

Lesson plan

I support others

Respect and care for the elderly

1. **Theme:** I support others: Respect and care for the elderly
2. **Grade:** 4th
3. **Lesson type:** for acquiring new knowledge
4. **Duration:** 40 min.
5. **Basic terms:** support, care, family, family members, grandparents, elderly people, community, society, empathy, responsibility, experience, wisdom, appreciation
6. **Pedagogical methods:** storytelling, presentation, discussion, dialog, reflection, individual work, brainstorming
7. **Means:** board (interactive or otherwise), markers, laptop/computer, multimedia (screen/projector), ppt presentation, flipchart (optional), letter templates, writing/drawing materials

8. Goals:

○ Educational:

The students

- ✓ Recall key concepts related to respect, kindness, and support for the elderly
- ✓ Cite examples of how to show respect and care towards the elderly
- ✓ Demonstrate appropriate behaviours in everyday situations that illustrate respect and care for older adults
- ✓ Compare and contrast how different religions and cultures view the role and importance of elderly people
- ✓ Assess the importance of respecting elderly people
- ✓ Create a letter, showing appreciation to an elderly person

○ Formational:

The students

- ✓ Show attentiveness during discussions about the needs and experiences of elderly people
- ✓ Engage actively in class activities, expressing thoughts and asking questions about respecting elders
- ✓ Demonstrate positive attitudes toward elderly people by expressing empathy and recognizing their contributions
- ✓ Integrate respect and helpfulness into their personal set of values

- ✓ Consistently show respectful behavior toward elderly people in and outside of school, demonstrating that these values have become part of their character

9. **Cross-curricular connections:** Social studies, Religious studies, Greek language (writing skills)

10. **Intra-subject connections:** with the lesson plans on the themes: Me and the others, Me and my environment and the other modules from the theme I support others

11. **Expected results:**

- ✓ Students are able to explain what respect for the elderly means and describe its importance
- ✓ Students demonstrate appropriate respectful behavior in the classroom and in society
- ✓ Compare simple teachings from at least two religions about respecting elders
- ✓ Actively participate in discussions and activities about respecting the elderly, showing attentive listening and willingness to share ideas
- ✓ Express empathy toward elderly people by describing why kindness and patience are important in real-life situations
- ✓ Demonstrate respectful attitudes consistently, in the classroom and in society

12. **Preparation**

○ For the teacher: Reading the theoretical base, downloading the presentation, printing the letter templates and preparing writing/drawing materials for the students

13. **Structure of the lesson:**

I support others: Respect and care for the elderly

1. Respect and care for the elderly
2. How can we show respect and care for the elderly
 - Ways to show respect and care
 - Why is it important to show respect and care?
 - Respect and care for the elderly in different religions
3. Activity: A letter to an elderly person
4. Reflection and discussion
 - The students are prompted to answer several questions on the subject, reflecting on their thoughts and feelings and engaging in a discussion.

14. Structure, content and timeline

1. Introduction (5 min.)

- Teacher activity:
 - Actualization of prior knowledge on the subject: What do you think means to respect and care for the elderly?; Is it important to respect and care for elderly people?; What is the most recent way that you can think of, in which you showed respect for an older person? (2 min.)
 - Introduction of new information and terms: (3 min.)

Respect and care for the elderly are important values in every society. Elderly people are those who have lived many years, gained knowledge, and accumulated life experience that they can share with younger generations. They often serve as a bridge connecting the past with the present through stories, traditions, and wisdom. When we spend time with older people, we can learn about what life was like before we were born, including how people lived, worked, and played in earlier times. Many elderly people enjoy teaching young people skills they learned over their lifetime, such as cooking special recipes, playing musical instruments, or telling fascinating stories about their adventures.

Taking care of our elders shows them that we appreciate everything they have done for their families and communities throughout their lives. Simple acts of kindness, like helping them carry groceries, listening to their stories, or just spending time with them, can brighten their day and make them feel valued. By treating elderly people with respect and kindness, we create a better world where everyone, no matter their age, feels important and loved.

- Student activity:
 - Participation in the dialog, asking questions, active listening
- Methods and tools:
 - Methods: dialog, storytelling
 - Tools: board, marker or an interactive whiteboard (for outlining the theme and the terms; optional, for writing down student's ideas, thoughts)

2. Stating the theme of the lesson: I support others: Respect and care for the elderly (30 min.)

- Teacher activity:
 - Short presentation, outlining the importance of respect and care for the elderly, ways to show respect and care, and religious notions about being respectful towards the elderly in the family and in society (10 min.)
 - Theoretical overview, performed with the presentation:

Respect for the elderly means acknowledging their life experience, listening to them, and treating them with politeness and patience. Every elderly person has lived through different life events, like studying, working, raising children, overcoming difficulties, and deserves appreciation. Older people have been where you are right now. They were once children: going to school, having friends, playing, sometimes arguing, and discovering the world around them. They were young: full of energy, dreams, and curiosity about their future. Because elderly people have lived through so many experiences, they have countless interesting stories to tell about challenges they overcame, lessons they learned, and happy moments they treasure. We should take time to listen to them and appreciate the wisdom they share, because their stories can teach us important things and help us make better choices in our own lives.

