





SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS FOR DEMOCRACY

Activities - Character strengths

The Gift of Strengths

 **Objective:** to identify, express and celebrate strengths in others

 **Duration:** 15 to 30 minutes

 **Pre-requisites:** understanding of the concept of character strengths

 **Organization:** in large or small groups

Materials:

A list of character strengths projected or inventoried beforehand by the students.

Procedure

Each student is asked to describe and “give” at least one strength in each of his or her classmates, describing that strength and how that classmate demonstrated it. For example, a student might choose the strength of kindness and explain how his or her classmate has been kind to him or her or someone else recently and how that helped.

The strengths are written on slips of paper and placed in a cup with the student’s name on it: their resource cup. To avoid frustration and to increase the fun, you can invite students to offer strengths to peers outside their group, including the teacher and other adults. The cups can remain on a shelf or desk for a period of time — a day or week— and strengths can be added. At the end of the allotted time, everyone leaves with their gift of strength.

It is important to fully illustrate and describe the strength in question. Also, expression of emotions experienced while offering or receiving the strength— through words or gestures— should be encouraged as much as possible. Each student is thus recognized through the prism of his or her strengths, which he or she receives as gifts. In turn, the student consolidates his or her self-knowledge.

This work on strengths can also be organized on a collective level: what are the strengths of our class, of our school, of such and such a project? What strengths will we need to carry it out, how can we develop such and such a strength in class or in a team, etc.? As we go along, we can organize a tree of strengths with the names of the strengths in the trunk and illustrations of these strengths on the leaves, etc.

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With the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

The creation of these resources has been (partially) funded by the ERASMUS+ grant program of the European Union under grant no. 2019-1-DE01-KA203-005003.

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