



Souper Safe Schools **Anti-Violence Curriculum**

Developed by
The Institute to End School Violence

with stories from
Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul

Souper Safe Schools

Anti-Violence Curriculum

Curriculum Objective

The goal of this five-lesson curriculum is for students and teachers to understand five key issues that can lead to school violence and how the students can help prevent violence with positive thoughts and actions.

Curriculum Overview

Each of the five lessons is designed for approximately ten minutes. Actual time will depend on the level of interaction the facilitating teacher desires. The lessons incorporate a story from *Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul*[™] along with grade appropriate lessons from the nationally acclaimed YouthConnect® curriculum.

Lesson Layout

- 1) Write the board quote in a place visible to all students.
- 2) Read the *Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul* story as a class or individually.
- 3) Interactive activity.
- 4) Discussion about how the skill or behavior taught in each lesson can prevent violence.

NOTE: The focus of the curriculum is not necessarily the completion of the interactive activity, but using the activity to help students better understand how they can strengthen their school.

Program Integration

The five lessons in this curriculum are to be utilized in order as each lesson builds on the ideas of the previous lesson. We recommend the facilitating teacher deliver the lessons over a one-week period, but they can also be delivered over a two-week period. We do not suggest closing a traditional class with a lesson. The lessons should be integrated at the beginning or the middle of an existing class in order to allow ample time for students to ask questions or make comments that the teacher can address prior to the ending of class.

Curriculum Extension Program

This curriculum is designed as a supplement that fits within a one or two week span, but it can lead to a longer-term instruction that provides students with guidance in the areas of:

- learning to take responsibility for their actions
- feeling valuable
- respecting others in their school and community

For more information about The Institute to End School Violence, please visit endschoolviolence.com.

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Lesson One

- Key Issue:** Lack of awareness of other's need for help; self-absorption.
- Board Quote:** *"Helping others can be as simple as giving someone a smile or saying hello."*
- Lesson Objective:** We all have the power to help someone else.
- Rationale:** Students need to understand that helping others is a choice.
- Souper Story:** "A Smile Can Save a Life" pp. 9 in this package.
- Activity:**
- 1) Read the *Souper* Story of the Day.
 - 2) Ask students to think about a time when they, or someone they know, helped another person. There could be a variety of examples of people helping each other.
 - 3) If the teacher can think of a time when a student (who can remain nameless) helped them, that will reinforce the idea.
 - 4) Once the students can think of an example of helping someone, or when someone helped them, ask them to share their example with one other person. The students will have 30 seconds to complete their sharing.
 - 5) Ask one or two student volunteers to share an example of **when someone helped them** and how it made them feel.
 - 6) Have one or two student volunteers share their example of **helping someone** and how that made them feel.
 - 7) The teacher should then focus on the idea that each example was possible because someone made a choice to help. Making a choice to help is an action we can all do. It doesn't have to be a major undertaking; it can be as simple as giving someone a hug, or smiling at them as they walk past. **We all have the power to make another person happy by making the choice to help.**
- Student Action:** Help someone today. (Example – You can help someone in a subject they are having trouble with; help someone deal with a problem they are having; help someone learn a sport, etc.)

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Lesson Two

- Key Issue:** Lack of respect and/or belittling others who are “different.”
- Board Quote:** *“There is something to be learned from everyone. We all are important.”*
- Lesson Objective:** Students will learn to appreciate people for who they are and understand that everyone is important.
- Rationale:** Looking for the good in others helps us to appreciate them, and in turn, appreciate ourselves.
- Souper Story:** “Scott” pp. 11 in this package.
- Activity:**
- 1) Read *Souper* Story of the Day.
 - 2) Ask students to think about a friend of theirs that is in some way different from them.
 - 3) Ask students to share with one other student who this friend is and why he/she is good for them. (30 seconds.)
 - 4) Share with students that sometimes when people are different from us we exclude rather than include them. Respecting and appreciating other people and their uniqueness allows us to see the good in everyone, and in turn for others to see the good in us. Ask your students: What did the students in the story realize about Scott?
 - 5) As a class, define the word “respect.” Remind the class that respect means many things to different people. Ask how respect and appreciating others is important to a safe school. Have several student volunteers respond to the question.
- Student Action:** Have students acknowledge another student that they would not normally talk to. (Let that person know that they matter to them.)

