build trust or create distrust. Use a “T” to mark those that build trust and a “DT” for those that create distrust.

_____ Stealing

_____ Disobeying laws

_____ Being honest

_____ Offering a gift

_____ Lying

_____ Being polite

_____ Being loyal

_____ Apologizing

SMALL GROUP WORK

Within your small group, discuss the following situation. Try to come to agreement about your answers.

A friend of yours has always been loyal to you. This friend always helps you and has never turned his or her back on you. One day, you overhear this friend saying negative things about you. When you ask why, you are told it was not about you. Would you believe this friend? How would you judge his or her behavior? Would you trust this friend again?

Worksheet for Lesson 2

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Write what you would do in this situation:

You and a group of students are discussing a book that you have been assigned to read for class. You finished the work, but one student did not read the book. She asks you and the other students to tell her what the book is about so that she won't get in trouble. Later, during class the teacher calls on the girl who didn't read the book. She answers correctly because of something she learned from the other students. How would you feel about that student?

SMALL GROUP WORK

In your small group, consider your responses to your Individual Work. How would you respond as a small group to the student's behavior?

Discussion Evaluation Form

The items listed below are discussion behaviors. These behaviors may have or may not have been present in your discussion. Read each behavior listed and consider whether that behavior was present in the discussion or not.

	PRESENT	
Cooperation	Yes___	No___
Silence	Yes___	No___
Interrupting	Yes___	No___
Respect	Yes___	No___
Dominance	Yes___	No___
Total participation	Yes___	No___
Active listening	Yes___	No___
Lack of interest	Yes___	No___
Asking each other questions	Yes___	No___

Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = poor and 10 = excellent, what score would you give this discussion and why? (You can use any number from 1 through 10 for your score.)

Your score: _____

Why you gave the discussion this score:

SMALL GROUP WORK

Imagine that in your neighborhood there is an older person whose lawn is long and overgrown because it is too difficult for her to push the lawnmower. You and your friends sometimes make negative comments about the yard and how bad it looks compared to other yards in the area.

Your mother suggests that you go over to the neighbor's house and offer to help out by mowing her yard. When you knock on the neighbor's door and make your offer, she happily accepts and tells you where to find the lawnmower. When you are finished working, she asks you to visit with her for a little while and serves you a snack. As you realize how much help you have provided her, you offer to mow her lawn again in two weeks.

When your friends find out what you've done, they laugh and make fun of you. As a group, discuss what each of you would do as individuals. Then come to agreement as a group about the best response to your friends' laughter and teasing.

Worksheet for Lesson 6

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Read the following questions. Then respond to them with a few sentences.

Have you ever been shown disrespect? If so, how did it make you feel? Did you forgive the person? Whether you forgave that person or not, how did you feel toward that person afterward?

SMALL GROUP WORK

In your group, read the questions below. Discuss each questions as a group. Come to agreement about what to write down to share with the class.

1. What are two things that you can do that demonstrate respect for another person?
 - 1:
 - 2:
2. What are two things that you do that show disrespect to another person?
 - 1:
 - 2:
3. Think of two groups of people in history that have been treated disrespectfully because they were considered “different” from others. Write your answer here:

