

Habits of Sages



A Full-Circle Learning Humanities (Literature/Poetry) Curriculum

For Secondary Schools

With Integrated Links to Social Studies and Math/Economics and Music

Companion Text: *The African Child*, by Camara Laye

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Habits of Sages:

Africa

Appropriate for Intermediate through High School Grades

Suggested Length of Unit: Up to one school year

A Full-Circle Learning Humanities Curriculum

Integrating Literature, Poetry, Music and Social Studies

Companion Text: *The Dark Child*, by Camara Laye

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Preface

Young people today yearn to learn – and also to earn. They realize the need for the practical commodities of life. Sometimes world conditions force them to grow up quickly. This curriculum strives to also help students develop the goals and identities of Sages – to strive to derive wisdom from a lifelong cycle of learning, observing and doing.

Often it takes many years to realize the value of absorbing the deeper meaning of life’s messages. We suggest that beyond this curriculum, teachers encourage a broad diet of student reading-- about past and present, about human experiences both universal and specific, based on the premise that interweaving reflective life experience with lessons learned advances the development of wisdom. Reading brings vicarious experience. Classroom activities can lend perspective. Action converts these to wisdom. For the student who extracts from literature and history this deeper relevance, the emergence of character strengths often occurs over time, bringing peace of mind, well-being and a deep sense of meaningful participation in society. In the words of a sage, “...Man's glory lieth in his knowledge, his upright conduct, his praiseworthy character, his wisdom rather than in nationality or rank.”

Integrated education – a path planted with seeds of relevancy and lit with life goals— can connect the disparate threads of learning required for true maturation in an often troubled world. As students acquire the capacity for reason and decision making, the guidelines for interpreting their texts and applying their course assignments can infuse them with critical thinking skills, a desire for transformative thinking and with the habit of reflection sometimes overlooked in preference of memorization alone.

While still pursuing a full range of studies, learners whose teachers fully apply and model the Full-Circle Learning approach can offer them a tool they can use long past the year when they forget the details on a particular page of text. This rare tool – wisdom -- comes with the benefits of time, experience, reflection *and a truly dedicated teacher*. For the duration of this course, you will serve as the role model to the Sages.

Teacher's Basic Planning Procedures

- Step 1.** Review the introductory section of this curriculum.
- Step 2.** Read through the supporting content material in the Suggested Unit Plans.
- Step 3.** Make copies of materials of the Teaching Tools, as needed. Using the blank unit plan template provided, write notes about any major changes, variations or additions you want to make in the projects and your service goals in the unit. For example, in some cases, you may want to have students help identify community needs before finalizing the details of a project.
- Step 4.** If you know of any locally required learning standards or educational resources you need or want to insert at various points in the unit, to enhance the learning process, note them on the unit plan template. In all other areas, just indicate the page numbers in this book that you will refer to for the content you need.
- Step 5.** You have already read through the unit and considered the end from the beginning. Now continue with this “backwards planning process” to consider the length of time it will take to complete the community service and deep thinking outcomes – the long-term goals within the unit. Assume that student participation and current events may add layers to the project. Identify the target dates for completing the major projects, factoring in the learning activities that need to occur in preparation for the project, as well as the scheduling needed with community partners.
- Step 6.** Calendar your unit plan based on the Full-Circle Learning Unit format and record it on a blank calendar page. A template is provided to cover 9 months.
- Step 7.** Use the Teacher Resource Sheets as needed in class. Student Resource Sheets may be duplicated when possible or written out on the board.
- Step 8.** Each week, make a list of any materials you will need to best facilitate the activities. Use the daily/weekly lesson plan template as an optional tool, or use the daily planning tools recommended by your school.
- Step 9.** Prepare notes or a complete lesson plan for each day's class period, based on your long-term planning. Draw upon texts, community experts, and other resources available to you and your students. You will feel confident knowing you can see the positive end results from the start.

Teaching and Planning Tools

About Planning

This section includes helpful tools for teachers to apply during the planning process. Review this section and use the materials to customize each unit. The final Chapter also offers support strategies for building a school culture that aligns with the goals for curriculum design.

The priorities and goals of education vary slightly for each educational system and school. Subjects, schedules and strategies may be weighted according to the value system embraced within a specific learning community. Yet teachers and parents around the world tend to recognize certain universal values that relate to the health, happiness, intellectual development and well-being of both the individual child and the community.

This curriculum encourages teachers to adapt and customize the projects to the local region, to empower students to improve their own communities and to emphasize required organizational priorities and timelines. Most teachers find it helpful to have a guide to creating a pacing plan over the course of a unit and over the course of a year. These plans help them to address the need to add chronological steps within the process, or to help students scaffold their knowledge, reasoning capacity and application of skills.

While a teacher must see the end goal before preparing the first lesson, the 13-S Step template shows the order in which the *students* experience a curriculum. It demonstrates the outcome rather than the order in which the teacher conducts his or her planning steps.

The most effective Full-Circle Learning teachers, even those very gifted at spontaneously teaching “in the moment,” will start by planning. The following factors will commonly guide the planning process:

- a. age-specific learning goals;
- b. human needs that students can address in the broader community, and the related community resources to help address them;
- c. goals for linking the character goal to these identified community outcomes and academic outcomes;

- d. specific activities teachers adapt from the curriculum using the 13-S learning unit template;
- e. a plan book or calendar to schedule the activities, bring about the learning objectives and complete the projects over the course of the unit;
- f. a pacing plan that extends over a month, a semester or a year, to incorporate all the units in the curriculum.

As you plan, remember to factor in time for students to teach and re-teach needed skills (for example, time for revising and enhancing written work in advance of a community project, time to review math functions needed for a statistical chart, etc.).

The series of steps in Exhibit A shows how a teacher integrates a particular habit-of-heart theme or desired life skill to extend its relevancy through all the academic and creative content areas, culminating in the service projects. The teacher leads students toward a sense of motivation and accomplishment that transcends a test score alone and helps them contribute to the well-being of others through a well-placed, purposeful application of skills that underlies moral instincts and habits. The teacher's goal, then, is to inculcate the deep gratification that comes not only with a job well done, but a job applied in pursuit of a meaningful life.

