Social-emotional learning encourages students to recognize and manage their emotions, build healthy relationships, and achieve positive goals. It is growing to become an essential part of learning in schools today. Be Your Best Self: Building Social-Emotional Skills is an important book series that helps readers develop their skills in mindfulness, gratitude, self- and social awareness, diversity and inclusion, and conflict resolution. The books also include relatable examples, practical ideas, and engaging activities that help children focus on positive thinking and behavior to become the best and happiest self they can be.

The lesson plans in the Be Your Best Self: Building Social-Emotional Skills Teacher Guide are tailored towards students in grades three to five. These lessons require students to work both independently and collaboratively, and think critically about their role in helping themselves, and others, to be their best self. Students will learn a variety of different mindfulness practices, engage in self-reflection, and identify how gratitude and happiness are fostered. They will also develop positive relationships with peers in their classroom and the greater school community. Students will be able to share their new learning with their classmates in different ways throughout each lesson of the Teacher’s Guide.

Each lesson plan in this guide can be taught as a stand-alone lesson. These lessons can be taught sequentially, or can be spaced out throughout the school year based on the needs of your students and your curriculum planning. Reproducible worksheets and assessment tools accompany each lesson plan. The titles in Be Your Best Self: Building Social-Emotional Skills include:

- Be Mindful! Be Here Now
- Creating a Happy School Community
- Kindness is Cool!
- The Power of Gratitude

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### PACING CHART AND VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Plan Title</th>
<th>Pacing</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicing Mindfulness</td>
<td>2 periods</td>
<td>anxiety, anxious, authentic, aware, focus, meditation, mindfulness, resilience, stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gratitude Attitude</td>
<td>2-3 periods</td>
<td>authentic, aware, brainstorming, community, gratitude, resilience, self-esteem, values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreading Kindness like Confetti</td>
<td>3 periods</td>
<td>contagious, diversity, illustrate, impact, inclusion, unique</td>
</tr>
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* 1 class period = 40 to 60 minutes

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### ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES

Accommodations provide equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is learned. Accommodations allow a student access to the subject or course without any changes to the knowledge and skills the student is expected to demonstrate.

Educators are encouraged to adapt the instructional approach, activities, and assessments included in this guide to best meet the diverse interests, needs, and abilities of their students. Possible accommodations may include:

**Instructional Strategies**
- Break tasks into parts with accompanying timelines
- Provide extra time for processing of oral information.
- Pair oral instructions with visual ones (writing or symbols)
- Pre-teach new vocabulary and regularly review previously taught vocabulary
- Provided model of completed work
- Frequently check with the student to get him/her started
- Provide oral and visual instructions and examples
- Provide a checklist of tasks for the student

**Environmental Strategies**
- Proximity to teacher
- Strategic seating
- Flexible or mixed-ability grouping
- Provide an alternative setting for learning that is free from visual and auditory distractions.

**Assessment Strategies**
- Build in extra time to allow student to process questions asked and answers given
- Provide written instructions and rubrics for assignments
- Offer a choice of assessment activities so that the student can choose one suited to their strengths
- Space out or extend assignments to prevent student feeling overwhelmed
- Reduce the number of tasks used to assess skill or concept
- Allow students to use assistive devices or technology
Lesson 1
Practicing Mindfulness

Curriculum Correlations

Common Core State Standards
- RI.3.1, 3.2
- RI.4.1, 4.4
- RI.5.1, 5.7

Ontario Language Arts
- Grade 5 Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2
- Grade 3 Reading: 1.1, 1.6
- Grade 4 Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.4, 1.6
- Grade 4 Reading: 1.1
- Grade 5 Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 2.3
- Grade 5 Reading: 1.1, 1.6

Materials
- Markers
- Cue cards (3 per student)
- 2 bottles of bubbles
- 2 pinwheels
- 2 stuffed animals
- 10 to 12 yoga or floor mats
- Basket
- 2 large envelopes
- Be Your Best Self series (class set)
- Be Mindful! Be Here Now (assorted pages)
- Mindfulness Activity Instructions Handout

PLEASE NOTE: This lesson is best suited for completion in a school gymnasium. If not available, a classroom can be used; however, depending on the classroom layout, you may need to move desks and classroom furniture to allow space for activities. If possible, please also try to complete lesson in two subsequent class periods.