There are several ways in which you can show respect and care for the elderly:

- Using polite language (e.g., “please”, “thank you”, “may I help you?”).
- Listening attentively when they speak.
- Helping with tasks that may be difficult for them, such as carrying bags or opening a door.
- Spending time with grandparents or other elderly people and showing genuine interest in their stories.
- Showing empathy by being patient and understanding that older adults may need more time and support.

Respect and care also extend to public places. Offering a seat on the bus, inviting them to go ahead of you in the queue, or helping an elderly neighbour are small but meaningful acts that show consideration. These simple gestures of kindness don't take much effort, but they can make a big difference in an elderly person's day and show them that people in the community care about their well-being.

Showing respect and care for the elderly is important because they have worked hard throughout their lives to make the world a better place for us. They raised families, built communities, and passed down knowledge and traditions that help us understand who we are today. Elderly people often feel lonely, so our kindness and attention can bring them joy and remind them that they are still valued members of society. When we treat older people with respect, we set a good example for others and create a society where everyone is treated with dignity regardless of their age.

Different religions also acknowledge the elderly as an important part of society. Many world religions teach that older adults should be honoured, respected, and protected. Although beliefs differ, the message is similar: caring for the elderly is a moral obligation and a sign of good character.

In the Christian tradition, elders are valued for their wisdom and experience. The Bible encourages compassion and support for older members of the community, reminding Christians that everyone deserves care and kindness, especially those who are vulnerable or in need. Many Christians believe that when they care for elderly people, they are following Jesus's example of serving others with a generous heart. Churches often organize special programs where young

people visit elderly members, help them with daily tasks, or simply spend time talking and sharing meals together.

Islam places strong emphasis on respecting parents and older people, teaching that this respect is a sacred duty. Caring for one's parents in their old age is considered a great virtue and one of the most important responsibilities a Muslim can have. Acts such as speaking gently, supporting elders physically, and showing patience are important parts of faith that every Muslim is encouraged to practice daily. Muslims believe that taking care of elderly parents and grandparents brings blessings to the entire family and helps create a peaceful, loving home.

Jewish tradition teaches that older adults deserve dignity and honour because they carry the history and wisdom of the Jewish people. Caring for elderly parents and community members is considered both a religious duty and a way of preserving tradition and wisdom that has been passed down through countless generations. Many Jewish communities have special programs where volunteers visit elderly people, bring them meals, and make sure they have everything they need to live comfortably.

In Buddhism, respect for elders is deeply connected to gratitude for all they have given us throughout our lives. Older people are honoured for the guidance and support they have provided, including teaching us right from wrong and helping us grow into good people. Helping elders is seen as a way to practice compassion, which is one of the most important values in Buddhism. Temples and Buddhist communities frequently organize activities where young people can help elderly members, such as preparing food, cleaning their homes, or simply sitting with them to keep them company.

In Hindu culture, elders hold a respected position within the family and are considered sources of knowledge and spiritual guidance, often teaching younger family members about Hindu gods, sacred texts, and the meaning of life. In traditional Hindu homes, elderly family members are often given the most comfortable seat, served food first, and consulted before making important family decisions. Hindu scriptures teach that a home where elders are honoured and cared for becomes filled with peace, prosperity, and divine grace.

Although these religions have different beliefs and practices, they all share the same important value: treating elderly people with respect, kindness, and love is essential to living a good and meaningful life.

Activity: A letter to an elderly person (20 min.)

- ✓ The teacher gives each student a template for a letter
- ✓ The teacher instructs the students to write a letter to an elderly person: their grandparent/s, a neighbour, an elderly person they know, or one they don't know (the students could write to elderly people in a care home, and the letters could be then distributed to the people, if appropriate)
- ✓ The teacher provides an example structure for the letter: a greeting, short presentation of the student, a brief story (what they like, what they want to ask, what their dreams are, etc.), conclusion and regards
- ✓ Each student decides to whom they want to write their letter and start composing it
- ✓ After the students finish the letters, if there are volunteers to read their letters, they could present them to the class

- ✓ The teacher instructs the students to give the letters to the person they wrote them for (if the letters are for elderly people in a care home, the teacher could collect and distribute them accordingly)
 - ✓ The teacher initiates a short brainstorming activity regarding actions of respect and care for the elderly:
 - “Writing a letter of appreciation, gratitude, or simple story-sharing is one way in which we can show elderly people that we care for them. Can you think of other ways to do that? Can you list some of the ways we mentioned today, for example?”
 - ✓ The teacher writes students’ ideas on the board and concludes with a summary of the actions which students could do to show respect and care for the elderly
- Student activity:
 - Participation in the dialog, taking notice of the presentation, asking questions, active listening, sharing ideas, reflecting on the activity
 - Methods and tools:
 - Methods: dialog, presentation, storytelling, individual work, discussion, brainstorming
 - Tools: interactive board or a screen, laptop/computer, board, marker, flipchart (optional, for writing down students’ ideas), letter templates, writing/drawing materials

