

Dots of Perseverance

This lesson focuses on our responsible actions through a short story and an art project.

Caring Sub-Concepts

Self Discipline, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ Butcher Paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ “The Dot” by Peter Reynolds

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

- Identify ways children can be responsible during difficult situations
- Explore ways to persevere through an art project.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

The root word for responsibility is “responsus” which is Latin for “to respond”. How do you respond to others throughout your day? This week, reframe things that might normally generate a frustrated or negative response (even simple things like getting caught at a red light or spilling something). Choose to respond with kindness, both internally and externally.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Draw simple pictures for scenario cards to help them understand each responsible scenario.
- Have advanced students create scenarios on their own to act out with a partner.



Share

5 minutes

Review the definition of **responsibility** - see if students can remember what it is: *being reliable to do the things that are expected or required of you.*

Review the definition of **perseverance** - trying our best, even when it gets hard, until we reach our goal.

If you have done Lesson 3, students brainstormed ways they could “go green” and become more environmentally responsible. Let’s check in and see how we are doing with our goals. Ask each child to name one way they have been successful in going green.

If you haven’t done Lesson 3, you can still ask students to state different ways they can be responsible toward the environment - recycling, picking up litter, carpooling, etc.

Although your actions seem simple and small, all of our little green actions build on top of each other to truly make a kind impact on our world!



Inspire

Responding with Kindness

7-10 minutes

Give students a quick opportunity to practice responding with kindness and in a responsible manner. Read out the following situations and invite students to share what they would do (this is a good way to reinforce the responsible decision-making students practiced in Lesson 3, if you have completed that lesson):

1. **Your friend invites you out to play, but you haven't finished your homework yet. What can you do?**
 - a. Some students may simply say no, I can't play. However, to incorporate "responding with kindness" they can explain the why behind their no - that the responsible thing to do is to finish your homework first and then you can play.
2. **You forgot your homework and the book you need for your book club at school today.**
 - a. Admitting you forgot your materials is a great first step. However, responding with kindness includes making a plan to remember next time so you don't waste your group's time in the future.
3. **A bully yells at you and invites you to a fight on the playground.**
 - a. Walking away is a great idea. However, responding with kindness can also mean you reach out to invite the bully into your games at some point in the near future. You should also talk to a teacher or another trusted adult to ensure you stay safe and the bully gets the help and support they need, too.



Empower

20 minutes

Perseverance Through Art

This activity will build on the short story "The Dot" by Peter Reynolds and encourage students to persevere even if they don't have clear ideas or direction for their artwork.

Read Aloud: "The Dot" by Peter Reynolds

Read Aloud Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNhfsQTWGf8> (5 min)

After the story, **ask:**

- What was Vashdi frustrated about at the beginning of the story?
- How did Vashdi persevere in her art?
- What happened when Vashdi persevered?
- How did Vashdi inspire other artists?

Dot Art Instructions:

1. Give each student a white, blank piece of paper.
2. Ask students to make a single dot in the center of the paper.
3. Then, give students 10-15 minutes to continuously add to their dot to create a piece of art that represents perseverance and/or

responsibility. They can do whatever they want but they should incorporate the dot somehow - draw more dots, draw a line out from the dot to something else, turn the dot into something in their picture, etc. Nothing has to be perfect and they don't need a specific idea (it can be abstract) - they just need to start drawing. They can use markers, color pencils, crayons, or just a regular pencil.

4. When the time is up, have students sign their art in the lower right corner like Vashdi did.



Reflect

5 minutes

Have students show and tell their dot art. How does it represent perseverance or responsibility to them?

If there is time, you can ask the following group questions or use them as journal prompts:

- How did it feel to keep going even if you weren't sure what to do?
- How does this activity remind you of what Vashti experienced in *The Dot*?
- What does this teach us about trying new things in the future?



Extension Ideas

- Create a "Gallery of Perseverance" and hang the student art up in the gallery as a reminder of their creativity, perseverance, and responsibility.



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Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

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