

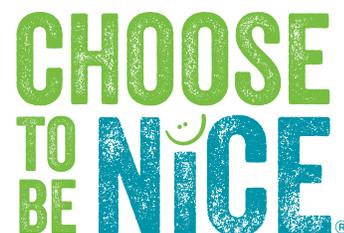
GRADES 6-8

Creating Cultures of Nice LEARNING ACTIVITY GUIDE



WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Learning Activities for Grades 6-8
- Book recommendations + literacy activities
- Home connections + tips for parents
- Project-based learning activities designed to promote lifelong social and emotional intelligence





Dear Educator,

Welcome to the Choose To Be Nice community! I am thrilled that you have chosen to use the **Grades 6-8 Choose To Be Nice Learning Activity Guide** with your students.

This guide uses project-based learning to engage students in understanding the nine Choose To Be Nice values (**respect, kindness, acceptance, teamwork, honesty, responsibility, friendship, patience, and courage**) by creating Choose To Be Nice projects to promote a culture of nice in their classroom, school, and community.

Each year is a new challenge for students. In sixth grade, students will work together to create a Choose To Be Nice project to promote a culture of nice in their classroom. In seventh grade, students will develop Choose To Be Nice projects to promote a culture of nice in their school. Finally, in eighth grade, students create Choose To Be Nice projects to promote a culture of nice in the community outside of their school.

Each grade features five developmentally appropriate learning activities to guide students through creating their own Choose To Be Nice project:

STEP 1 - Understand: What does it mean to Choose To Be Nice?

STEP 2 - Explore: How does our community Choose To Be Nice?

STEP 3 - Create: What can we create to help our community Choose To Be Nice?

STEP 4 - Act: How can we make our Choose To Be Nice project happen?

STEP 5 - Celebrate & Reflect: Why is it important to Choose To Be Nice?

CHOOSE TO BE NICE PROJECT PROCESS





As part of the curriculum, students will be asked to create a video about their Choose To Be Nice project. At the end of the year, students will submit their Choose To Be Nice project videos and compete with other Choose To Be Nice Middle Schools. A winning submission will be selected for each grade by a panel of judges consisting of educators, community leaders, and Choose To Be Nice staff. All videos will be featured on the Choose To Be Nice website and social media channels, but the winning video for each grade will receive a Choose To Be Nice goody bag and a special Choose To Be Nice plaque.



It is our hope that these projects will promote learning through doing: helping students to build empathy, kindness, and lifelong values and become resilient and compassionate individuals.

We also hope that the projects help create and maintain a lasting culture of kindness in your school and community as each new grade builds and adds upon what has been done before. I can't wait to see the projects that your students will create!

Your Friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dina Creiger'.

Dina Creiger

Founder, Choose To Be Nice

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 GETTING STARTED

- About Choose To Be Nice
- Our Values
- How To Use This Guide
- Project Based Learning Tips
- Suggested Schedule
- Book List
- Connect With the Choose To Be Nice Community!

14 SIXTH GRADE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

20 SEVENTH GRADE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

28 EIGHTH GRADE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

37 APPENDIX

- Reproducible Handouts (for 6-8 Learning Activities)
- Make the Choose To Be Nice Promise Form
- Letter to Parents + Guardians

GETTING STARTED

ABOUT CHOOSE TO BE NICE:

MISSION

Choose To Be Nice® is a social movement and global call to action dedicated to encouraging and inspiring kindness. Our aim is to improve the way people interact with each other by reminding them that they have a choice about how to “be” in the world.

And it all starts with a simple promise:

“I promise to help spread kindness wherever and whenever possible. And to the very best of my ability I’ll be nice to those with whom I come into contact on a daily basis.”

VISION

Our goal is to get at least one million people from around the world to make the **Choose To Be Nice**® promise. Your school is now part of this movement as an official **Choose To Be Nice**® school and has joined a growing global community.

Our program is built on a very simple, yet positive, powerful and proactive message of being nice. Schools across the country have joined the movement, and thousands of people around the world have made the promise. We are so happy that you’ve joined our family!

To learn more about Choose To Be Nice, visit our website www.choosetobenice.com.

OUR VALUES

Choose To Be Nice promotes its mission with these nine important values:

RESPECT - be polite and show consideration for others and their differences

KINDNESS - be nice and friendly to people wherever you go

ACCEPTANCE - appreciate and recognize people for who they are

TEAMWORK - collaborate and work together with others

HONESTY - be truthful and fair

RESPONSIBILITY - be helpful to others and be accountable for your own actions

FRIENDSHIP - be a friendly companion other people want to be around

PATIENCE - be calm and understand that some things take time and endurance

COURAGE - be brave and dare to be nice even when it's hard

GETTING STARTED

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

This guide is designed for educators of sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Students will be introduced to the **Choose To Be Nice®** values through engaging, fun, and reflective activities.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: There are five learning activities for each grade level that can be completed in the classroom or after school. Activities are student-centered, inquiry-led, involve independent and collaborative learning, and focus on building the important and lifelong skills of social and emotional intelligence and awareness.