Worksheet for Lesson 7

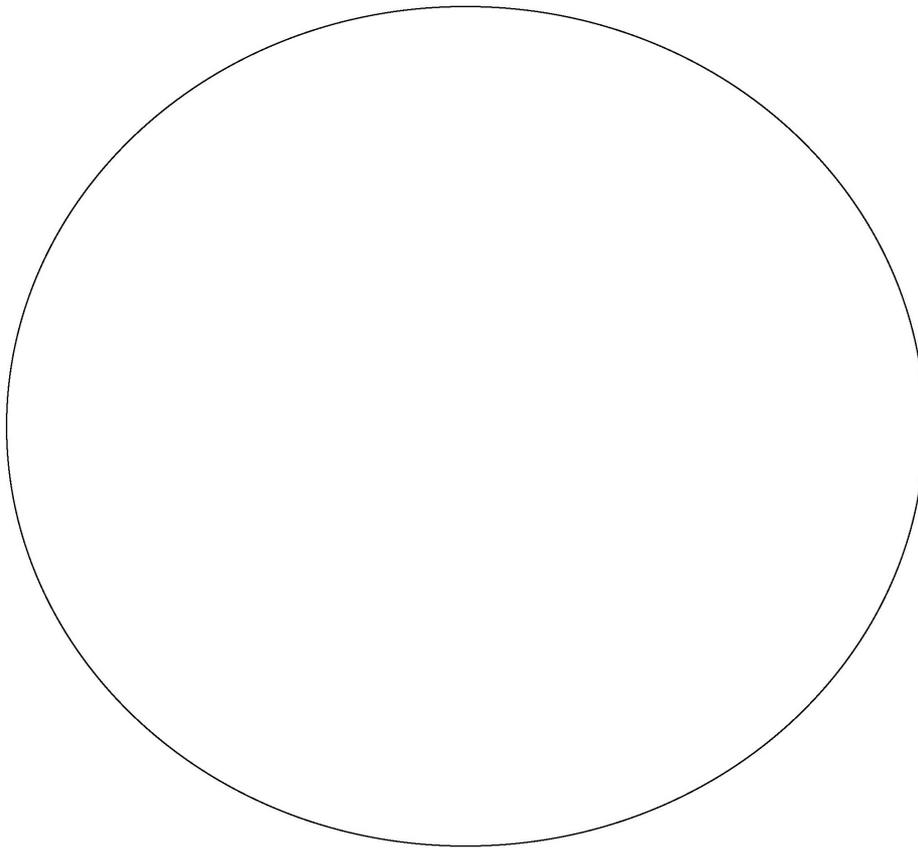
INDIVIDUAL WORK

1. Think of a question that you would like to explore about this text and write that question here.

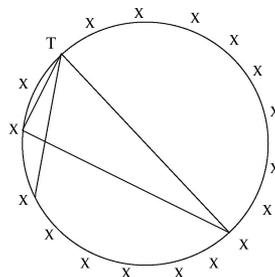
Touchstones Discussion Map

A Touchstones Discussion Map helps to show what takes place during a discussion. This circle represents your class. Put a small x or an initial to represent someone's name on the line of the circle for each student in your class and a T for where your teacher is sitting. If there are 25 students sitting in the circle, then you will draw 25 x's or initials on the circle.

Your teacher will begin the discussion with a question. When a student speaks to respond to the question, draw a straight line from the teacher to the student who has spoken. When the next student speaks, draw a line from the first student speaker to the second student speaker. Do this each time that a student or your teacher speaks.



This example shows what a Discussion Map looks like after four students have spoken.



DISCUSSION EVALUATION FORM

How would you score this discussion on a scale from 1 through 10?

Remember that a 1 would be given to a weak discussion. A 10 would be given to an excellent discussion. The numbers between 1 and 10 reflect where on the scale you think the discussion belongs.

Your score: _____

Give a reason for your score:

DISCUSSION EVALUATION FORM

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Remember that a 1 would be given to a weak discussion. A 10 would be given to an excellent discussion. The numbers between 1 and 10 reflect where on the scale you think the discussion belongs.

Your score: _____

Give a reason for your score:

Worksheet for Lesson 8

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Consider the following situation and then write your response to the questions.

One Saturday each month, your family visits a local shelter for the homeless and volunteers their time preparing and serving food. You have come to find that many of the people you meet at the shelter are kind and appreciative of the food and shelter that they find there. One day, a new person is at the shelter. She is in line to receive some food and when she reaches you, you greet her in a friendly voice. She looks at you and scowls and does not say a word. After you serve her some food, she walks away and sits down by herself. How do you respond and why?

SMALL GROUP WORK

In your small group, discuss the following question and come to agreement.

Name three types of people that others naturally show respect to in our society?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Worksheet for Lesson 9

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Read the following questions and answer them each in two or three sentences.

1. Do you treat all of your friends the same? Explain why or why not.
2. Are all of your friends also friends with each other? Explain why or why not.
3. Some people believe that they have enemies and some don't. What is the most likely way that a person would become your enemy?
4. After two people become enemies, can they ever become friends? Explain why or why not.

