

## WELCOME BACK TO THE REASON YOU BECAME AN EDUCATOR.

Like most of your colleagues, you chose this career—this calling—because you want to make a positive difference in the lives of your students. This FISH! For Schools Classroom Experience Guide was created to help you make that important difference.

Imagine an environment where students are fully present for their academic work and for their classmates' emotional needs. An environment where they treat peers and adults with respect, and have fun in a way that adds to the excitement of learning, rather than taking away from it. Building a supportive and effective culture is what FISH! For Schools is all about.

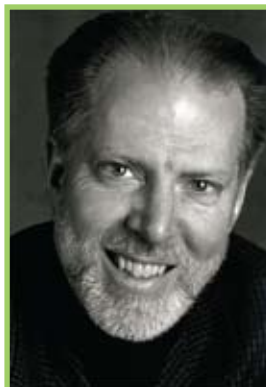
Created and tested by educators, FISH! For Schools is based on research and best practices in social and emotional learning, character education, classroom management and human behavior. At the heart of FISH! For Schools are four powerfully simple practices—Be There, Play, Make Their Day and Choose Your Attitude—that have transformed people and organizations around the world. These practices are known as The FISH! Philosophy. (For more information on research, educator experiences and The FISH! Philosophy, please visit [www.fishforschools.com](http://www.fishforschools.com).)

FISH! For Schools is not about adding more things to your already full plate. Instead, it's meant to fit into your existing curriculum and, over time, reduce unproductive behavior—freeing more space for learning, discovery, achievement, creativity and fun.

There is no greater gift than preparing young people for lives of learning and contribution. Thank you for giving that gift to your students every day. I hope you will find FISH! For Schools a valuable ally in achieving your noble goals.



John Christensen  
CEO, ChartHouse Learning



## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE GUIDE

This guide is a series of experiences (lessons) designed to help educators and students make The FISH! Philosophy real and relevant. When the four practices—Be There, Play, Make Their Day and Choose Your Attitude—come to life in a classroom, the result is a cohesive culture focused on supporting learning.

### FISH! PHILOSOPHY BASICS

The FISH! Philosophy is based on four essential practices:

#### Be There

Be emotionally present for people. It's a powerful message of respect that strengthens relationships.

- Be fully present.
- Listen to understand, not just to reply.
- Take action to meet people's needs, based on awareness.

For students, Be There can be as simple as listening attentively or as deep as making a genuine emotional connection. Explore their ideas about and experiences with Be There and help them make it an intentional way of being.

#### Play

Tap into your natural way of being creative and having fun. Play allows curiosity and enthusiasm to flow in childlike wonder without being childish.

- Build trust. Without it, people don't feel safe.
- Create a physical and emotional environment conducive to Play.
- Encourage freedom to try new approaches.
- Be curious—about everything.

Play is not separate from the “work” you do in school; it is the way you approach that work. You don't have to have a comedian's sense of humor to be Play-full, just the passion to throw yourself into whatever you are doing and the lightheartedness to enjoy all parts of your day, even the challenges.

#### Make Their Day

Find special ways to connect with everyone you encounter, for no other reason than to serve them in a meaningful way.

- Be selfless.

## INTRODUCTION

- Be of service.
- Be authentic.

Often regarded as the simplest of the practices, Make Their Day can have great impact on students, especially those who perceive themselves as powerless. By intentionally making the day of others—often through appreciation or recognition—each of us learns that we do have an impact on the world and can make a positive difference if we choose.

“Nothing ever becomes  
real till it is experienced.”  
— JOHN KEATS

### Choose Your Attitude

Be responsible for consciously choosing how you want to show up in the world, no matter the situation.

- Be aware of your impact. Is it the one you want?
- Consciously choose your response to what life throws in your path. Live in alignment with who you say you want to be.

Choose Your Attitude is not an order or admonition, but a reminder to yourself, “I can and do choose how I show up in the world.” Because attitudes are neutral—the same attitude may be harmful in one situation but beneficial in another—each of us must determine what impact we desire and then ask ourselves if the attitude we are choosing is helping us achieve our goal.