At certain times during the human maturation process, this process looms as an essential need:

- In early childhood, when the brain grows quickly and the innate tendency toward altruism can benefit most from the nurturing of this link between intellectual and emotional development of traits such as empathy, kindness and cooperation.
- During the elementary school years, when personality traits become habits and cultural values, and when children seek boundaries and confirmations that help them define how to measure the results of their life's work.
- During the adolescent years, as young people increasingly look for role models beyond their own family members; they increasingly seek individual identity and purpose, while relying even more on the peer group values; based on neurological research, they are hard-wired to create bonds with role models who show them how to live a meaningful life.*

Students emerging from childhood to adulthood especially need the infrastructure of a curriculum that allows them to take initiative while still respecting core community values. Studies show that they remain engaged when they experience a sense of belonging within a positive peer culture while exploring their capacities to contribute something valuable based on personal strengths.

The secondary curricula for Full-Circle Learning factors in the sociological perspectives of these youth while maintaining the pursuit of purpose as a high priority for education that motivates learning and personal growth, unites communities, and advances civilization in life-affirming ways.

Read each unit carefully well before the day you enter class to present the materials. Make a unit plan and collect any materials needed to present it. Collaborate with other teachers on your team and reproduce the pages you need to plan meaningful activities based on the supplementary books and library or computer resources available to you and your students. The future is already here. You are looking at it when you enter the classroom and see the faces of your students. Make the most of it.

Exhibit A: The 13-S Steps

1. Sense it.
Present an anticipatory set or attention-getting activity that piques curiosity or connects to prior knowledge, to explain the significance of the habit-of-heart. Tap as many of the visceral senses as possible. Emotional impact or positive memories can also provide sensory experience. Let the process supersede the formula, and be sensitive to the psychological proclivities of the group. For instance, if a classroom of students has been traumatized by a shared experience in their community, an appropriate activity for Step One might be an activity to allow students to rebuild bonds or to express something restorative about their shared experience, as it might offer the emotionally healing act that moves them forward as a learning family with a sense of purpose. (Do not ask students to relive a trauma and do not present an unpleasant experience for this introductory step.) Connect joyful or enlightening sensory activity with the context of the habit-of-heart projects you will pursue throughout the unit. (See examples within the curriculum.)
2. See it.
Write the habit-of-heart on the board in large letters.
3. Say it.
Clap out the number of syllables. Have the students clap with you.
4. Synchronize it.
Give the syllables in the word different pitches and sing or chant the word together, to help the students remember the word (or let a volunteer offer an appropriate melody). Synchronizing pitch and syllabic sounds is especially effective with long words.
5. Shape it.
Draw the shape of the word around the written word. Have all students write the word on their own paper (or for young preschoolers, provide a paper with the word prewritten) and draw the shape around it. Explain that this box is not part of the written word but will help them remember how to spell it.
6. Symbolize it.
Demonstrate an action associated with the word. Have the class practice this action. Let students practice other actions associated with the word. Challenge students to draw a symbol next to the word that will help them remember what it means. You may offer several symbols as suggestions.
7. Show it.
Assign role plays on the conflict bridge associated with the word. Using puppets or dolls may help shy children overcome their fears.
8. Storytell it.
Read aloud a story about the trait, engaging age-appropriate learning skills among the students. Discuss how the story would have ended differently if certain characters would have used the habit-of-heart

differently. Also use guided imagery to help students envision the quality's application in their lives. (Literacy take-home books may be available for the youngest preschoolers.)

9. Sing it.

Teach students a Habit-of-Heart song about the current habit. Students will rehearse it frequently, for enjoyment as well as for performance, with an emphasis on the idea that music is a gift they give to teach others what they have learned. (In a preschool class, the shyest students may hide behind props they wave and still feel they are participating.) English language learners will focus on identifying words on the song sheet as they listen to the music.

10. Standardize it.

This step often expands into days, weeks or months of activity, as you integrate the unit theme into all the standards-based academic content areas and arts-based areas, based on the objectives and learning outcomes expected in your educational program. Teach the context of basic concepts within social studies, science, language arts and math or economics. Apply process-based learning and project-based learning where possible, as suggested in the lesson plans or as your age-appropriate content suggests.

These artifacts created with new knowledge may become tools to teach others as students implement service activities that occur in the following steps. If yours is not a full-day school but an enrichment program, this step may be referred to as the Supplement it step because it can change in length based on the schedule, content areas and flexibility of the educational program.

11. Send it.

Students learn a quote or learning concept about the habit and make pictures that depict the concept. Send the pictures to international pen pals or friends and ask for feedback or provide a joint service goal as the outcome of the mailing. If possible, include photos of the students and artifacts of their learning, and ask for information about the other students.

12. Share it.

Students have already experienced global connections on a small scale. They now need to see the value of their teaching and learning in their own community. They sing and present their learning and give handmade gifts to an audience of adopted grandparents or to someone in the community who needs their service, or they teach the concepts to students in another classroom by singing or pantomiming songs and displaying artwork. (In one school, the youngest students taught the older students their songs periodically, and vice versa.) In a school or setting where all students are presenting, students may participate in a school-wide museum or other off-site service field trip. Also have students return their Habits-of-Heart homework depicting how they practiced their learning at home.

13. Sustain it.

Allow circle time or “council time.” Older students may pass an object to take turns speaking, or they may write in a journal. Discuss the positive impact of the project in terms of community change. How will the internal and external successes of the projects help to sustain the habit-of-heart in the community and in the individual, through transformation of character and joint participation in enhancing the wellbeing of the human family? Consider further connections between project-based classroom content and character lessons with service to humanity as the outcome. When this reflection time produces a sense of sustained commitment to the habit-of-heart and to the integrated content skills and wisdom learned in the unit, you are ready to proceed to the next unit.



Matching Community Needs and Resources

(This sample shows how teachers brainstormed the links between needs, resources and educational requirements. Reproduce these blank pages for personal brainstorming use as you read the chapters that follow and customize for local use.)