3. Reflection and discussion (5 min.)

- Teacher activity:
 - Posing questions for a discussion:
 - ✓ Why do you think elderly people deserve respect and kindness from younger people?
 - ✓ Can you think of a time when you helped an elderly person? How did it make you feel?
 - ✓ What are some challenges elderly people might face in everyday life?
 - ✓ How can children show respect to older adults in simple, everyday situations?
 - ✓ What can we learn from elderly people?
 - ✓ Why is it important for families and communities to take care of their elderly members?
 - Engaging the students with prompts:

- ✓ “One thing is, that they can teach us important things about life; what else can you think of?”
- ✓ “Even small actions, like holding a door, can make a big difference”
- ✓ “Some tasks might take them more time or energy”
- ✓ “For example, offering to help with small tasks”
- ✓ “Advice based on things they have gone through”
- Answering questions and clarifying information
- Student activity:
 - Engaging in the discussion
 - Reflection on their ideas and emotions on the subject
- Methods:
 - Methods: reflection, discussion, active listening

15. Variations:

- The “Wisdom book” activity: The teacher instructs each student (before the lesson) to interview a grandparent or elderly neighbour, asking them a few simple questions (“What games did you play as a child?” “What was school like?” “What advice would you give to kids?”); The students write short summaries of the interviews and present them in class; The class, with the help of the teacher, combines all pages into a “Wisdom book” to display at the classroom/school.
- The “Respect in different religions” activity”: The teacher prepares cards with brief statements about respect and care for the elderly in different religions (Churches organise special programs; Caring is considered a great virtue; Respect for elders is connected to gratitude; etc.); The teacher prepares matching cards with the religion that is connected to each statement; The teacher divides the students into small groups and gives each group a set of both types of cards; Each group connects the pairs of cards; The teacher initiates a discussion about religious teachings about respect and care for the elderly.
- The “Care for the elderly map”: The teacher divides the students into groups and provides each group with a larger sheet of paper; Each group draws/sketches a map of the neighbourhood (or the centre of the city, different neighbourhoods, etc.); Each group identifies places elderly people might need: benches, safe crossings, wide sidewalks, clinics, quiet areas; each group adds suggested improvements (e.g., “Add more benches here”, “Build a ramp here”); The students present their ideas; The teacher initiates a discussion about how a community can become more welcoming and safe for all ages.
- The “Comparison chart activity”: The teacher divides the board into two columns: “Our grandparents’ experiences” and “Our experiences”; The students, with the help of the teacher brainstorm differences in: school life, technology, games and toys, communication, clothing, etc. (the teacher can prepare images and short explanations about items and experiences from years ago); The teacher organises a discussion on the topic of changes and how they affect older people today and why they may face challenges with new technology, for example; The teacher connects the discussion to showing respect for the elderly and being patient and supportive.

- The “Respect poster” activity: The teacher initiates a brainstorming activity – the students propose ideas about respectful actions they can take toward elderly people; The class prepares together a poster with all suggestions; The teacher displays the poster in the classroom.

16. Interesting facts (from <https://buddhaweekly.com/filial-duty-the-buddhist-perspective-on-caring-for-elderly-loved-ones-virtuous-karma/>; <https://www.morethantokyo.com/elderly-honored-respect-for-the-aged-day/>; <https://www.rudraksha-ratna.com/articles/respect-and-reverence>; <https://www.thechinajourney.com/double-ninth-festival/>; <https://www.ffwpu.org.uk/news-events/spotlight-on-korea-mid-autumn-festival-chuseok>; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pongal>)

- ✓ In Buddhism, caring for elderly people is considered a virtuous act that generates good karma for both the caregiver and the receiver.
- ✓ In Japan's a Respect for the aged day is celebrated each year. This public holiday (Keirō no Hi) celebrates and honours elderly citizens. People visit elders, volunteer in communities, give gifts, and participate in events that show gratitude and respect. Special media programs and performances by youth further highlight elders' importance in society.
- ✓ In Hinduism, specific etiquette toward elders includes sitting to their left, avoiding strong opinions in their presence, and not engaging in disruptive behaviours like yawning or stretching openly, all signalling respect and deference.
- ✓ In China, people celebrate the Double Ninth Festival (Chongyang Festival). It involves climbing mountains, drinking chrysanthemum tea, and honouring the elderly with special prayers for their health and longevity. It has roots in ancient rituals to ward off illness and promote blessings for elders.
- ✓ In countries like The US and Canada, people celebrate the Grandparents' Day by showing appreciation for elderly people and giving them cards and gifts.
- ✓ The Chuseok festival is celebrated in Korea. This is a major harvest festival celebrated in mid-autumn, where families gather to honour ancestors through rituals (Charye), share food, and pay respect to elderly family members.
- ✓ The Pongal festival is celebrated in Tamil Nadu state, India. Though primarily a harvest festival, Pongal includes specific rituals where younger members serve and seek blessings from elders, expressing gratitude and respect for their role in the family and community.