

*"When it was dark,
you always carried the sun
in your hand for me."*

~Sean O' Casey, Three More Plays:
The Silver Tassie, Purple Dust, Red Roses for Me

Lesson #11: Challenges to Hope



Topic: Using our hope tools when life brings unexpected events. Finding and identifying a person who will support you and your hope.

Teacher Notes

Materials needed

Hope Sunflower Individual Student Worksheet

Student Personal Resource Survey¹

Step by Step teaching guide

Pre questions

- 1) Have you ever had a time in your life when something unexpected happened? Did it change your plans? What did you do? Did someone help you?
- 2) When in your life have you helped someone else? How did you help them? Do you know how your help impacted that person?

Lesson Steps

- 1) In our last lesson, we discussed what we can do to overcome obstacles as we progress toward our goals. These are challenges that we can think about or know ahead of time and find ways of solving.
- 2) Sometimes life brings unexpected things that we have not planned for, that may be painful or especially difficult, which will challenge our hope. This is when it is so important to remember that we can *always use our hope tools* to help us no matter what comes our way.

One tool that is especially helpful during these challenging times, is to connect with something sacred. Sacred things are so important because they help us see the world outside of ourselves. They help us remember there is a community of people like us who appreciate and believe in the same things that we do, and that we are not alone.

People can find sacredness in nature, anything related to human activity, animals, symbols, religion, or the fact that we are a part of the never ending and connected universe.

Teacher Prompt: What do you find sacred in your life? Write it in your journal.

- 3) In order to keep all of our hope tools, we must have a “Hope Supporter”.

- 4) A Hope Supporter is someone who knows and appreciates you, sees your strengths, and helps you keep a hopeful mind. They are imperative to our hope. It takes a team to achieve most goals. It’s always important to *ask for help, especially when we can’t seem to find hope on our own*. These supporters are there for us, willing to listen, and around to support in fulfilling our dreams.

- 5) At the end of this lesson we are going to create a Hope network. Start thinking of those you might put in your network. If you don’t think of anyone offhand, you can always ask them, so it’s okay either way. Before we do that, let’s listen to a story.



Kendra's Unexpected Challenge

In lesson 8, we learned that Kendra was successful in finding a way to travel to her community center to keep her action steps in place for her running goal. Kendra was proud of herself for finding a way to solve this expected challenge. However, after her arrival on Saturday, she encountered something she had not anticipated.

Once Kendra got there, she was very excited to be with other kids who enjoyed running as much as she did. Immediately, she approached a group of students to say hello and introduce herself. They glanced briefly at her, but quickly turned back to their own conversation.

When it was time to run, Kendra was amazed at how fast they could go. She tried desperately to keep up, but it was clear that the other students were much faster than her.

After practice, she told them how impressed she was with their pace. The group exchanged knowing looks and rolled their eyes. Then, one of the students replied, “Yeah, you’re really slow.

We don't think you're good enough to run with us. You're never going to keep up and you run funny." The group laughed and walked away. Kendra felt embarrassed, hurt, and defeated.

Teacher Prompt: This was an unexpected challenge for Kendra. Discuss now with your students what Kendra should do. Should she give up? How can she find hope in this situation?

Some ideas for Kendra may include:

Having a Hope Supporter: Finding another student at the community center separate from this group to become friends with and run together. Tell a trusted adult if the group continues to be mean towards her and ask for guidance. Focus on what she finds sacred to bring comfort and support.

Ignore the group bullying her. By not giving attention to their teasing and mean comments, they may lose interest when not receiving a reaction.

She may think and remind herself about how far she has come with her running goals. She may not be as fast as the other kids, but she is running farther than she had been when she first started. She has created her own success. Her enjoyment of running does not have to change because she may not be as fast of a runner.

Kendra's Solution

Kendra went home that afternoon and told her aunt what happened. Her aunt gave her a big hug and reminded her of how hard she had been working and the progress she had made. She encouraged her to try the group again and see if there was another student who may be interested in running with her.

Kendra had been so impressed with the group running fast the first day, she didn't pay attention to some of the other kids at the center. She agreed to try again the following Saturday.

When Kendra returned, she avoided the mean kids and focused on finding another friend. She found another girl Emma who was quiet at first, but after talking they realized they had a lot in common. They enjoyed running at a slower pace and complimented one another as they improved each Saturday.

The other group still made mean comments at times, but Kendra and Emma stuck together and ignored them, focusing instead on what brought them joy. Eventually, the group moved on to teasing someone else at the center.

Teacher Prompt: What could they do if the group continued to be mean to them? What if the bullying got worse? How could Kendra and Emma help the new person being teased?

Post Questions:

- 1) What hope tools would you use during an unexpected event in your life?
- 2) Is there anything you consider sacred that brings you hope?
- 3) Who can you always count on for hope, that is always there to listen, doesn't judge you, doesn't criticize you, and simply loves you? That you feel you can tell anything to in tougher times?
- 4) How can you support someone else with hope?

Activity

Please have students fill out Hope Network Worksheet. Make sure each and every child has identified at least one person to be a Hope Supporter for them. Please have students complete the to aid in choosing a support person. Students are encouraged to keep their worksheet in a safe place for reference. They are also encouraged to share with the person they identified as a Hope supporter that the student chose them, to ensure the hope supporter agrees to be a safe space when the student is having a hard time.

Teacher Prompt: At this time, you may offer to be a Hope Supporter for students



Friends on whom I can count:

Family members with whom I feel comfortable sharing my feelings:

Relative (e.g., aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent) with whom I can talk:

Faculty and staff (e.g., teacher, counselor, coach) I can go to for support:

Someone I might be able to count on even though we are not always close:

Someone I can go to that does not judge or criticize, and offers loving support:

Something sacred to me (pets, nature, music):

¹ Adapted from the Student Personal Resource Survey Opalewski and Robertson (2007), p. 13