Month	Habit-of-Heart and Key Integrated Academic/Arts Goals or Outcomes	Broader Community Needs for Service Related to Themes	Share It and Send It Steps	Potential Contacts (Guest presenters, field trip hosts, mail or email recipients, etc.)
Example:	<p>Theme: Aspiration</p> <p>Skills: Humanities– Research skills Writing persuasive letters</p> <p>Research of current events shows context between daily life and economic structure</p> <p>Economics/Math– Understanding economy; co-ops, microloans</p> <p>Art: Murals as math to honor skills that build community</p>	<p>Need for jobs</p> <p>Need to upgrade infrastructure</p> <p>Need higher standard of living for the under-employed</p>	<p>Current events to explore gaps between needs and jobs and to identify new opportunities; Letters to civic leaders</p> <p>After chapter, identifying skills, goals and aspirations; collect ideas through wisdom exchange</p> <p>Create class co-op with new skills; give help to creating hope for all Post public mural to honor contributors to</p>	<p>Guests: Civil engineers, college students, business owners</p> <p>Field Trip: Public facility where mural will be posted.</p>

			community	
Month	Habit-of-Heart and Key Integrated Academic/Arts Goals	Broader Community Needs for Service Related to Themes	Share It and Send It Steps	Potential Contacts (Guest presenters, field trip hosts, mail or email recipients, etc.)
September				
October				
November				

December				
January				
February				
March				

April				
May				
June				

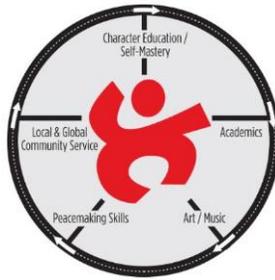
Backwards Planning and the 13-S Steps

Backwards planning helps teachers see the end from the beginning. Even though the steps appear in chronological order, based on what the students experience, the teacher's process is just the opposite. We must envision the finish line before taking the first step.

To begin this process, first look at the content of the unit plan and think about academic standards you need to teach over the course of the unit. Some ideas you will immediately see ways to implement and others you will want to adapt uniquely for your learning community or region. Note these special adaptations such as unique community needs and special human resources on the resource sheet called Community Needs and Resources. Starting with the habit-of-heart theme and the service ideas in your unit, where will you need to customize? What type of share it and send it projects from the curriculum need adjustments to best help students exercise their skills while enhancing the transformation of the community? Which of these projects strengthens the current habit-of-heart? How might the project integrate relevant skills in multiple content areas? Social Studies, Science or Literature often provide a starting point, while Math often reinforces supportive skills for a project. (For one project, you may focus on math reasoning; for another statistics, pie charts or bar graphs may help advocate for a cause; for another, students may build using by employing geometry concepts, etc.)

Check the curriculum first for ideas. Use this note-taking resource only as needed, to customize. Once you have a strong idea, identify your Share-It and Send-It steps. These project ideas may come directly from this Full-Circle Learning curriculum, but they will necessarily involve customization in terms of the details; or they may be completely customized to your local needs. Supporting music might come from a Full-Circle Learning source (CD or download) or may come from local resources. Introducing students to many genres, over time, can expand their understanding of the universal nature of artistic and musical expression as service to society.

Once you have identified your service project plans, you are ready to plan for the other 13-S steps. Sometimes these steps will shift based on the changes you have made in your particular service project, but customize the concepts as needed. Although the 13-S form may be just a template to more specifically plan the projects listed in the curriculum, it can also help you adapt the plan for specific community needs and available resources. Know that the curriculum is here for you to draw from as needed, adding or adapting to allow the teacher, student and community participation that make it appropriate for your learning community. **If possible, reproduce the following pages to ensure that you will have one template per habit-of-heart unit.**



Template for Full-Circle Learning Unit Plan

13-S FORMULA

Copy and use this template to make notations on your overall plans for each unit of study.

HABIT-OF-HEART: _____

DATES: _____

COMMUNITY NEED/S STUDENTS WILL ADDRESS: _____

DESCRIPTION OF STEP	<u>NOTES TO GUIDE PREPARATION</u>
<p>SENSE IT. Present an anticipatory set or attention-getting activity that piques curiosity, links to ultimate service goals, or connects to prior knowledge to explain the significance of the habit-of-heart, using as many of the senses as possible. Follow up with descriptions or examples to demonstrate the meaning of the word.</p>	
<p>SEE IT. Write the habit-of-heart on the board in large letters.</p>	

<p>SAY IT. Clap out the number of syllables. Students clap along.</p> <p>SYNCHRONIZE IT. Students give the syllables in the word different pitches and sing or chant the word together. Synchronizing pitch and syllabic sounds is especially effective with long words. The chant becomes a cheer to use when students are practicing the habit-of-heart.</p>	
<p>SHAPE IT. Draw the shape of the word around the written word in a way that suggests a visual metaphor. Conduct a kinesthetic activity to reinforce the meaning, such as building a human train to represent cooperation. Have younger students write the word and draw the shape to promote word recognition and to reinforce the concept.</p>	
<p>SYMBOLIZE IT. Have students agree on an action associated with the word. (Prohibit gang signs.) Have the class practice this action. When calling the class to show the habit, instead of using the cheer, a student or teacher can silently use this gesture.</p>	
<p>STORYTELL IT. Use real-life applications, current events, examples in recent assignments, role plays or literary passages that present opportunities to discuss the habit-of-heart. Discuss how the plot might have ended differently if certain characters had applied or not applied the habit-of-</p>	

<p>heart. Students imagine the most positive endings.</p>	
<p>SHOW IT.</p> <p>Collect examples of relevant applications from curriculum, current events and school culture.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign hypothetical demonstrations on the conflict bridge, using interpersonal, community-based and international conflicts. 2. Use guided imagery to help all students envision the application of the quality in their lives. 3. Reinforce the habit by making Habits-of-Heart homework a tradition. (Students show/describe how they practiced the habit. Parents participate.) 	<p><u>Describe the Conflict Participants:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1.</u> <u>2.</u> <u>3.</u> <p><u>Guided Imagery Theme (repeated twice weekly)</u></p>
<p>SING IT</p> <p>Rehearse a Habit-of-Heart song about the current habit, emphasizing that music serves two purposes, as a gift of joy and comfort or as a tool to inspire action or advocacy</p>	<p><u>Song/s:</u></p>
<p>STANDARDIZE IT (SUPPLEMENT STANDARDS-BASED LEARNING.)</p> <p>Look for thematic threads of continuity in core content areas. You will find suggestions throughout this book. Here, students express the habit through research, study and action. Apply process-based learning and project-based learning where possible. Use graphic organizers, to connect thematic and academic content. Integrate two relevant ideas</p>	<p><u>In the spaces that follow, write page numbers of activities to emphasize or key words of activities you will add to unit.</u></p>