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Lesson Three

- Key Issue:** Low self-esteem; lack of positive forms of communication.
- Board Quote:** *“Celebrate what makes you special.”*
- Lesson Objective:** Create awareness among students that liking ourselves is important.
- Rationale:** Learning to appreciate ourselves is important to help us learn how to appreciate others.
- Souper Story:** “Windows to My Soul” pp. 13 in this package.
- Activity:**
- 1) Read *Souper* Story of the Day.
 - 2) Ask students to identify the one thing they like most about themselves (could be physical, intellectual, an achievement, school event, family, etc.).
 - 3) Ask students to find a partner and share what they like about themselves with their partner. They are to start the sentence with, “The one thing I appreciate about myself is ...”
 - 4) Have each student identify and share one thing they personally like about their partner with their partner. They are to start the sentence with, “One thing I like about you is ...”
 - 5) Have student volunteers share with the rest of the class, with a focus on how the student found good within themselves and with their partner. Each student should explain how he or she felt when they talked about themselves to their partner, and how they felt when their partner shared with them.
- Student Action:** Instruct each student to share with a friend something they like about that particular friend by the end of the day.

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Lesson Four

- Key Issue:** Peer pressure v.s. appropriate action in the face of a perceived threat.
- Board Quote:** *“Reporting threats to a trusted adult could save your life and the lives of others.”*
- Lesson Objective:** Encourage students to notify an adult if someone is threatening to hurt themselves or others.
- Rationale:** Even if students are afraid to be thought of as an “informer” by other students, a trusted adult has the power to help in a potentially dangerous situation in order to prevent someone from hurting themselves or others.
- Souper Story:** “For the Best” pp. 14 in this package.
- Activity:**
- 1) Read the *Souper Story* of the Day.
 - 2) Ask students to answer the following question silently: “What would you do if someone threatened to hurt others or themselves?”
 - 3) Ask three students to share with the class what they would do. Write a brief summary of each response on the board.
 - 4) Next, ask three students to share who they would contact with this important information (may be partially answered in summaries).
 - 5) Discuss with the class the fact that if they tell an adult about a threat, it may cause the person they are telling on to be angry, or they could be thought of as an informer. Regardless of the perceived consequences, make it clear that they should always tell an adult when they think that someone might get hurt.
- Student Action:** Determine which three people you could tell if someone threatened to hurt themselves or others.

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Lesson Five

- Key Issue:** A sense of entitlement without responsibility; apathy.
- Board Quote:** *“Every action we take to improve our world makes a difference.”*
- Lesson Objective:** Students will choose and take an action to improve our world.
- Rationale:** Recognizing that we all have the power to improve our world is the first step to taking action.
- Souper Story:** “If I Could Change the World for the Better...” pp. 16 in this package.
- Activity:**
- 1) Read *Souper* Story of the Day.
 - 2) Ask students to silently pick their favorite action from the list.
 - 3) Ask students to identify two actions that were not on the list that they could personally take to improve our world. These actions can be small or large.
 - 4) Ask students to get into groups of three and share their two actions. As a group, select one action that the group likes the best.
 - 5) Each group will then share their action with the class and teacher. Write on the board the one action per group.
 - 6) Share the idea with the class that we can all take different or the same actions, but every action we take, whether large or small, can help our world.
 - 7) Ask students to then pick the one action that they could take today to better the world.
- Student Action:** Instruct students that by the end of the day they must implement the one action that they selected.

SOUPER SAFE SCHOOLS

Kids Keeping Their Cool in School

Guidelines for a Successful Week

We want your **Souper Safe Schools** week to be a fun and productive experience for you and your students. Aside from implementing your daily dose of *Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul* stories and corresponding curriculum, we came up with some fun, interactive activities to celebrate each day of your SSS week.

- ❖ **Writing Contest Day**- have your students write a true, inspirational story to be considered for publication in future *Chicken Soup* books. Topics can include the following:
 - You or someone you know encountered a violent act or potential act that resulted in a lesson learned
 - Someone that you may not have liked very well, did or said something nice to you
 - You stood up for someone who was being teased or vice versa
 - You lost a close friend or loved one due to a violent act

- ❖ **SSS Donation Day**- students organize a donation drive having students and faculty donate old jewelry, headbands, hats, t-shirts, sewing kits, decorative glue, etc to make “Peace Party Favors” for the assembly. Such favors may include using different peace signs to decorate head bandanas, headbands, chokers, ankle bracelets and armbands