Subject connections vary from activity to activity but include Visual Arts, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Science. Collaborating with your fellow teachers is encouraged!

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: Project-based learning is a teaching strategy that engages students in identifying real-world problems and creating solutions. If this is your first time with project-based learning, use the tips on page 9 for guidance.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Activities use materials that most teachers have on hand.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BOOK LIST: This guide includes a list of recommended books aligned to each Choose To Be Nice value for each grade level. Book suggestions are likely to be found in your school or local library.

Ideas for using the book list include:

- Create a Choose To Be Nice library in your classroom with the books.
- Assign each month of the school year a Choose To Be Nice value and read the suggested book for that value.
- Have students select a book from the list to read independently.

PACING: This program is designed to be taught over a nine-month period, but please feel free to adapt it to meet your needs. Each activity on average should take anywhere from one to three 60-90 minute class periods. See our suggested schedule on page 10.

GETTING STARTED

LONG-TERM IMPACT: After completing each activity, it will be important to revisit and engage your students in group discussions throughout the year about how embracing each value will help them to Choose To Be Nice.

EXTENSION IDEAS: To extend the learning beyond the activity, extension ideas have been offered. These can be conducted any time of the year.

HOME CONNECTIONS: Essential to adopting any new behaviors is to make sure the learning reaches home. Each activity includes a home connection which will involve parents/guardians and engage them with their child about what they are learning. In addition, an introductory letter for parents is included in the Appendix of this guide should you wish to use it.

APPENDIX: Reproducible handouts and forms used in conjunction with specific lessons are included in the Appendix, found at the end of this guide starting on page 37.

GETTING STARTED

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TIPS

Project-based learning is a teaching strategy that engages students in identifying real-world problems and creating solutions. If this is your first time with project-based learning, use the following tips for guidance:

- **Provide context:** Help students understand and connect to real problems in their classroom, school, and community
- **Be open-minded:** Allow students to develop their own ideas
- **Stay flexible:** Depending on the project, students might need more or less time
- **Create checklists:** Keep students focused during independent work time by creating checklists for key tasks
- **Be strategic:** Create student teams that strategically include learners of all abilities
- **Ask for help:** Project-based learning is a great opportunity to engage parents, school staff, and other volunteers in your school community

GETTING STARTED

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

This program is designed to be taught over a nine-month period, but please feel free to adapt it to meet your needs. Each activity on average should take anywhere from one to three 60-90 minute class periods.

We suggest setting aside one class a week for Choose To Be Nice. After the Learning Activities are completed, use the extension activities provided or give students time to read books from the Choose To Be Nice book list.

Use the suggested schedule below for guidance:

SEPTEMBER	CHOOSE TO BE NICE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY
OCTOBER	STEP 1 - UNDERSTAND
NOVEMBER	STEP 2 - EXPLORE
DECEMBER	STEP 3 - CREATE
JANUARY	STEP 4 - ACT
FEBRUARY	STEP 4 - ACT
MARCH	STEP 5 - CELEBRATE & REFLECT
APRIL	PREPARE VIDEO
MAY	SUBMIT VIDEO: MAY 4, 2018
JUNE	CHOOSE TO BE NICE WEEK: JUNE 4-8, 2018

Here are our tips for incorporating Choose To Be Nice into your existing curriculum:

- As each school has different calendars, take a look at the lessons ahead of time and make a plan that works for you.
- We suggest setting aside one class a week for Choose To Be Nice. For example, you could end each week with “Choose To Be Nice Friday.”
- On average, the learning activity for each step should take anywhere from one to three 60-90 minute class periods. The suggested timing is listed at the top of each learning activity. For example, the sixth grade “Choose To Be Nice Theatre” activity is designed for two 60-90 minute class sessions. During the first session, students explore the Choose To Be Nice values and prepare a script for a skit. During the second session, students practice their skit, share with the class, and reflect on key takeaways.
- If students finish the learning activity early, use the extension activities provided or give students time to read books from the Choose To Be Nice book list.

GETTING STARTED

MIDDLE SCHOOL BOOK LIST

The books in this list have been selected to reinforce learning about the nine Choose To Be Nice values for each grade..

RESPECT

- (6) **Wonder**, By R.J. Palacio
- (7) **Forget Me Not**, By Ellie Terry
- (8) **Pacific Crossing**, By Gary Soto

KINDNESS

- (6) **Matilda**, By Roald Dahl
- (7) **It Ain't So Awful, Falafel**, By Firoozeh Dumas
- (8) **Raymie Nightingale**, By Kate DiCamillo

ACCEPTANCE

- (6) **The Mighty Odds**, By Amy Ignatow
- (7) **Loser**, By Jerry Spinelli
- (8) **The Misfits**, By James Howe

TEAMWORK

- (6) **Hello, Universe**, By Erin Entrada Kelly
- (7) **Seedfolks**, By Paul Fleischman
- (8) **Revolution**, By Deborah Wiles