Setting the Stage

For this activity, students will travel around the learning space in small groups and participate in different mindfulness activities.

To begin the lesson, ask your students to join you by sitting in a large circle, facing one another. Explain to your students that today you will be discussing mindfulness. Ask students to raise their hand if they have an idea about how mindfulness is defined. Allow students the opportunity to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

After everyone who raised their hand has shared, explain to students that mindfulness is a practice of being in the present moment and quieting your mind.

Read pg. 4-5 of the Be Mindful! Be Here Now book to your students. As you are reading, ask students to pass around a basket with cue cards and markers inside, and ask each student to take one of each. On the cue card, ask students to write their name, and something they do (or could do) to be mindful.

Once students have written down their response, ask them to place the card in front of them on the floor with the words up. When everyone has finished, have the students stand up, and slowly rotate the circle while reading each of the cards. Once they get back to their own card, ask students to be seated again. Explain to students that today they will have the opportunity to learn about different activities that will encourage mindfulness.

Activity

Divide the class into five equal groups, and explain to students that they will be traveling around the room with their groups to explore different mindfulness stations.

At each station, students will have different tasks to complete. Explain to students that at each station, there is an instructions page that will tell them more about the expectations of the station they are at.

Remind students that it is important to walk from station to station, and to use a quiet indoor voice so as to not disturb their classmates.

You will put each page of the Mindfulness Activity Instructions Handout and the required materials at each corresponding station. Advise students that at each station, they will be asked to read two specific pages in the Be Mindful! Be Here Now book, and will then be directed participate in a corresponding activity. The activity stations are as follows:

- Station 1: Fun Ways to Breathe
- Station 2: Mindful Meditation
- Station 3: Mindful Yoga
- Station 4: Calming Negative Emotions
- Station 5: Be Your Own Best Friend

Each group will start at a different station, and then will rotate through each one in a clockwise motion. Students will have approximately 10 to 15 minutes to spend at each station.

Once students have written down their response, ask them to place the card in front of them on the floor with the words up. When everyone has finished, have the students stand up, and slowly rotate the circle while reading each of the cards. Once they get back to their own card, ask students to be seated again. Explain to students that today they will have the opportunity to learn about different activities that will encourage mindfulness.

Objectives

Students will be able to:
- Understand what mindfulness is.
- Identify ways in which they can be mindful.
- Participate in a variety of mindfulness practices.

Assessment

Access student understanding and participation during group work task through observation. Travel around the classroom to each group to ensure students are on task, and that students understand the content being addressed. Clarify misunderstandings as needed. Check each student’s responses from Station 4 and Station 5 for completion.

Extensions

If time permits, students can be given the opportunity to share other mindfulness practices that they engage in with the class.

Wrap-Up

Once students have traveled to each station, ask students to join you again by sitting in a circle. Moving around the circle, have each student share their favorite mindfulness activity, and the reason why it was their favorite. Please give students the option to pass their turn if they do not want to share.

Explain to students that you will be creating a display board in the classroom that includes their pieces from Station 4 and Station 5. This will remind students of characteristics that make them authentic, and will serve as a resource for finding strategies to calm negative emotions if needed.

To finish the lesson, have students participate in the activity described on page 8 of the Be Mindful! Be Here Now book. Students will lay on their backs, and for 8 to 10 breathing cycles, will move their hands together. Students will raise their hands when breathing in, and down when breathing out.
Mindfulness Activity Instructions

**STATION 1: Fun Ways to Breathe**

**Materials**
- *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* books (5 to 6 copies)
- 2 stuffed animals
- 2 bottles of bubbles
- 2 pinwheels

**Step 1**
With your group, please read pages 8-9 in the *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* book.

**Step 2**
Take 1 to 2 minutes to practice each of the following activities described on the assigned pages:
- Breathing Buddy
- Bubble Breath
- Bunny Breath
- Pinwheel Breath
- Bumblebee Breath

**NOTE:** Not everyone in your group can practice the same activity at the same time. Please take turns using the materials provided.

**Step 3**
When you are finished each activity, please wait quietly for the teacher to signal that it is time to move to the next station.