- ❖ **Peace Poster Day**- students make posters, signs and banners for the assembly. Challenge their creativity by having them to come up with their own peace slogans and signs

- ❖ **Student Skit Day**- place students into groups of 5 and have them improvise a situation that may exemplify the right thing to do if encountered with a potential act of violence or disrespect

- ❖ **Student Pledge Day**- students write peace pledges on a piece of paper for teachers to take to the assembly to be included in a random drawing to win cool prizes at the assembly

A Smile Can Save A Life

The day that changed my life forever started out like any other day for me. I have been a professional speaker for the last four years, since I was eighteen. I travel around the country speaking to middle and high school students about self-esteem, goal setting and helping others. On that day in 1999, I was speaking to a group of students near Fort Worth, Texas. The auditorium was full of applause, hugs, and smiles. Such a love-filled morning did not prepare me for the tragedy about to unfold.

After my speech that day, I went back to my hotel room. It was then that I received the emotional phone call that I will never forget.

“There was a tragedy at a youth event, right near where you spoke. Most of the victims were kids. I don’t know what their conditions are.”

For once, I was speechless. I was also afraid. *Were any of the kids I spoke to today involved?* I wondered. Even though I didn’t really know them, I felt a strong connection with the young people who had been in my audience only hours before.

I immediately hung up the phone and turned on the radio to find out more. A middle-aged man had walked into a youth rally at a local church and started shooting. In only minutes, he had ended the lives of several preteens from the church’s youth group.

I bought a map, and drove the few miles to the scene. When I got there, it was a horrible scene. Helicopters were circling overhead, and parents were screaming and calling the names of their children. Everyone was crying. I didn’t know how to help, or what to do. Then I noticed a group of young people sitting on the street corner and I walked up to them.

To this day, I don’t remember exactly what I said. I do remember that we hugged one another and did our best to comfort each other while the crying and screaming was going on all around us. I will never, for the rest of my life, forget sitting on that street corner with those kids – feeling their pain and confusion – and crying with them.

I knew from that moment on, that my life work would be about preventing youth violence.

I began asking questions during my speeches and listening to the students, tens of thousands of them from all over the country. I learned from them what they thought causes violence and especially what they thought could prevent it. Having the students sharing their opinions, and working with them to shape their schools has become a moving experience for me.

I will never forget the eighth grade girl, Jenny, who told me she was more afraid of sitting alone at lunch than being physically hurt, and that no one ever smiled at her. Or looking into the teary eyes of Stephen, who had sat next to another boy for an entire year – a boy who later shattered his school and many lives. He hung his head as he told me, “I never once said hello to him. I never once asked him how his day was. I never once acknowledged him.” I started to realize that these kinds of behaviors are the seeds that can later create violence. My belief was confirmed when I got word about the man who had shot the kids at the event in Fort Worth. He had opened fire on those kids just to get attention, and because he had felt that this was a way to get back at people who had ignored him.

The most important thing that I have learned is that young people are amazing. I am always so frustrated that the media depicts teenagers as lazy, unintelligent and violent. They rarely discuss the millions who work hard to get through school, hold steady jobs, support their families and stay clear of trouble. They overcome all kinds of obstacles, limitations and fears everyday, in order to move forward with their lives. Such as Maria, the blind girl that is a star on her school’s track team, or John, the school bully, who turned his life around to become one of my best volunteers. Thousands of students put forth an effort everyday to help others, and they never even expect to be acknowledged.

Together we can work to respect all different types of people. We can learn what behaviors can hurt and what behaviors can help. Ignoring others or calling them names can create an atmosphere that fosters violence. And, something as simple as a smile can truly save a life.

Young people do have the potential to make their own schools and communities safer. Most of all, we can sincerely value ourselves and others for who they are. Together, we can connect and end the hurt.

Jason R. Dorsey

Scott

It was time for the ice cream social fund-raiser that my small youth group had awaited for many months. The group consisted of five boys, one of them was Scott.

Scott always had a positive attitude. He looked on the bright side of things and never criticized anyone. But Scott was different from the rest of us. He was disabled. Oftentimes, he was unable to participate in activities. No one ever made fun of him to his face, but at times, people would snicker or stare in his presence. But Scott never worried; he just kept his head up high and ignored them.

Finally, the night of the ice cream social came. We rushed to the church basement and waited with scoopers in hand for the guests to arrive. One by one, people filed in, all hoping to get a nice, creamy glob of ice cream. But what they ended up getting was a hard, frozen mass. We waited for awhile for the ice cream to thaw, and eventually, it did.