These ideas are the basis of The FISH! Philosophy. You and your students will find your own words to express them and your own way to live them. We refer to these ideas as practices because practice requires action, and like anything else you practice, you can always improve. With experience, your conversations and actions will take on new meanings, especially as your students grow and mature.

### STRONG RELATIONSHIPS LEAD TO BETTER LEARNING

“Teachers who had high-quality relationships with their students had 31% fewer discipline problems, rule violations and related problems over a year’s time than did teachers who did not have high-quality relationships with their students.” (Marzano & Marzano, *Educational Leadership*, September 2003, 6-14)

When our classrooms are based on strong, caring relationships, students feel connected; they are much more likely to care about themselves and the community of which they know they are a part. According to William Glasser’s Choice Theory

## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE GUIDE

(1998), human behavior is guided by five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. These needs are the source of internal motivation. The FISH! Philosophy supports these basic needs through activities and conversation focused on emotional safety, trust and respect.

As students put these qualities into practice, individual character development is enhanced. Research on character education states that to be most effective, it must be integrated—present in music class, the halls, the office and throughout the school day. FISH! For Schools is a framework that applies to relationships, behavior and even how content curriculum is delivered, so that presence can be felt and experienced in all areas. The impact is far-reaching. Although FISH! For Schools is not specifically a bullying, discipline or management program, it positively affects each by building community, providing strategies and enhancing skills.

The FISH! Philosophy is not something else educators have to do. It is how we do what we already do.

## INTRODUCTION

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

#### STRUCTURE

The Classroom Experience is divided into six units:

1. Chart Your Course (Page 13)
2. Be There (Page 23)
3. Play (Page 31)
4. Make Their Day (Page 39)
5. Choose Your Attitude (Page 45)
6. Keep It Going (Page 55)

Each unit has a series of experiences. They are designed to be done in order, but you know your students best and should modify them as you see fit.

Feel free to play with the experiences. With a little bit of personal flair, each of these 25 - 30 minute lessons can be integrated into the content areas you teach. Each experience can stand alone, but it's best if learning and practices are referenced throughout the day, not only by classroom teachers but by specialists, counselors, food service personnel, custodians—everyone who comes in contact with students.

#### FORMAT

As you look through this guide, you'll find that a consistent format is provided for each experience.

These boxes contain helpful hints, anecdotes from FISH! teachers, and thought-provoking quotes. Many of these are excerpted from *Schools of FISH!*, a book about educators who have brought The FISH! Philosophy into their schools.

#### Experience Number and Title

**Time**—An estimate of how long this experience might typically last. As you add your personal flair, you may find that the time needed will change.

**Objective(s)**—To help with your planning and maintain focus.

**Materials**—Most materials, except for markers, butcher paper, scissors, etc., are included with The Classroom Experience Guide. Three discs are located in the back of this guide:

- The *Student FISH!* DVD
- The Graphics and Reproducibles CD: PDF files of the reproducible items needed for the experiences as well as other useful tools. Feel free to print as many copies of each as needed.
- FISH! Music CD—Original songs about The FISH! Philosophy. Instrumental-only versions are also provided for background music and for when the students master the lyrics.

## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE GUIDE

Accompanying this guide are a set of three write-on/wipe-off posters, a deck of Situation Cards (the purple rubber binder goes around the deck), Pete the Puppet and Pete the Perch, all for use with designated experiences. There also is a large FISH! Philosophy Four Practices poster to display in your room.

**Process**—Step-by-step directions to help you bring each experience to life with your students. Feel free to inject your personality, humor, costumes or props to make these experiences exciting both for you and your students. Our goal was to give enough information so you would know what to do, but to leave you the freedom to be creative and engaged.

**Evaluation**—Each experience concludes with an evaluation. In most instances this is informal—a simple question to check for understanding or an invitation to share your discoveries with a guest. Additionally, there are a few formal, survey-type assessments to help you track progress and clarify the impact of your class's efforts.

**Extension(s)**—Brief suggestions for extending the learning into a variety of areas of the curriculum or varying the challenge of the experience to suit the needs of learners with different skills or knowledge.