**STATION 2: Mindfulness Meditation**

**Materials**
- *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* books (5 to 6 copies)
- 5 to 6 yoga or floor mats

**Step 1**
With your group, please read pages 12-13 in the *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* book.

**Step 2**
Following the instructions in the book, spend 5 minutes practicing meditation. Everyone in your group will start and end at the same time. Using the timer provided, set an alarm to sound after 5 minutes.

**Step 3**
After you have finished meditating, discuss the suggested questions with your group:
- a. What do you hear?
- b. What do you see?
- c. What do you taste?
- d. What do you smell?
- e. What do you feel?

**Step 4**
When you are finished your discussion, please wait quietly for the teacher to signal that it is time to move to the next station.
Mindfulness Activity Instructions

STATION 3: Mindful Yoga

Materials
- *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* books (5 to 6 copies)
- 5 to 6 yoga or floor mats

Step 1
With your group, please read pages 16-17 in the *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* book.

Step 2
Following the instructions in the book, spend 8 to 10 minutes practicing the different yoga poses described. You should try each of the following poses at least once:
- Lotus pose
- Camel pose
- Cobra pose
- Downward Dog pose
- Child pose
- Tree pose
- Crow pose
- Corpse pose (this should always be your last pose)

Step 3
When you are finished trying the different poses, please wait quietly for the teacher to signal that it is time to move to the next station.

STATION 4: Calming Negative Emotions

Materials
- *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* books (5-6 copies)
- Blank cue cards
- Markers
- Large Envelope

Step 1
With your group, please read pages 24-25 in the *Be Mindful! Be Here Now* book.

Step 2
Using a cue card and the markers provided, write down one activity you do that helps you to calm negative emotions when you feel them. You can include illustrations on your card. Please include your name on the front of the card, as your response will be part of a classroom display.

Step 3
When you are finished your card, put it in the large collection envelope. Please wait quietly for the teacher to signal that it is time to move to the next station.
Mindfulness Activity Instructions

STATION 5: Be Your Own Best Friend

Materials
- Be Mindful! Be Here Now books (5-6 copies)
- Blank cue cards
- Markers
- Large Envelope

Step 1
With your group, please read pages 26-27 in the Be Mindful! Be Here Now book.

Step 2
Using a cue card and the markers provided, write down something about you that makes you authentic. You can include illustrations on your card. Please include your name on the front of the card, as your response will be part of a classroom display.

Step 3
When you are finished your card, put it in the large collection envelope. Please wait quietly for the teacher to signal that it is time to move to the next station.

Curriculum Correlations

Common Core State Standards
RI.2.1; RI.4.9
RI.5.7
Ontario Language Arts
Grade 3 Oral Communication:
1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 2.3
Grade 3 Reading:
1.1, 1.6
Grade 4 Oral Communication:
1.1, 1.4, 1.6
Grade 4 Reading:
1.1, 1.5, 1.6
Grade 5 Oral Communication:
1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 2.3
Grade 5 Reading:
1.1, 1.6

The Power of Gratitude

Students will be able to:
- Understand what gratitude is.
- Identify ways to express gratitude.
Assessment
Assess student understanding during lessons using observational and anecdotal notes. Use the Gratitude Journal Entry Checklist to review journal entries for completion and understanding. Review student work to clarify misunderstandings as needed.

Extensions
- If you would like students to delve deeper and include specific answers related to school subjects, ask them to also read pages 18 to 25 in the Creating a Happy School Community Book. Students can then add to their list or adjust responses to include the subjects they feel grateful/happy to learn about. These pages can also be used as a resource for a student who may require more guided learning, or if they are having difficulty creating their list of five things.

Wrap-Up
Ask each group to pick their number one idea to share with the class. On a piece of chart paper, compile these ideas to be displayed in the classroom as a reminder of positive actions or values that help make their classroom a happy community.

Ask each student to record the class list in their own journal as well, so that they can refer back to it as needed.