Once the ice cream had thawed, we had another problem. It had melted into three pools of vanilla, chocolate and strawberry. But we persisted in serving it. We all had our chance to serve, except for Scott. So, being as kind as possible, we gave Scott a chance to scoop and serve.

As soon as Scott gripped the scooper, our ice cream troubles turned into the World's Greatest Ice Cream Massacre. Milky ice cream was flung in every direction. Scott wouldn't stop. He kept scooping and scooping and scooping. Then, suddenly, in the thick of the chaos, Scott stopped. We looked at Scott. Scott looked at us. And that's when I realized why he had stopped.

Scott was looking at a small, cute girl who entered the basement. Scott stated, "That's m-m-my friend." Our jaws fell open. The most beautiful girl we had seen all night was Scott's friend.

We pushed Scott out of the way, hoping that we could get to serve her. But Scott just looked at us and said, "I-I-I want to scoop the ice cream for her." We backed off.

The girl slowly approached him. Scott stood poised, ready to scoop again. The girl said, "Hi, Scott."

"H-h-hi," stuttered Scott.

She began to make conversation with him by saying, "Look. I got my new braces today." She looked up and gave a wide, bright smile to show off her gleaming braces.

"Th-th-they're neat," responded Scott. The two carried on a short conversation then the girl sat down.

That night I realized that somebody had overlooked Scott's problems and had seen him as a friendly, normal human being.

I realized something else, too. It was time for all of us to see Scott the same way.

David Ferino, twelve

Windows to My Soul

*Lost in dark depression
Not knowing where to turn
I opened the windows to my soul
To see what I could learn
I swept up the depression
Scrubbed the sadness and the hurt
I put it all in trash bags
And set them by the curb
I found stashed in a corner
Tucked high upon a shelf
A treasure chest of knowledge
That I could love myself
And wherever my future takes me
I know that I will win
Because I opened the windows to my soul
And let the light shine in.*

Hope Saxton

For the Best

*It is not only for what we do that we are held responsible,
but also for what we do not do.*

Moliere

It was two days after the tragic school shooting in Colorado and I was feeling bad about what had happened to the students there. My school began having a lot of bomb threats and it seemed that police cars were there often. I was standing with my friend Amberly, and her boyfriend when he casually said, "I'm gonna blow up the school and kill everyone." I asked, "Why would you want to do that?" and he said, "I just do" and walked away.

I was scared because no one had ever said anything like that to me before. I found out when talking to other friends that he also bragged about this to other people. My friends told me that I should tell an adult what he had said, but I was too scared and I made them promise not to tell anyone either.

One day, Amberly, and I were talking about what he had said when the teacher overheard our conversation. She took me out into the hallway and made me tell her who had said it and what they had said. At first, I refused to say a word. She told me it really was for the best, so I told her. I felt awful for doing it. I was angry with her for making me tell who said it. I wasn't sure he really meant it and didn't want him to get into trouble.

He got suspended for two days and had two days of in-school detention after that. I sometimes wonder if I had not told, would he have done what he said he was going to do? The guys in Colorado seemed pretty normal to a lot of people. The bottom line is, you should never joke around about something as serious as killing people. If you do, responsible people have no choice but to have you checked out to ensure everyone else's safety.

After he was suspended, the whole sixth grade had an assembly. The principal and counselors told the students that there was a kid who was making threats and that he was

suspended. I decided later to tell him that it was me who told on him so he wouldn't speculate about who did it. I was surprised to find that he was not angry with me for doing what I did. He was able to get help for his feelings and behavior.

Many people are in the same situation that I was in. If your friend is saying threatening stuff like my friend was, then they obviously need help -- and soon. It seems like when one school shooting happens then another one occurs not too long after that. If there were any way that you could prevent one school shooting it could perhaps save your own life and many others as well. If I had to do it over again, I would - because it really was for the best.

April Townsend, twelve

[EDITORS NOTE: If you are aware of dangerous or illegal activity that has happened or is going to happen at your school, tell this information to a trusted adult, or in case of an emergency, call 911. If you would like information on starting a student-led safe school initiative (S.A.V.E. chapter) contact the Center for the Prevention of School Violence <http://www.ncdjdp.org/cpsv/>. If you would like to report your concerns about an act or potential act of violence, contact WAVE America [Working Against Violence Everywhere] at www.waveamerica.com. You do not have to give your name.]