<p>to the end service goal or to the objects being produced as a service to society. Apply authentic outcomes wherever possible, as students create artifacts that become gifts to honor those working in the fields or products used for advocacy or problem-solving.</p>	
<p>SEND IT. Create a wisdom exchange with another class. Seek information or send congratulations from a research facility. Mail or email a wisdom exchange to a global classroom collaborator. Write to newspapers, professionals or officials, in reference to a service goal.</p> <p>For global collaborators, if possible, include photos or drawings of the students and artifacts of their project, telling of its impact and relationship to the habit-of-heart. Challenge the distant brothers and sisters to share ideas and to join them as they address the issue. (i.e.poverty, deforestation, energy concerns.)</p>	<p><u>Service Objective and Learning Goal Reinforced:</u></p>
<p>SHARE IT. By now, students may have already experienced a distant connection with the human family. They also need to witness the value of their teaching and learning in their own community. They teach or advocate for a cause or share something they have created with their knowledge to help the community. They may sing and present to an audience they are honoring on a service-learning field trip. Alternatively, in some cases, local service occurs onsite, by bringing a guest presenter in or by creating an in-school museum.</p>	

SUSTAIN IT

This step helps students reflect and recognize the value of their unit-long efforts to enhance the wellbeing of those served. (It is not the project steps being sustained but the lifelong commitment to the habit-of-heart. However, when necessary—for example, if you grew a community garden--you may also need to discuss whether any follow-up steps are needed on the completed projects.)

To “sustain the habit,” conduct a layer cake activity or a discussion with a talking stick or a shared pair activity or a journal writing activity or all the above. Challenge students to first layer responses and then to write responses as they identify the potential positive impact of the Share It and Send It steps on the local and/or global community. Give them a chance to reflect on their own personal growth and especially to discuss their group impact on community transformation.

Commit the class to make the habit-of-heart an ongoing part of their code-of-ethics and pattern of life as an altruist/change agent/ sage/ hero/ ambassador/helper/vision seeker/humanitarian, etc.

After this step, the class is ready for the next habit-of heart unit.

Activity for Reflecting on Community Impact:

Challenge for Sustaining the Habit:

The Habits of Sages

Learning Unit 1: Presentation Steps

Sense It Step

- Before students come to class, draw the days of a calendar on the board or else cover up an existing calendar, clock or sun dial with paper, fabric or a blanket.
- In class, explain that you will show students the most valuable gift they can imagine.
- First they must close their eyes and wait. Be silent and let them wait for a full minute or two before they try to guess what it is. They can use all their senses except sight but cannot move from where they are nor open their eyes.
- Before you share the answer, remove the veil from the calendar, clock or sun dial. Tell them you have just shared with them the gift of time, not by letting them observe its measuring device but by sharing those moments of contemplation together.
- Read the poem called ***The Price***, which appears as the first poem within the resource section **Poetry: A Universal Language**. (You may want to write it on the board or make copies for students.)
- Elicit ideas about the meaning of the poem. Share that it was written in 1971, when the poet was 16 years old.
- Ask, Why must wisdom be bought with time? Do students feel wealthier than they did yesterday, if time is such a precious gift? Does it matter how we spend our days, or does wisdom accumulate automatically?

See It. Say It.

Write the word *Sage* on the board. Say it together.

Define the word *sage*. Although we generally think of a sage as an elderly person, the main aspect of a sage comes from his or her wisdom. Sages often become wise counselors because of the things they have experienced and thought about, the qualities they have developed and the wisdom they have gained. Challenge the students to think of some Sages known through their own oral traditions or world history.

Explain that this unit will focus on just a few of the habits of sages. We will write in weekly journals and think about our personal journey as we come of age. We will consider whether we are using our time wisely to combine our inner and outer strengths, for this is how a sage develops wisdom.

Because we will use literature as the basis for our study, we will cover one habit over the course of every two chapters.

Synchronize It.

Develop a chant based on the word Sage. This can become an introduction to later chants you use as you reintroduce the Synchronize it step throughout the book.

Choose several students to each sing the word on several different pitches. Sing them in succession to a rhythm of your choice. Syncopate the rhythm and sing it together. Take five minutes to create a group song, to help the class remember the word, which you may use to create a new morning routine and as an impromptu celebration song to remind them of the identity to which they will aspire during this course.

Shape It.

The general theme of *Habits of Sages* appears first as introductory content for students to absorb before you present the Humanities reading selections. Suggest a gesture representing wisdom or a shape indicating a holy person or counselor. It may be hands folded as if clutching something – medicine, a gift of knowledge, a book, or a candle to light the dark.

Symbolize It.

Create an honoring gesture, such as hands folded around an open book or perhaps a local gesture of respect. Use the symbol to commend students when they demonstrate wisdom.

Each new habit-of-heart appears for the first time when students begin their next set of literary reading chapters. You will have a chance to repeat similar steps for Gratitude, Industriousness, Refinement, Transcendence, and Aspiration. For this first unit alone, the stories told come from the students, in the Storytell It step.

Storytell It

Ask students to each bring a traditional story to class that has been in their family for a long time. It should be a story passed down by their elders and intended to inspire positive action, whether based on history, belief systems or cultural and oral traditions.

After students have shared their stories, examine the similarities. Ask who determined the stories were important enough to pass on to each generation? Who defines “truth” in terms of its value to a family or society?

Based on the experiences of the class members, does life experience help a person develop the wisdom to evaluate truth? Do the elderly people, or sages, tend to tell the stories considered valuable moral tales? Does it take conscious effort and training to become a sage? What does the class think?