**Emphasis Notations**—In order to assist in planning, and to help you find the best experiences for your classroom's needs, we've included Emphasis Notations in the lower outer margin. In addition to its primary purpose, transforming classroom culture, each experience in FISH! For Schools also emphasizes Character, Community and/or Social Skills Development.

Character  
Community  
Social Skills

### SHARED OWNERSHIP, SAFETY AND SUCCESS

FISH! is unique. No two classrooms will be the same. FISH! classrooms will even look different from year to year simply because of the unique blend of students in each class, their experiences and how they each live FISH!. Students who are involved in the creation of behavioral standards will take your classroom to amazing levels of interaction and responsibility!

## INTRODUCTION

The same is true of the physical environment. Take some time to consider how it reflects the four practices, the culture you are trying to create and the idea of shared ownership. Students are more likely to care for something they create, so engage them in the process of creating your learning environment. Most importantly, by sharing in the decision-making, they become partners with you in creating a physically and emotionally safe space for learning.

Once safety is established as the norm, students become free to raise their hands, offer opinions and ask for help—not only from the teacher but from one another. It is this shared ownership, using the common language of The FISH! Philosophy, that leads to greater interpersonal and academic success.

### CONNECTING HOME AND SCHOOL

FISH! For Schools is about building a community with parents as well as students. Invite parents to learn what you are trying to accomplish with The FISH! Philosophy, and ask them to help you whenever possible with FISH! activities. As you create a partnership, your collective ability to handle learning or discipline issues will improve. To get you started, there is a sample parent letter (Parent\_Letter.doc) on the Graphics and Reproducibles CD.

### ASSESSMENT

If you are interested in assessing the effect of FISH! For Schools on both individuals and your classroom culture, have students complete the Student Survey (Survey\_Student.pdf) before you introduce The FISH! Philosophy. Then have students take the same survey again after several months of FISH! For Schools experiences. This survey, created specifically for grades K-2, will show you and your students the impact created by talking about and living The FISH! Philosophy throughout the year. There is also a Teacher Survey (Survey\_Teacher.pdf) designed to help you assess your classroom from an adult perspective.

### LAST WORD

FISH! is an invitation. As teacher David St. Germain once said, “The easiest way to kill it is to mandate it.” The converse is also true: The easiest way to bring The FISH! Philosophy to life is to offer it and allow others to choose to participate. This act requires a collaborative way of working, and the belief that given options, responsibility and inspiration, students will choose to co-create a culture that encourages relationship building, enhances trust and increases learning.

We invite you to begin your journey with FISH! For Schools. You are changing the world every day, and there is nothing more important.

## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE GUIDE

### CHARACTER EDUCATION ALIGNMENT

According to the Character Education Partnership, the following eleven principles define quality character education programs. The FISH! For Schools curriculum is not exclusively a character education program, but one that provides a solid foundation for schools engaged in improving the character of their students.

| ELEVEN PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CHARACTER EDUCATION   | FISH! FOR SCHOOLS MATERIALS |                             |                  |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
|  | Guided Journey              | Classroom Experience Guides | Schools of FISH! |
| <b>Principle 1</b><br>Promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.   | ●                           | ●                           | ●                |
| <b>Principle 2</b><br>Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior.   | ●                           | ●                           | ●                |
| <b>Principle 3</b><br>Uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive and effective approach to character development.  | ○                           | ○                           | na               |
| <b>Principle 4</b><br>Creates a caring school community.   | ●                           | ●                           | ○                |
| <b>Principle 5</b><br>Provides students with opportunities for moral action.   | ○                           | ●                           | ○                |
| <b>Principle 6</b><br>Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character and helps them to succeed.  | ○                           | ○                           | ○                |
| <b>Principle 7</b><br>Strives to foster students’ self-motivation.   | ○                           | ●                           | ○                |
| <b>Principle 8</b><br>Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students. | ●                           | ●                           | ●                |
| <b>Principle 9</b><br>Fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.  | ●                           | ●                           | ●                |
| <b>Principle 10</b><br>Engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.  | ●                           | ●                           | ○                |
| <b>Principle 11</b><br>Evaluates the character of the school, the school staff’s functioning as character educators and the extent to which students manifest good character.  | ○                           | ●                           | na               |

● Directly   ○ Indirectly   na Does Not Apply