SMALL GROUP WORK/PAIR WORK

In your small group, consider the following situation:

A scientist thinks that she has discovered a cure for human blindness. She has already done some tests on some human patients that show tremendous promise. But in order to know for certain that her cure will work, she must first test it on a large number of non-human subjects if she wants results sooner than later. She knows that she can get a shipment of laboratory rats for her experiment and that within six months she will have reliable results—one way or the other. However, all of the rats will die in the process of her experiment. If she doesn't use the rats, she will have to wait for human volunteers to be in her scientific study. It could take more than 10 years to have enough human subjects for a conclusive answer to her experiment.

Should the scientist order the rats. Why or why not? Come to agreement as a group and prepare to present your reasons to the entire class.

Worksheet for Lesson 10

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Sometimes being selfless is easy for us to do. Other times, it is difficult. Take a few minutes to think of three simple things that you do or can do everyday that others would think are helpful. These can be things that benefit another person or other people, the environment, or a community.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which of these things does the greatest amount of good and why?

What things prevent you from doing more to help other people, the environment, or your community?

SMALL GROUP WORK

1. Sometimes, it is hard to see our own weaknesses or strengths. Within your group, make a list of three strengths for each person in the group.

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
1.					
2.					
3.					

2. If you are asked to participate in a group that is considering a new recreation center for local children in your community, how would you use the strengths in your group to make the project go smoothly and successfully?

Worksheet for Lesson 11

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Do you think that most of your actions are based on good reasoning? Explain your answer.

SMALL GROUP WORK

In your small groups, reread the first paragraph of the passage and work together to create one sentence that summarizes what Peirce is saying in that paragraph. Each person in the group must contribute some part to your group's final sentence. Choose one person in the group to read your sentence aloud to the whole class and one person to explain the process your group used for working together.

Worksheet for Lesson 12

INDIVIDUAL WORK

1. List three things or people in your life who inspire you, give you hope, make you feel better, or make you want to do something good for others.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. List three things in your neighborhood or community that you wish were better or that you could improve in some way.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SMALL GROUP WORK

Your task today in your small group will be to create a community action plan. Follow the steps below and complete the information outlined on the worksheet.

1. Appoint a chairperson and secretary.
2. As a group, review the three issues that each person in your group wrote down for #2 under Individual Work.
3. Discuss those issues and choose one to be your group's focus for improvement. Write down the most important reason why you chose this issue.
4. Write down the specific change you wish to accomplish.
5. Create a plan together that outlines three main steps you will take to address the issue.
6. Decide how you will share or communicate your ideas to the public. (For example: make posters, hold a march or parade, hold a rally to enlist volunteers, etc.)

ISSUE: _____

REASONS: _____

DESIRED CHANGES: _____

STEP ONE: _____

STEP TWO: _____

STEP THREE: _____

SHARE YOUR IDEA: _____

Worksheet for Lesson 13

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Think of something about yourself (a behavior, attitude, idea, belief) that you think other people should imitate because it would be good or helpful for them and those around them. Write it down here and explain why people should imitate this.

SMALL GROUP WORK

In your small group, read the following story. Then decide what you will do and write it down. Try to reach agreement within your group about your decision.

It has started to rain, and you are all walking home together from a local park. Just before you reach your neighborhood, a recycling truck goes by. When it turns a sharp corner at the end of the block, a bag falls out of the back and breaks open onto the sidewalk. You can see that the bag had been full of newspapers, which are now blowing around on the sidewalk. A young mother who has taken her child for a walk stops and begins stuffing the newspapers into a nearby trash bin even as the rain is coming down. You turn to each other and decide to....

Worksheet for Lesson 14

INDIVIDUAL WORK

1. Think of someone you like. In the space below, write down three things that you have in common with that person.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. Think of someone who you don't know well. List three things that you think are different between you and that person. Then list two things that you believe that you share in common.

- 1 - different:
- 2 - different:
- 3 - different:

- 1 - in common:
- 2 - in common:

PAIR WORK

Your teacher will now assign you to work in pairs. With your partner, discuss the following work and write down your answers.