Show It

Role play a storytelling game called **Obey the Sage**. A different person each day is called upon to show the wisdom of a sage when faced with challenging situations. These can be situations from the class history book or from a current event the teacher finds in a local newspaper or online article. Gradually, the students will learn how to supply appropriate stories for the game.

For example, the sage may have to advise on ways to recapture a feeling of gratitude in a land dispute when the aggressor wants more than his fair share.

To play:

1. The teacher passes the story around to student readers or summarizes it., as needed.
2. The teacher then poses questions to the sage about what could be done to solve the problem, integrating the current habit-of-heart into the solution.
3. The sage calls on helpers in the class to then act out the wise ending to the story, as the sage advises them.

The teacher can sometimes use hypothetical situations relevant to school life or home life. A new round of **Obey the Sage** starts up with each new habit-of-heart. The teacher should remind students that while they are still deepening their wisdom, there are already sages who have lived long enough to give good counsel. List the local sages together (parents, elders, teachers, etc.).

Sing It

Introduce the Full-Circle Learning song *Sages of the Ages*. (A song book and CD are available from Full-Circle Learning for those with accessibility to electronics.) Challenge students to discuss the meaning of the song.

Standards-based Learning: Humanities

Reading book: *The Dark Child*, by Camara Laye

Introduce the featured author by reading or assigning the students to read the resource sheet, *The Dark Path*.

Work with the history teacher to present characteristics of a changing world in Guinea between 1922 and 1984. How did the most Guineans respond to independence from France, only to find autocratic rule in the decades that followed? Compare this with occurrence in the mid-century in other parts of Africa.

Paulo Freire, a famous human rights advocate from Brazil defined oppression as an “act that prevents one from being a human being,” or that leads to what he termed

“dehumanization” (Freire 1996: 39). If we believe we are each a part of the human family, we look for ways to uphold and to secure the rights of all to provide for their families, to have health and security, whatever that might mean (jobs, farms, schools or votes.)

What role did writers play in helping keep people aware of their obligation to look out for the rights of their brothers and sisters in the past century? (As authors began to write histories and stories and to become journalists, the world became more aware of the need to protect and help others.)

Sages in the world of mythology and religion have often used stories to counsel people. Writers also use stories to tell the important truths of history.

Discuss the difference between a fact and a truth. (Facts tell our observations. Truths share wise interpretations.) Historians need to give factual accounts. Novelists and autobiographers help us decide what to do to improve on the world conditions we inherit.

As we explore our role as Sages, learning to express a thought, a conviction, a fact or a truth may become important, just as it was for Camara Laye.

Introduce the exercises on the resource sheet *Walking and Talking*.

Share It

Challenge students to combine the sentences in their Walking and Talking exercise into one group story—the story of their community. Is it a story of facts or truths? Does the story suggest a call to action at the end?

Invite a local storyteller to come to the class. Ask the storyteller to communicate a favorite story with a moral. As a gift, the students will give their community story to the storyteller, to retell or to comment on.

Does the story contain any value of use to a sage? Does it inspire action? Does it provide a history?

What did the young Sages learn from the storyteller? What did the storyteller learn from the Sages?

At the end of the year, the storyteller may be included as a special guest at the culminating mastery ceremony.

Send It

Look at the observations made during the Walking and Talking exercise. Did students document any human rights concerns? Any safety issues that needed correcting? Did

they notice a family in need? Help them use the power of their words by writing a persuasive letter or an essay, incorporating a main point, supporting sentences and a closing appeal. Determine a reading audience for their work. This will determine whether the statements should be based in fact or whether they may editorialize. There may be sections in a newspaper where they can provide their own comments. Persuasive writing might also be helpful if they are writing to make a request for items to help a family rebuild a home. However, if they are reporting an incident for a newspaper, they will want to tell the facts and let the readers decipher.

Sustain It

Students first gather in small circles to reflect on what they have learned about the role of a Sage in society. They begin to discuss any new thoughts about how they might improve the society in which they live by developing their special skills, if they develop and sustain the habits of Sages. They record their early thoughts in journals, to review from time to time as the course progresses.

Sages Resource Sheets

Student Reproducible

The Price

Reflecting

upon the yesterdays of my life
I realize that wisdom—
the costliest gift men hold—
can only be bought with time,
which makes me glad
that tomorrow
I'll be one day older
than I am today.

By Teresa Winn, Reprinted from *America Sings*, National Poetry Press, 1976, p. 93.

Student/Teacher Resource

The Dark Path

Each day the sun comes up, full of new possibilities. Still, many tomorrows lie ahead like paths of mystery in the dark night. We cannot see where they go. We can only hone our vision now, while the light remains in the sky. This lesson we can learn well as we study the life of Camaray Laye, author of *The Dark Child*.

Camara Laye was born into a family of blacksmiths in 1928 in French-speaking Guinea. As an author, he used his last name first, in the tradition of Guinean school. Laye loved the innocence not only of his own youth but of the Africa he remembered and loved as a boy. He wanted to preserve its traditions and the essence of its values.

The Dark Child tells of his departure from his homeland to France, an educational journey he felt was not worthy just to become a mechanic, as this was not his passion, though for some it would be fine. His experienced planted in him the realization that he must use his skills to become a novelist.

His first book, *The Dark Child*, was published in 1953 and became a classic. He then published *The Radiance of the King* in 1954. He continued to write and was later cited by Gerald Moore as one of the acclaimed *Seven African Writers* in 1962.

In the interim, Camara Laye and his wife had returned to Guinea in 1956. He held government positions. After Guinea attained its independence in September of 1958, Laye became Guinea's ambassador to Ghana and played a key role in procuring aid for his country. He also spent a short time as a diplomat in Liberia; later, he returned to Guinea and held a series of prominent positions including director of the Department of Economic Agreements at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and associate director of the National Institute of Research and Documentation.

However, working close to the government gave him a close view of the corruption of a totalitarian regime during Sekou Toure's rule, after Guinea broke its ties with France. The ruler increased a trend toward dictatorship, amassed wealth for himself and brought economic instability, conducting show trials for anyone who opposed him.

