

## From Rude to Respectful TEACHER'S GUIDE

### What teacher's need to know:

- A poll conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals found that 89% of grade school teachers and principals reported that they “regularly” face abusive language from students.
- In 2000, the University of South Carolina’s Center for Child and Family Studies evaluated its state’s four-year character education initiative and found that approximately 90% of the educators surveyed reported improvement in student attitudes and behavior, 60% reported improvement in academic performance and more than 65% reported improved teacher and staff attitudes.
- A 1998 survey of 356 high school teachers, published in the *American School Board Journal*, found that nine out of 10 teachers say that cheating is a problem, and half say that they encounter students cheating in most of their classes. According to teachers, this is because of an “erosion of ethics in a self-centered culture.”

### Lesson Plan:

#### Objectives:

- Discuss examples of civil and rude or “uncivil” behaviors
- Work with group members to develop a scenario based on an uncivil behavior
- Conclude the short- and long-term consequences of acting uncivilly

#### Materials:

- Paper, writing implements; black/white board.

### Project and Purpose:

1. Explain to your students what it means to be civil toward others.  
i.e. *When you are civil to a person, you behave in a polite and respectful manner.*
2. Ask your students to give examples of civil and uncivil behaviors. Record their responses on the board.  
**Civil examples:** helping a new student find his way around school, holding the door open for someone, walking your younger sibling home from school, tutoring your friend.  
**Uncivil examples:** using bad language, teasing a student, talking during class while your teacher is teaching, not performing your chores at home, arguing with your parents, reading your sibling’s diary
3. Divide your class into groups of four students. Assign each group one of the uncivil examples from the class list, or allow groups to use a new example that you approve. Explain to your students that they will act out a scenario in which the uncivil action is performed. Share with your students the following rules:
  - The scenario must include the following roles – student, friend, and parent or teacher.
  - The scenario must present the short- and long-term consequences of the uncivil action.
4. Allow students time to develop and practice their scenarios with their group members.  
**Note:** You may want to assign this part of the activity as future class work or homework.
5. On the date you specify, have groups perform their scenarios for the class.
6. After all groups have performed their scenarios and evaluations, lead a follow-up class discussion using the following questions as a guide:
  - Do you think most kids today are polite and respectful? Explain.
  - Are some behaviors more uncivil than others? Explain.
  - Do your parents expect you to act civilly toward others? What are the consequences if you are uncivil?
  - What could you do to promote civility in your school?

### Class Discussion Questions:

1. What character traits would you associate with civil behavior? Uncivil behavior?
2. Do you think kids today are less civil than kids 20 years ago? Explain. Do you think the standards for polite and civil behavior change with every generation? Explain.
3. In your opinion, why is it important to act civilly toward another person, even if he or she is a stranger?

**Self-Reflection Questions:**

1. What important values have your parents taught you? Do you always live by these values? Explain.
2. Think of a time when you witnessed one of your classmates being uncivil toward your teacher or another student. How did it make the person feel? How did it make you feel? How did the class react? What is one thing you would do differently if you experienced that same situation today?
3. Have you ever been the victim of uncivil behavior? What did you do or say in response? Was your behavior appropriate? Explain your answer.

**Evaluation:**

Did students understand the difference between civil and uncivil behavior?

Did students work cooperatively in groups to prepare a scenario?

Did students participate in the discussions?