Gratitude Journal Entry Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>In the journal, student recorded five things that they are grateful for in their school community.</td>
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Additional Comments: ____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Name: ___________________________ Date: ____________________

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Student’s Name: ___________________________ Date: ____________________
LESSON 3
Spreading Kindness like Confetti

Curriculum Correlations

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<tr>
<th>Common Core State Standards</th>
<th>RI.5.7, 5.9</th>
<th>RI.4.1, 4.9</th>
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<td>Ontario Language Arts</td>
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<td>Grade 5 Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6</td>
<td>Grade 5 Reading: 1.4, 1.6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grade 5 Writing: 1.1, 1.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Materials
- Be Your Best Self series (class set)
- Kindness is Cool (assorted pages)
- Circle Cut-Outs Handout
- Class list (one copy per student)
- Envelope (one per student)
- One piece of chart paper or Bristol board per student
- Kindness is Cool book

Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Understand what kindness is, and how to be kind.
- Identify various words and actions that spread kindness in their classroom community.
- Identify important qualities of being a good friend.

Setting the Stage
Prior to the lesson, prepare envelopes for students. Each student gets their own envelope, filled with "confetti" cut out from the Circle Cut-Outs Handout. There should be one piece of confetti for each student in the class. Write each student's name on their envelope, as they will hand them in for assessment before the confetti is distributed. It is suggested to print the confetti circles on different colors of paper, so that students have a mix of colors.

Write the word "kindness" on the board. Create a student-created word web with words that relate to kindness. Ask students to come up to the board, 2 or 3 at a time, and jot down any kindness words they can think of.

When everyone who wanted to record a response has done so, read pages 4-9 in the Kindness is Cool book as a class. The teacher can read to the class, or students can volunteer to read a paragraph.

Activity
Divide your class into groups of 3-4 students. In their groups, students will read pages 16 to 19 in the Kindness is Cool book.

In their groups, students will choose one adult in their school community (such as a teacher, secretary, custodian, principal, etc.) and create a card thanking them for everything they do to help the students at your school.

- Instruct students to include a statement in each card asking the person to continue to spread kindness in their own way, because kindness is contagious!

When each group has finished their card, they will submit them to you to be dispersed. Hold a class discussion and ask students to share how they felt when spreading kindness around. Is it something they enjoyed doing? The answer should be yes!

Explain to students that now that they have spread kindness in the school, they will have the opportunity to spread kindness in their own classroom. Ask students to independently re-read pages 16 to 19 in the Kindness is Cool book.

As students are reading, provide each student the large envelope with their name on it. Ensure each envelope is filled with one piece of confetti per student in the class. Tell students that they will fill out one piece of confetti for each of their classmates. On each piece of confetti, they will write a kindness compliment or a sentiment of gratitude. They must include their classmate's name on the piece of confetti. Hand each student a class list as well, and instruct them to check off each peer's name after they write a kindness compliment to them.

- Remind students to stay away from comments about the "outside" (i.e. "You are pretty" or "I like your hair") and have them focus on statements that focus on the "inside" (i.e. "I appreciated when you walked home from school with me" or "You have a great sense of humor)."

Over the next week, students must fill out one piece of confetti for each of their classmates. Each time they complete a confetti for a classmate, they will check off their name on the class list, and will put the completed confetti back in their envelope.

Extensions
- If a student has difficulty completing a task like this due to the ongoing deadlines, you could set mini-deadlines over the course of the week (i.e. Students must have 5 pieces completed each day).
- You could also leave a display up with sample ideas if students may require some additional assistance and/or direction.
- After students receive their kindness confetti, have them write a journal entry or, in groups, prepare a dramatic presentation that explains or represents how they felt when they read their compliments. Have students focus on writing down or showing the emotions they felt when they read the confetti.

Wrap-Up
After one week has passed, each student will submit their confetti envelope to you. You will then sort each piece of confetti into the envelope of the student it is written about.

- At the end, each named envelope will be full of “Kindness Confetti” that shares what the students’ classmates appreciate about them.

Students will be presented with their envelopes to read through each piece. Then, give them a period to glue the confetti onto a piece of chart paper or Bristol board to take home and display. They can also decorate their chart paper or Bristol board.

Assessment
Students will submit their envelope to you, which you can check for completion. As you sort through the pieces of “Kindness Confetti,” use the Kindness Confetti Checklist to ensure that students have appropriately filled out their confetti. You will know which student wrote each piece as it will be taken from their envelope.
### Kindness Confetti Checkbrick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name:</th>
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**Additional Comments:**

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