As Camara Laye became politically outspoken, he underwent house arrest, so in 1965, he took his young family and fled to Senegal. There he made a living editing the folktales and songs of the Malinke people. When his wife returned to Guinea to visit her dying father, the government captured and arrested her, and Laye was left to raise their seven children alone. His third novel, *Dream of Africa*, written in 1966, tells the bitter story of what happened to his country. Into the 1970s, he wrote of his exile, surrealistically mingling fact and fiction to tell a greater truth about the relationship of power and injustice. He was uniquely positioned to tell this story.

We will read the book that made him famous while he was still young and discovering his passions. Before we do, consider some important questions:

- When we begin to develop a talent, do we know how it will become useful later in life?
- When we set out on an unknown path, do we know where it will lead?

Camara Laye had many questions about which paths to pursue in his life. What if he did not have the words to tell his story? He learned that the capacities he developed did indeed have a profound purpose. The stories he told the world became important windows on history.

None of us can tell where we will be in ten or twenty or thirty years, but when we strive to develop the habits of Sages, we better prepare to bring our strengths to whatever path destiny calls us.



Resource Sheet

Walking and Talking

1. Take a walk in the neighborhood.
2. Make a list of factual observations.
3. Take a second look.
4. Now return to class and turn the facts into a state of interpretations or “truths.” See the example below.
5. Make two lists. On one list, include situations when you think it important only to tell facts, such as on the front page of a newspaper or when your parents ask where you went after school. On the second list, name occasions when you feel people would rather hear truths or interpretations that give greater meaning to facts. Include specific examples.
6. Share your lists with the class. Justify your responses. See if everyone agrees.
7. What happens when people misinterpret the facts? In historical documents? In newspapers? In relationships? In science? In belief systems? What about in literature? This may be the best place for communicating experience based on intuition and life experience.
8. Discuss the role of experience in helping writers, counselors, and elders develop the wisdom to turn facts into truths.

Literary Example of Fact versus Truth:

Fact:

A blackbird darted at a scurrying woman. She shielded her eyes and clutched her infant. A shrill cry pierced the air.

Fact Stated as a Truth:

A panicked mother shielded her eyes against the sun. She could not see the nest on the roof when the shrieking bird chased her. It also wanted to save its young. Fear clouds our vision.

The Habit of Gratitude

Learning Unit 2: Teacher's Planning Steps

Sense It

Activity Steps:

- Bring two foods or plants to class – one with a pleasant aroma and one that does not smell. Each one should have value to humans in its use as a food, medicine or decoration. Put them aside where students will not see them.
- Ask students to close their eyes. Pass the aromatic plant under the nose of one half of the class. Pass the neutral smelling plant under the nose of the other half of the class.
- Put the plants aside and let them open their eyes, asking, “Did any of you come across something of value?”
- See who can guess what they smelled or the value of what they smelled.
- Point out that sometimes our senses, minds and hearts are not attuned to the goodness of life. Sometimes we either do not recognize a gift or do not give credit to those who made an opportunity possible for us. Ask for examples.
- Introduce the concept of gratitude as the simple act of noticing things of value and thanking those who cared enough to create them or to make them possible for us.
- Even the *feeling* of gratitude can turn our own thoughts from darkness to light. The *expression* of it can make someone *else's* day lighter. Ask for examples of experiences class members have had with this. Point out that Gratitude—even gratitude for strengths earned through hardship--is one of the first marks of a true Sage.
- A generalized sense of gratitude can make us more aware of the helpful roles others play in our lives. Let the class react to the following story.

In a famous fable, a man is crossing a river in a boat. Sharks, water eels, leeches and other dangers lurk everywhere. He does not want to fall into the water. Suddenly a storm comes, and boat tips over. He is dashed to and fro against the rocks and he shouts out a plea, “Oh, please, God, save my life! I will do anything for you if you do.” Just then, along comes a floating log. He crawls up on the log and floats to safety on the only dry spot on the opposite shore. He rolls off the

log, looks up and says, "Never mind, God. Everything's all right. I took care of it myself."

- Ask: Did the man in the story seem foolish or sagacious (sage-like)? Why? Challenge students to keep this story in mind when they read *The Dark Child*, to determine who in the story shows the qualities of a sage, and why.

See It. Say It.

Write the habit-of-heart *Gratitude* on the board. Say it together.

Shape It.

Draw a shape around *Gratitude* that looks like something Sages might feel grateful for, such as the long log on the river, a field of blossoming plants, or a sunrise. Challenge them to think of the relevant story each time they try to recall the spelling of *gratitude* to aid their sight recognition of the word.

Symbolize It

Choose a gesture that expresses gratitude, such as hands clasped together. Agree to extend the signal to one another frequently in class, to increase the awareness of things Sages do to help one another.

Synchronize It.

Choose three students to each sing a syllable of the word *Gratitude*. Syncopate the rhythm together. Take five minutes to create a group song, to help the class remember the word. You may choose to use the song in your morning routine or as an impromptu celebration song whenever students practice the habit-of-heart.

Storytell It

The Dark Child, as a literary text, features components of both fiction and nonfiction. Camara Laye wrote it as a memoir of his youth. Students will study the first two chapters as they apply the habit-of-heart in the *Gratitude* unit. The follow-up activities appear in the Standards-based learning section of the unit.

Please Note: Teachers can read the suggestions in English and present the written novel in either French or English.

Depending on the number of copies available, the book can be read aloud as students follow along, can be read in small groups, or can be assigned as homework reading.

Prepare ahead by reading all the activity suggestions and calendaring your plans before the beginning of each unit. Your planning will require some work with the community.

In each unit, assign the reading to students as a group or individually, one chapter at a time. (This decision may be based on the number of available books and the reading capacities of students.)

Write and define any words that may be challenging for students before beginning each chapter. Have them define the words in the dictionary or assist them in this process by having them match words on the left of the board with definitions on the right. You might also make a game of acting out a definition or with nonverbal gestures or actions, to make the definitions more memorable.

For the habit of Gratitude, the class reads chapters 1 and 2 of *The Dark Child*.