HONESTY

- (6) **The 14 Fibs of Gregory K.**, By Greg Pincus
- (7) **Tell Me No Lies**, By Hila Coleman
- (8) **Pants on Fire**, By Meg Cabot

GETTING STARTED

RESPONSIBILITY

(6) **50 Simple Things Kids Can Do To Save The Earth**, By The Earthworks Group

(7) **One Eyed Cat**, By Paula Fox

(8) **It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going!**, By Chelsea Clinton

FRIENDSHIP

(6) **The Best Man**, By Archer Magill

(7) **Liar and Spy**, By Rebecca Stead

(8) **Posted**, By John David Anderson

PATIENCE

(6) **The Fourteenth Goldfish**, By Jennifer L. Holm

(7) **The Skin I'm In**, By Sharon G. Flake

(8) **Island of the Blue Dolphins**, By Scott O'Dell

COURAGE

(6) **Courage for Beginners**, By Karen Harrington

(7) **Ninth Ward**, By Jewell Parker Rhodes

(8) **I Am Malala**, By Malala Yousafzai



Have more book suggestions?

Let us know by sending them to educators@choosetobenice.com.

GETTING STARTED

CONNECT WITH THE CHOOSE TO BE NICE COMMUNITY:

Now that you are part of the **Choose To Be Nice** community, let's stay in touch!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- Have feedback or suggestions for us on the program and activities?
- Want to be part of our **Educator Advisory Board**?
- Want to connect with other **Choose To Be Nice** educators?

Reach out to us at educators@choosetobenice.com. Include your full name, school, city and state. In return and in appreciation for your periodic feedback, we'll send you a **Choose To Be Nice** gift and coupon!

Find out more about what **Choose To Be Nice** is doing and how our movement is spreading by visiting our website at www.choosetobenice.com.

Connect with us on social media! Upload your photos with the hashtag **#choosetobenice** and share.



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/choosetobenice>



Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/choosetobenice>



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/choosetobenice>



Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/choosetobenice>

SIXTH GRADE

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



CREATING A CHOOSE TO BE NICE CLASSROOM

Sixth graders will learn about the **Choose To Be Nice**® values by creating a Choose To Be Nice project for their classroom. Activities are project-based and include opportunities for students to collaborate and work independently, exercise their literacy skills and creativity, and develop social and emotional awareness.

Each activity will take approximately one-three 60-90 minute class sessions to complete. We recommend the lessons happen during a core sixth grade course (for example: homeroom, english class, social studies class, etc.) so that all students are able to participate. Ideas to extend the learning beyond the activity and at home are included.

Challenge: How might we work together to create a culture of nice in our classroom?

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND: Choose To Be Nice Theatre

STEP 2: EXPLORE: What Do You Think?

STEP 3: CREATE: Dream Big!

STEP 4: ACT: Make it Happen!

STEP 5: CELEBRATE & REFLECT: Stars & Steps

LEARNING ACTIVITY: Choose To Be Nice Theatre**SUBJECT CONNECTIONS: English Language Arts, Performing Arts****TIMING:** Two 60-90 minute class sessions**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Choose To Be Nice Project Process Poster
- Choose To Be Nice Values Handout (see Reproducible 1 on page 38)
- Choose To Be Nice Skit Worksheet (see Reproducible 2 on page 39)
- Props for skits
- Chart paper

INSTRUCTIONS: Introduce students to the following Choose To Be Nice challenge for the school year: **How might we work together to create a culture of nice in our classroom?**

Explain to students that they will go through five steps to help them create a project to help promote Choose To Be Nice in their classroom: Understand, Explore, Create, Act, and Celebrate & Reflect. Use the Choose To Be Nice Project Process Poster to discuss each step.

Build student excitement by explaining that at the end of the project, they will submit a video about their project to Choose To Be Nice and compete against other sixth grade classrooms at other middle schools. Submissions will be judged by a panel consisting of educators, community leaders, and Choose To Be Nice staff. All videos will be featured on the Choose To Be Nice website and social media channels, but the winning sixth grade video will receive a Choose To Be Nice goody bag and a special Choose To Be Nice plaque!

Share with students that **Step 1 - Understand** is all about becoming familiar with and understanding the Choose To Be Nice Values. Pass out the Choose To Be Nice Values Handout and read each value together as a class.

Next, split students into nine groups, one for each value. Assign each group a different value and ask them to develop a short 1-2 minute skit to explain the value. Have each team use the Choose To Be Nice Skit Worksheet to develop a script.

After students are done preparing, have them share their skit. Pause after each skit to have students discuss key takeaways for each value. Invite a student to write the values and key takeaways on a sheet of chart paper. Hang the chart paper up in the classroom to reference for the rest of the project.

EXTENSION IDEAS:

- Have students travel to a local elementary school to present their skits to younger students.
- Have students design and make their own props for the skit.
- Have students revise and finalize their scripts, create a cover, and bind the scripts to add to a classroom Choose To Be Nice library.

**HOME LINK**

Record a video of each skit and upload to a classroom YouTube page. Invite students to share their video at home with their parents/guardians.