

Introduction

Compassionate Citizen is a free educational programme whose purpose is to help children develop respect and compassion for all living beings and learn how to make a difference for animals.

Target Audience

This programme is intended for use by students aged 8 to 12, but we invite educators to adjust the suggested guidelines and activities to the needs of their particular students.

Programme Objectives

Compassionate Citizen is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Enhance students' understanding that all animals are living, feeling beings who deserve our consideration, respect, and protection
- Assist students in recognising that animals often experience the same needs and feelings that they do, which will help them develop empathy for other beings
- Enable students to appreciate animals' fascinating characteristics and abilities
- Help students understand how humans' regard for animals has changed and developed as our knowledge of them has increased
- Empower students by helping them recognise the advancements that we've made as a society in moving away from the use of animals, in addition to showing them how to take responsibility for helping animals in their own lives

Compassionate Citizen can also be used in your efforts to help students meet the following goals:

- Demonstrate command of appropriate grammar and usage when writing or speaking
- Demonstrate command of appropriate punctuation and spelling when writing
- Demonstrate reading comprehension
- Apply critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
- Conduct research

Programme Components

- *Compassionate Citizen* DVD
- Teacher's guide
- Reproducible activity sheets
- Reproducible kindness pledge
- Reproducible colouring sheet
- Classroom poster



Activity Outlines & Answer Guides

▶▶ Animals Are Like Us

Part 1: The Golden Rule and You

For this activity, students are presented with five situations in which they must make a decision to act based on their understanding of animals' needs and feelings. They will be challenged to follow the Golden Rule.

You can introduce this activity by writing the Golden Rule – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” – on the board and discussing it with the class. Ask students, “Have humans treated animals according to this rule, or have they failed to follow it?” Have them give examples and suggest ways to help animals who are not being treated according to this rule.

Answers will vary. Here are some possible responses:

1. **Why this situation doesn't live up to the Golden Rule:** Hitting the bull will hurt him but will not make him move faster, because the cart is too heavy.

What you can do: Suggest that the farmer stop hitting the bull and reduce the load. If the animal appears to have been injured, ask another adult to call a veterinarian or local animal-protection group.

2. **Why this situation doesn't live up to the Golden Rule:** No one has stopped to help the injured bird.

What you can do: Protect the bird from further injury. Ask an adult to take the animal to a veterinarian for treatment, or call a local animal-protection group for help.

3. **Why this situation doesn't live up to the Golden Rule:** The dog's basic needs for food, water, exercise, and companionship are being ignored.

What you can do: Have a parent, teacher, or other adult go with you to notify the owner that the dog appears to be in need of food and water and shouldn't be chained. If the owner doesn't make the necessary changes, contact a local animal-protection group and give as much information about the situation as you can.

4. **Why this situation doesn't live up to the Golden Rule:** Removing the turtle from the forest puts the animal's life in danger.

What you can do: Return the turtle to the forest, and tell your friend why it's wrong to remove animals from their natural habitats.

5. **Why this situation doesn't live up to the Golden Rule:** Birds need to fly free and socialise with other birds, not sit alone in a cage.

What you can do: Tell your cousin that keeping birds in cages makes them sad and that they should be allowed to live in their natural homes.

Part 2: Practising Empathy

This activity is designed to promote students' understanding that animals have much in common with humans and must be treated with respect and compassion, regardless of how different they may seem. It begins by inviting students to read a passage about dogs who protect a human baby. The text illustrates that animals experience concern and empathy for others. The activity then challenges students to imagine and list the feelings of three different animals in specified situations.

Answers will vary. Some possible responses might include the following:

1. Happy, loved, relaxed
2. Anxious, frustrated, sad
3. Scared, sad, lonely

Part 3: I Am an Animal

In this activity, students will write a brief story from the viewpoint of an animal of their choice and think of three wishes that animal might make. They can also illustrate their story with a drawing. You may want to introduce this task by asking them to discuss the feelings of companion animals or stray animals they know. Ask how they can recognise these animals' feelings. How does the animals' behaviour change as circumstances around them change? Then, suggest that other animals might experience similar feelings.

Answers will vary according to students' individual experiences and abilities. Make sure they write their story in the first person but from the animal's point of view.

▶▶ Animals Are Amazing

Part 1: Amazing Animal Facts

Here, students will encounter a number of true and fascinating facts about animals that highlight just how complex and intelligent they are. Before the students start their writing assignment, have a class discussion about the statements. You might read through the list of facts, have students raise their hands when one surprises them, and ask them to share their thoughts about it.

Answers will vary based on students' opinions.

Part 2: Test Your Animal Knowledge

This activity is designed to help students appreciate how unique and complex animals are by introducing them to some additional amazing animal characteristics and abilities. All facts listed here are covered in the *Compassionate Citizen* DVD, so do this activity after watching the video if possible.

Note that all the statements are true. Be sure to review them with students who responded "false" and refer to the video.

Part 3: How Do They Feel?

Here, students imagine that they're a particular wild animal. Have them research that species' habitat and write an impassioned letter to humans about a threat to their home and life.

Answers will vary according to students' individual experiences and abilities as well as their chosen animal. You can have older students write letters to the editor and suggest suitable websites, magazines, or newspapers that might publish them.

▶▶ How You Can Save Animals

Part 1: Be an Animal's Best Friend

For this activity, students will consider the needs, feelings, and thoughts of the animal companions they share their homes with in order to build empathy and better understand their needs. Students should choose a domesticated animal and then list things that the animal likes and dislikes, things that both they and the animal like and dislike, and things that they themselves like and dislike.

Answers will vary. Here is one possible response:

A dog likes:	We both like:	I like:
Chasing a ball	Eating a delicious meal	Playing video games

Use this opportunity to discuss the importance of adopting a dog or cat from an animal shelter or the street, if their families are looking to welcome one into their homes, as well as the importance of being certain that they can meet the animal's needs. Many students encourage their parents to buy animals such as fish, mice, rats, hamsters, rabbits, birds, and even cats and dogs from pet stores without realising that they suffer in the pet trade, which treats them like objects rather than living beings and fails to meet their very specific needs.

Part 2: Changing Times, Changing Minds

This activity presents students with a variety of ways in which animals are used by humans today and challenges them to think of existing or new alternatives to using animals for these purposes.

Answers will vary. Some possible responses include the following:

1. Using a tractor
2. Making shoes out of canvas or any other non-animal material
3. Rescuing animals from the circus, sending them to reputable sanctuaries where they can live out their days in peace, and supporting animal-free entertainment options

Part 3: Animal Overpopulation = Sad Maths

Here, students will calculate the number of animals who may be born when humans don't have their dog or cat companions sterilised by a veterinarian. Through this activity, they'll gain a better understanding of the homeless-animal overpopulation crisis and the solutions.

$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ + 6 \\ \hline 7 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ + 18 \\ \hline 24 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ 36 \\ + 54 \\ \hline 96 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ 54 \\ + 162 \\ \hline 222 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ 24 \\ 96 \\ + 222 \\ \hline 349 \end{array}$
7 (TOTAL A)	24 (TOTAL B)	96 (TOTAL C)	222 (TOTAL D)	349 (GRAND TOTAL)

Answers to the final two questions will vary, but make sure students understand that having animals sterilised and always adopting them from animal shelters or the street rather than buying them from pet shops or breeders are the best ways to help solve the homeless-animal crisis. And be sure to tell them that this doesn't apply only to cats and dogs – the same is true for other animals commonly purchased at pet shops. By adopting, students can save lives instead of supporting businesses that profit from bringing even more animals into an already-overpopulated world.