The Standardize It step describes suggested follow-up discussions and activities.

For further guidelines, see the Teacher's Responses to discussion questions, found in the Appendix.

Standardize It

Standards-based Learning: Humanities

Reading book: *The Dark Child*, by Camara Laye

The length of time committed to the activities at each chapter's end will vary, depending on how you have planned your time. If your class period is one hour per day, you will probably spend one to two weeks on each chapter. If you incorporate history into the content, you may spend up to a year on this curriculum.

In this and other chapters, some of the activities extend over time, beyond the length of the chapter. Discussion questions can later resurface as test questions, as needed.

Any student handouts needed appear in the resource section at the end of the unit and can be reproduced, if possible, for student use.

***The Dark Child*, Chapter One Discussion and Activities**

(Suggested responses to discussion questions appear in the Appendix, in the back of this curriculum.)

Laye is fascinated with the Guiding Spirit of the snake. As a member of a Moslem family, his parents have also taught him faith in God. The book also makes reference of the role of his own conscience in helping shape his beliefs and actions. He also talks about observing role models as a means of reinforcing his own intuition about how to

live a good life. His father tells him, “There is a certain form of behavior to observe, and certain ways of acting in order that the guiding spirit of our race may approach you also.”

1. What is the role of the inner voice or conscience? What is the role of the guiding light? How does his process for understanding life compare with your own?
2. Why does Laye feel confused about whether he should quit school? Is he more concerned about “doing the right thing” or about not wanting to go to school?
3. What gift does he long for that his father possesses?
4. **Journal Question:** List the sources of guidance you are grateful for in your own life. Some may be direct, such as parents and mentors, and others may be indirect, such as books and innate spiritual values. Identify which of these gifts you are grateful for are a part of the world you were born into. Which gifts did you acquire by looking at the world in new ways? Voltaire said that the journey of discovery is not in going new places but in having new eyes. What do you think he meant?

Chapter Two Discussion and Activities

1. To whom did the father attribute his skills and powers?
2. Why was he reluctant to turn over the gold smelting to his assistants?
3. Who took pleasure in the making of gold jewelry?
4. Who did not approve of the process of making the gold jewelry?
5. Discuss the perspectives and intentions of the characters in terms of their personalities, life experiences and the habits-of-heart each is striving to perfect.
6. **Writing Your Life:** During the week, strive to apply the habit of gratitude through at least one personal act each day. Describe one of these actions in a vignette or (short scene, character description, or slice of a story). Write it as part of an autobiography. In one scene, include people who are not in your family, who simply cross your path in the same way the women and the praise singers played a role for Laye’s father. Include a second vignette or story in which you express gratitude for someone close to you. These can be simple everyday scenes that would occur in any family.
7. Think about the character descriptions of the people involved in your vignettes. How did they react, or not react, to your simple expression of gratitude? Did you show their reaction to them? Is their reaction based on their own unique habits-of-heart? Examine your own motivations as a character. Did you find yourself expressing gratitude mostly to those who rewarded you with mutual gratitude, admiration or affection? Do you find it as easy to express gratitude, both for life and for those who cross your path, regardless of their reactions? Did your experience include a character who did not know they had a meaningful role to

play in someone's life until they heard your words of thanks? Revise your stories, as needed, and share them with the class.

Integrated Content: Poetry

Allow time for students to study and write poetry within each unit. The poem for the unit appears as a reproducible Resource Sheet at the end of the unit.

Base your activities on the discussions and activities on the Resource Sheet at the end of the unit, *Poetry, A Universal Language*.

Relate Pablo Neruda's poem *Brown and Agile Child* to the current unit themes.

- This poem, written by the famous Latin American writer Pablo Neruda, describes the joy and reverie of a child at play in the ocean. Does the child remind you of Laye at the beginning of *The Dark Child*? Which phrases refer to a child's universal love of nature? How was Laye's life on the farm, tending the cows, basking in the sun, similar to the child's romp in the ocean?
- In the third stanza, how does the poet symbolize the responsibilities of the adult world as a tug away from the carefree life of youth? Do you think the poet is contrasting a small child's life with the careworn thoughts that come with experience? Do you think he envies the child a little bit?
- Ironically, the title of the poem is similar to the title of the book we have read. Do you think children growing up on different continents have similar periods of transition between childhood and adulthood? Why or why not? What factors influence this process? What evidence have you seen to support your response?
- The act of writing and sharing the poem, perhaps, helped recapture a moment of childhood for the poet. The arts help us relieve stresses and sad memories and help us emphasize positive thoughts. Maybe writing about such images can help you create moments of wonderment and gratitude for earth's bounties.
- Close your eyes and imagine the taste of your favorite food, the feel of the sun on your face in the morning, or the most beautiful moment you remember. Write down a note and go on to another memory. Record numbers one through five on a piece of paper. Based on your introspection, poetically describe five things you have seen, heard, tasted, smelled or touched that gave you joy. Craft each description until it becomes vivid and yet no longer than a line in a poem. (Study the use of metaphor the way Neruda used it in his poem.)

- After putting all your descriptions together in sequence, give your poem a title related to the habit of Gratitude.

Integrated Content: History

Using the history or social studies book designed for your locality, read the current stories with the current habit-of-heart in mind. Challenge students to demonstrate their understanding of the context of history as well as their understanding of the role of choice.

You may find the game of Obey the Sage a useful tool. Have students reenact scenes from the history book, incorporating the habit-of-heart into the thought processes, speech and actions of the historical figures. The sage plays a role in advising the characters. (See the Show It step.)

Show It

In a weekly game of **Obey the Sage**, a different person each day is called upon to show the wisdom of a sage when faced with challenging situations.

In this unit, for example, the sage may have to advise on ways to recapture a feeling of gratitude in a hypothetical land dispute when the aggressor wants more than his fair share. Or you may read a passage from a local history text and evaluate how the habit of gratitude might have changed the outcome.

To play:

1. The teacher reads or summarizes the history passage or current event, as needed.
2. The teacher then poses questions to the sage about what could be done to solve the problem, integrating the current habit-of-heart into the solution.
3. The sage calls on assistants in the class to then act out the wise ending to the story, as the sage advises them. They may use the conflict bridge, as needed.