If I Could Change the World for the Better, I Would...

Eliminate every manmade weapon and all war. I would make sure that everyone treats each other equally.

*Lance Bass, *NSYNC*

Find one positive thing that everyone in the world could believe in. Prove to everyone there is a common ground in all people no matter what race, color, sex, faith, rich or poor. Bring people a little closer together, and remind them we're all the same. Just try to make it through life as human beings, and remember that every life is just as important as the next.

*JC Chasez, *NSYNC*

Have free ice cream breaks for everybody. I would have children have more say so in the world, and ban all guns and drugs.

*Joey Fatone, Jr., *NSYNC*

Put a smile on everyone's face.

*Chris Kirkpatrick, *NSYNC*

End racism and make equality for men and women. I would teach life through music.

*Justin Timberlake, *NSYNC*

Melt every cold heart and mold them into new warm ones.

Scarlett Kotlarczyk, eleven

Help people realize that people like me who learn and do things differently than them are still really the same underneath it all. We want to learn and be liked and be smiled at.

Wilson Cook, nine

Find another way to test drugs instead of using them on animals.

Brandon Barger, thirteen

Make it so every kid would have a warm meal, and no one would go starving.

Timothy Blevans, eleven

Open a house for all of the orphans of the world. I would get lots of people to help me take care of them.

Stacey Bergman, fifteen

Stop kids from making fun of other kids. Prejudice is just what we don't need. Kids hate being ridiculed.

Rachel Force, eleven

Make people realize that it's not what other people think of you, but what you think of yourself. You shouldn't put yourself down when people say cruel things about you or do things to you, because they're the ones that need a little *Chicken Soup* for their soul.

Sarah Hampton, fourteen

Travel back in time, and make sure the people who invented drugs and smoking never discovered or invented them.

Lisa Cline, eleven

Find a cure for diabetes. My little brother's friend has juvenile diabetes. Every year my family "Walks for the Cure." I wish there wasn't such a disease because he has to do shots and stuff.

Kristin Boden, thirteen

Want everyone to keep an open mind about everything, because with an open mind, you can accomplish anything.

Annemarie Staley, fourteen

Make everything solar powered including factories, vehicles and all types of machinery. By doing this, there wouldn't be as much air pollution and people could breathe easier.

Tracye Paye, thirteen

Give every child a grandmother like mine. She may not be rich and famous, but she has enough love in her heart for her twenty-one grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and plenty more to spare. How many millionaires can say that?

Casey Singleton, eighteen

Make it so that kids don't have to go through child abuse.

Kristen Hamilton, eleven

Make every capable person do one hour of community service per month. This would include cleaning up rubbish, bathing and feeding homeless people, and planting trees.

Trevor Burton, nineteen

Make sure that no one in the world was harmed because of their religion.

Pratima Neti, eleven

Stop child labor, which is unfortunately still going on in this world. Children deserve the right to live, and working at a very young age will not give you that freedom.

Jessilyn Yoo, twelve

Pay teachers more, because teachers are the foundation of all learning. Without teachers, the world would just be a useless space full of useless people.

Angela Rotchstein, fourteen

Make sure that everybody in the world is able to read. Reading is the world's greatest gift for the mind and imagination.

Jessica Behles, fourteen

Have everybody just agree to disagree instead of fighting. After all, we are all different, and have our own ways; this is the spice of life.

Jill Ananda, fourteen

Ask everyone in school to say one nice thing to another person everyday. Have every family tell each other they love one another.

William Baun, twelve

Have people talk to each other and listen more, and make sure that everybody would have enough play time.

Neil Gogno, nine

Stop all the violence that is on TV, which is where people get the idea that it is okay to hurt or kill someone. When we were channel surfing, my step-mom and I saw seven guns and three acts of violence all in one minute; even my dog got scared!

Bethany Hicks, twelve

Want everyone to have at least one best friend that they could count on.

Andrea Hawsey, eleven

Create vehicles that would run on natural resource waste material to stop the pollution.

Rosie Huf, eleven

Get more clubs and activities going so that people would stay away from gangs, drugs and crimes.

Stacy Luebbe, fourteen

Bring back all our lost loved ones for a day.

Rita Koch, ten

Make sure that all children in the world can go to school, and have *Chicken Soup* books so that they that they aren't alone.

Allison Opsitnick, twelve