1. Make a list of five things you have in common. (for example, your neighborhood, favorite food, favorite book or author, hobby, family structure, career goals, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. Are you surprised by what you have in common? Why or why not?

Worksheet for Lesson 15

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Reread the poem to yourself silently. What type of events do you think would lead a person to feel the way that the person in the poem does? Explain the connection between those events and the feelings described in the poem.

Imagine that this poem was given to you by someone you know. Write what you would do, if anything, in response to receiving it?

SMALL GROUP WORK

Imagine that you and your group are out together on the weekend. You are in a park and you walk past someone who is sitting on a bench and crying. Would you approach that person? What factors about that person would influence your decision? How would you feel about your decision to act or not to act?

Worksheet for Lesson 16

INDIVIDUAL WORK

1. Write down a question that you would like to explore about this passage.

2. Think about the rights that you enjoy as a citizen. Then write down three of those rights.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

SMALL GROUP WORK

- In your small group make a list of three things that you think are the most important basic rights for all people everywhere. They do not have to be in any particular order.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Discussion Evaluation Form

The items listed below are discussion behaviors. These behaviors may have or may not have been present in your discussion. Read each behavior listed and consider whether that behavior was present in the discussion or not.

	PRESENT	
Cooperation	Yes___	No___
Silence	Yes___	No___
Interrupting	Yes___	No___
Respect	Yes___	No___
Dominance	Yes___	No___
Total participation	Yes___	No___
Active listening	Yes___	No___
Lack of interest	Yes___	No___
Asking each other questions	Yes___	No___

Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = poor and 10 = excellent, what score would you give this discussion and why? (You can use any number from 1 through 10 for your score.)

Your score: _____

Why you gave the discussion this score:

Worksheet for Lesson 17

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Think of someone you know who is elderly. Then think of three simple things that you already do or could do to help that person live a more fulfilling life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SMALL GROUP WORK

Imagine that your group has been asked to spend two hours visiting with senior citizens at the local community center. Your visit with the seniors has one goal: to make their day more interesting and lively. What activity would you plan? What role would each member of your group have in the activity? And what would you hope to achieve with your activity? Write your group's ideas here:

Worksheet for Lesson 18

INDIVIDUAL WORK

After you have reread the passage to yourself, write down a question that you would like to explore about the passage.

SMALL GROUP WORK

In your small group, consider the following scenario. You have just been shipwrecked on a deserted island in the middle of the ocean. Fortunately, you think you hear running water coming from the jungle that starts at the end of the beach. That could mean access to fresh water. Although you realize that you will probably be rescued before too long, you don't know how long that will be. You all agree that you need some rules to increase the chances that you will be safe and sound when the rescue team looks for you.

Come to agreement about three rules for your community on the island.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Was it easy or difficult to agree on these rules?

What will you each have to give up in order for these rules to work?

Worksheet for Lesson 19

INDIVIDUAL WORK

King said that he believes in a world where, “peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.”

Which of these things that King mentions is the most important in any society? Why?

PAIR WORK

With your partner, develop an action plan to improve something in your school that will benefit students and teachers.

1. Here is what we would like to improve in our school:

2. We believe this change is important because it brings these benefits to everyone:

3. These are the challenges that we would probably face:

4. To overcome obstacles, we would:

Worksheet for Lesson 20

SMALL GROUP WORK

Within your small group, discuss the following scenario and answer the questions.

Your group is designing a new community. You have the freedom to make it however you would like. In your group, each person has his or her own individual role. One person will design what the city will look like (where houses will be, where businesses will be, where roads will be, etc.), another person will make sure that there are schools for all of the educational needs in the community, another person will be the mayor and make sure there is government for all of the citizens, another person will be a doctor to care for the people in your community, and another person will be a police officer and a fire fighter who makes sure everyone is safe. Decide who will do what and then answer the questions below.

Take a few minutes to think about your individual job. What will you do first to make sure that you meet your community's needs?

Together with your group, discuss how you will make sure that your community is safe for everyone who lives there. Write your ideas down here: