SECTION 1 Introduce Enthusiasm

This curriculum offers approximately 3 hours of instruction, divided into 3 sections. Each section can be broken into smaller pieces if you prefer short lessons. For additional resources, visit www.CharacterFirstEd.com.

3 WAYS TO BUILD ENTHUSIASM:

Educate
Focus on enthusiasm for a period of time. Use the lessons in this curriculum to talk about enthusiasm and why it matters. Look for ways to emphasize enthusiasm in other subjects, such as math, reading, language, history, social studies, science, music, health, and athletics.

Evaluate
Think about daily decisions in the light of good character. Ask yourself and your students, “Is this the right thing to do?” Use the “I Wills” on page 4 as behavioral objectives, and refer to these standards when correcting negative attitudes and behavior.

Celebrate
Catch people doing good and point out the character qualities they demonstrated. Children thrive on sincere encouragement, so don’t overlook the little opportunities to praise each day!

DEFINE ENTHUSIASM
(Discussion, 15 minutes)

Point out and discuss key words in the definition. Review and commit the definition to memory.

Definition: Putting my whole heart into what I do.

The word enthusiasm comes from the Greek entousiasmos, meaning “to infuse with a divine spirit.” An enthusiastic person is filled with passion, energy, and commitment to do one’s best—no matter how big or little the task.

Enthusiasm “brightens” the world around you, like fireworks that brighten the night sky. Give your best effort to every assignment, and remember that half-hearted work does not lead to success.

Pay attention, follow instructions, and apply yourself to each task. Be enthusiastic, and live life to the fullest!

Related concepts:
Energy, excitement, effort, passion, motivation, fervor, zeal, vision, drive, optimism

Discussion:
● What does it mean to “have a good attitude” at school? What does a “good attitude” look like at home?

● How can you have a positive attitude when doing something you don’t like to do? Can you give an example?

● Why is it important to do your best in “little” things?

● The opposite of enthusiasm is apathy, which means not caring about what happens or how things turn out. What do you think will happen to a student who doesn’t care about his or her work?

“The real secret of success is enthusiasm” —Walter Chrysler

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Additional resources at www.CharacterFirstEd.com
IT'S CONTAGIOUS
(Exploration, 15 minutes)

Use pom-poms, a megaphone, or something else related to cheerleading as a hands-on object lesson.

Have you ever seen cheerleaders trying to motivate the crowd or encourage the players? They smile, shout, jump up and down, and wave their pom-poms in order to get everyone excited about the game.

More than anything, cheerleaders spread enthusiasm by being enthusiastic. You don't see cheerleaders frowning, grumbling, or looking sad. That's because enthusiasm is "contagious"—it spreads from one person to the next.

Enthusiasm doesn't mean you have to be loud and crazy. You can simply smile, be friendly, and have a good attitude about your work. Your enthusiasm can help others be enthusiastic—which can make everyone's day a little better!

THE BIG PICTURE
(Project, 20 minutes)

Help students understand the importance of doing their best, even when they can't see "the big picture."

Write the word "ENTHUSIASM" on a large piece of paper or poster board. (Or visit www.CharacterFirstEd.com to download a template.)

Cut the paper into enough pieces for each student to color his or her own puzzle piece. Ask if anyone knows what the puzzle says. Work together to assemble the puzzle, and tape the pieces together when it is complete.

Points to Ponder:
- If one piece is missing from the puzzle, it is incomplete. This shows how each person is important and that everyone can make a difference.
- It's important to have a good attitude and do your best, even when you don't see "the big picture." It might take years before you see how it all fits together.

Enthusiasm
.Putting my whole heart into what I do
**Practicing for Enthusiasm**

Sincere and specific compliments can encourage students to keep going in the right direction. Recognize students for:

- Making friends outside of their "cliques."
- Showing excitement about what they are learning.
- Taking initiative to help others.
- Putting their whole heart into an assignment.
- Not giving up.

**Build Confidence**

The way you respond to a child's work can boost (or break) his or her confidence. Here are some tips:

- **Show genuine interest:** "How did you make the water look so real in this picture? It is so detailed!"
- **Recognize hard work:** "That was a hard project and you probably felt like giving up. Thanks for sticking it out to the end."
- **Put things to use:** "This is so creative. I will use it today."
- **Show that you learn:** "I never would have thought of that. Next time I'm going to follow your example."

**I WILL...**

*(Discussion, 25 minutes)*

1. **Be an "energy-giver."**
   People often feel energized after being around an enthusiastic individual. Such a person is an energy-giver.
   - How does it feel to work with someone who is an "energy-giver"?
   - How can you get "energized" when you don't feel like doing something?

2. **Smile.**
   Smiling shows you have a cheerful, positive attitude. Not only is a smile pleasant to look at, but scientists say that smiling is good for your health!
   - Try different facial expressions and see how they feel. What's the difference between smiling and frowning? What about surprise, anger, fear, and delight?
   - Why should you smile and be courteous to everyone at school, not just your friends?

3. **Encourage others.**
   An enthusiastic person encourages others to do their best—like teammates who inspire and motivate another to keep going and to not give up.
   - Why is it important to encourage one another?
   - Why is it not okay to insult, hurt, ridicule, mock, or bully others?

4. **Treat every job as important.**
   Recognize the importance of your work—even the smallest task. Write neatly, check your answers, and try to do things right the first time.
   - Why is it important to check your work before finishing?
   - Do you think something "small" like sweeping the floor is important? What happens if you leave crumbs or spills on the kitchen floor?

5. **Not be discouraged by failure.**
   Sometimes we learn through "trial and error." When you make a mistake, recognize what you did wrong so you can avoid doing it again.
   - What are some skills or lessons that took you several tries to learn?
   - How is "failure" like a stepping stone that gets you one step closer to success?

**No one becomes a great artist overnight. It takes patience, practice, and passion to do one's very best—whatever the task!**
WHAT’S IN YOUR BAG?
(Exploration, 20 minutes)

Help students visualize the differences between being a giver, waster, and taker.

Gather 6 granola bars (or other food), 6 balloons filled with air, and 6 rocks. Label each item with one of the corresponding descriptions listed below.

Label three sacks or backpacks: GIVER, WASTER, and TAKER. Read the label from each rock, balloon, and granola bar, and ask the class which bag it belongs in. When finished, discuss which bag you’d rather have on a hiking trip—the food, balloons, or rocks?

ENERGY-GIVER
(food)
• Helps others
• Says kind words
• Smiles
• Shares with others
• Helps those who are bullied
• Tells the truth, even when it’s hard

ENERGY-WASTER
(balloons)
• Helps if convenient
• Says nothing
• Does not smile
• Keeps things for self
• Ignores those who are bullied
• Tells the truth most of the time

ENERGY-TAKER
(rocks)
• Helps self
• Says unkind words
• Frowns
• Takes from others
• Hurts and bullies others
• Tricks others and tells lies

Supplies: Pencils, yarn, large beads, paper, scissors, tape

Points to Ponder:
• Enthusiasm comes when you “catch a vision” for what you are doing. When you believe something is important, you are more likely to do your best!
• Think of some “little” tasks at school. Why are these important? How will they help you in the future? Why should you put your whole heart into what you do?

CATCH A VISION
(Game, 25 minutes)

Use this craft and game to talk about “catching a vision” for what you are doing.

Tape the end of a 6-inch piece of yarn to the top of a pencil. Make a paper circle and cut a slit from the outside edge to the middle. Slide the edges of the slit toward each other to make a cone, and secure it with tape.

Cut the tip off the cone just big enough to fit it over the top of the pencil, and tape the cone to the pencil. Cut a small strip of paper to serve as a flag. Write “Catch a Vision” on it and tape it to the pencil underneath the cone. Tie a large bead to the end of the yarn, and try to catch it in the cone!

Supplies: Pencils, yarn, large beads, paper, scissors, tape

Points to Ponder:
• Being a “giver” is more about attitude and effort than it is about money. How can you be a “giver” without money?
• An enthusiastic person shares his or her energy by smiling, encouraging, and helping others.
• Invest your time and energy in things that matter. Learn as much as you can. Build good habits. Make life better for your family, friends, and community.

ENTHUSIASM POEM
(Literacy Connection, 15 minutes)

Teach this poem as a way to memorize the five “I Wills.” Watch the video at www.CharacterFirstEd.com.

I’ll encourage those around me with the smile that I wear. And I’ll give a little energy, both here and everywhere.

Each job is so important that I’ll work with all my heart. And I’ll never be discouraged, even when things fall apart.

My character is what will make a leader out of me! So next time through, let’s say it more ENTHUSIASMATICALLY!
At 50 feet long and weighing 50 tons, the humpback whale can't help but do things in a big way. This songster of the ocean sings tunes that often last 20 minutes and resonate through the water for hundreds of miles.

**THE HUMPBACK WHALE**  
(Story, 20 minutes)

Imagine yourself sitting in an inner tube off the coast of Hawaii. You dip your toes into the cool ocean water and sip on a glass of sweet lemonade. The waves around you glisten in the bright afternoon sun, and all seems peaceful as you gently rock back and forth.

Then... the water around you turns dark and you feel something move beneath your feet. You look down into the water and see one of the largest sea creatures known to man—a 50-foot long, 50-ton humpback whale!

All of a sudden, the whale comes up out of the water! It goes high into the air where it pauses for just a moment. Then it starts to fall—in your direction! You paddle and paddle and paddle to get out of the way before... SSSSSPLAAAAASHHHHHH!

**Big Splash**
That's what it's like to see a humpback whale "breach" in the ocean. No one knows all the reasons why humpback whales like to splash and dive. But this is for certain—when a humpback whale makes a splash, it makes a BIG splash!

While swimming through the water, the humpback uses its powerful tail to turn its body up and out of the water. The whale soars into the air, pauses for a moment, and then comes crashing down into the sea. The splash is so loud it sounds like a cannon being shot!

**Big Bubbles**
Humpback whales also make bubbles—BIG bubbles. In order to catch food, a whale takes a big breath of air and dives deep into the ocean. Then it swims in a large circle blowing a constant stream of air. Fish inside the ring find themselves trapped by the bubbles.

Slowly, the whale tightens the circle as it swims closer to the water's surface, making the "bubble net" smaller and smaller. When the fish are all bunched together, the whale opens its mouth and swallows the fish—up to 1,000 pounds in one meal!

**Big Songs**
Humpback whales also make BIG songs. The male humpback whales are the only ones that sing. Their songs can last up to 20 minutes and are usually repeated for hours.

Whales in different regions sing different songs, but all the whales within the same region sing the same song. The songs are so big and so loud that other whales can hear them hundreds of miles away!
Let's learn what it's like to sing a whale song. Remember, you have to sing with all your heart!

(Select seven volunteers to help you “sing” the following song. Teach them one line at a time and practice singing as a class. Watch it on video at www.CharacterFirstEd.com.)

A whale song goes something like this:

- Oooooo
- Eeeeee
- Chirrrrp, Chirrrrp, Chirrrrp, Chirrrrp
- Gera, Gera, Gera, Gera, Gera
- Wah-Ooo, Wah-Ooo, Wah-Ooo
- Yuppa, Yuppa, Yuppa, Yuppa, Yuppa
- Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

Whatever you do, put your whole heart into it and give your very best. That’s how you “make a splash”—by showing enthusiasm in everything you do!

WHALE SONGBOOK
(Project, 20 minutes)

Make a “songbook” to help students learn and practice the whale song.

Visit www.CharacterFirstEd.com to download and print a craft template for each student. Cut out four whales with the whale song “lyrics” written on them. Reinforce the tails with clear tape and connect the tails (through the tape) with a brass fastener. Color or decorate the whales if desired.

Supplies: whale template, brass fasteners, scissors, clear tape
OVERVIEW: Enthusiasm is essential for success. Whatever the task, no matter how big or small, it will always turn out better if you put your whole heart into it! Another great thing about enthusiasm is—it’s contagious! Your “spark” of energy and excitement can ignite others to live their lives with enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm

Definition: Putting my whole heart into what I do

I WILL...

- Be an “energy-giver.”
- Smile.
- Encourage others.
- Treat every job as important.
- Not be discouraged by failure.

Humpback whales can be 50 feet long and weigh 50 tons. They can’t help but do things in a big way!

CHARACTER QUIZ:

1. Why should you put your whole heart into what you do?

2. An enthusiastic person… a. frowns a lot. b. nags and complains. c. gladly helps others. d. tries half-heartedly.


4. An enthusiastic person is always loud and energetic. TRUE? or FALSE?

5. How does the humpback whale show enthusiasm?

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