The teacher can occasionally use hypothetical situations relevant to school life or home life.

Sing It

Introduce the Full-Circle Learning song *Gratitude* and any song you have created as a class. (A song book and CD are available to help teach this song.)

Share It

Create a Gratitude Tree in a local park or plaza or in the schoolyard. (See the Poetry Resource Sheet guidelines for creating and hanging your poetry in the tree.)

Hold a poetry-hanging party and reading. Invite guests and sing the Gratitude song. Each time a classmate feels unfortunate, friends bring them to the tree to read the poetry.

Send It

Consider the role gratitude plays in creating joy in the world. Combine the Gratitude stories from the reading activity section to begin a class compilation. After completing the booklet, the class will hold a community reading, then send the book as a gift for the school or community library and also sending a copy to another school as a wisdom exchange.

Sustain It

Students take a survey to see whether each feels more satisfied with 1) their school experience, 2) their surroundings, 3) their own abilities, 4) their role in the family and community and 5) their inner lives, now that they have learned to express gratitude. They tally the results. They gather in a circle to reflect on any lives they touched in the community and to list the new things for which they feel grateful through the unit. Each student commits to extend gratitude through personal acts in the weeks to come, to sustain this habit as individuals, beyond their group experience.

Gratitude Resource Sheet

Student Resource

Brown and Agile Child

Brown and agile child, the sun which forms the fruit
And ripens the grain and twists the seaweed
Has made your happy body and your luminous eyes
And given your mouth the smile of water.

A black and anguished sun is entangled in the twigs
Of your black mane when you hold out your arms.
You play in the sun as in a tidal river
And it leaves two dark pools in your eyes.

Brown and agile child, nothing draws me to you,
Everything pulls away from me here in the noon.
You are the delirious youth of bee,
The drunkenness of the wave, the power of the wheat.

My somber heart seeks you always
I love your happy body, your rich, soft voice.
Dusky butterfly, sweet and sure
Like the wheat field, the sun, the poppy, and the water.

By Pablo Neruda, 1955.

The Habit of Industriousness

Learning Unit 3: Teacher's Planning Steps

Sense It.

- Bring to class a bundle of paper strips, yarn, string or straw in random lengths. (Or have students collect them.)
- Apportion to each student three strands or stems. Ask them to feel the surface of the materials, to sniff it, touch it and carefully inspect it to see if there is anything special about it.
- Next, tell them that these are miracle materials. From what you have given them, they will be able to quickly weave a whole mat. Challenge them to do so in five minutes.
- Students may look at you skeptically, but let them know you will simply watch to see how resourcefulness and industriousness can predict the outcome.
- At the end of the period, some of the students will hopefully realize that alone they can accomplish little, but when they gather in groups and lay out their strands alongside each other, they can quickly weave a mat.
- Challenge students to name the industries that drive the local economy. Ask what role resourcefulness, teamwork and new ideas played in creating each industry. Ask what role steadfastness and hard work play in keeping it alive. Industriousness means to work steadily, as a habit, in order to contribute to a productive effort or outcome. Without industriousness, we would not have the clothing, building materials or transportation sources created in factories. Without personal industriousness, we cannot enjoy the benefits our own work produces.

See It. Say It.

Write the habit-of-heart Industriousness on the board. Say it together.

Shape It.

Draw a shape around Industriousness. It may look like a factory. If so, discuss the functions the tall I might serve. It may look like a smokestack for burning coal, but as we see new needs for new energies, our industriousness leads us to new inventions. It could also be as a grain silo, sawdust chipper, or other device.

Symbolize It

Choose a gesture that expresses industriousness. It might be fingers woven together. Remind students that working together, they can accomplish a lot, and this signal will wordlessly remind them of their need to do so when they are conducting group work.

Synchronize It.

Choose five students to each sing a syllable of the word *industriousness*. Syncopate the rhythm together. Take five minutes to create a group song, to help the class remember the word. You may choose to use the song in your morning routine or as an impromptu celebration song whenever students practice the habit-of-heart.

Storytell It

The Dark Child continues as the featured literary text for whole group, small group, or individualized reading.

Students will study **Chapter 3-4** as they apply the habit-of-heart Industriousness. The follow-up activities appear in the next section, on Standards-based Learning.

(See the suggestions in the first unit regarding reading individually or as a group.)

Standardize It

Standards-based Learning: Humanities

Reading book: *The Dark Child*, by Camara Laye

Chapter 3 Discussions and Activities

(Suggested responses to discussion questions appear in the Appendix at the back of the book.)

1. The conversation in Laye's head as he grows will increasingly involve the merits of the farming life, the life surrounding skilled labor and the type of learning Laye enjoys at school. Laye came from a larger town with a school but goes to the ancestral farming village during holidays. Describe the evidence that Laye sees positive examples of a good way of life by looking at his country relatives in Chapter Three. He also admired his parents back at home. How do his reactions make you feel about the varying professions of his relatives in the city and in the country?
2. How do the young boys in the farming community show responsibility and industriousness?

3. How does Laye describe Uncle Lansana's tendency toward silence as a man of the fields?
4. How did Laye relate to his uncle during mealtime?
5. Industriousness equates to happiness in this story, and yet each character's work makes them happy because it meets a need, matches their own sense of purpose and brings them into harmony with their environment. Discuss perspective and intention in terms of the habits-of-heart Industriousness. Who in your life seems happy in their work, and why? What kind of profession has made a strong impression on you in terms of its usefulness in society?
6. **Identify Group Skills:** As a class, list the knowledge and skills the students are currently mastering in each of their classes (math, science, art, etc.) Brainstorm community needs that can be addressed using at least one of these skills as a group. For example, can your knowledge of biology or the environment create a better community garden?
7. **Application of Project:** Each member of the class will contribute hours and talents to the project over a period of time (from a week to a year). Who will the project benefit? Throughout the project, evaluate the satisfaction of the participants, to see if some want to switch roles. Everyone must make some commitment.

Chapter 4 Discussion and Activities

1. Laye described the hard work associated with farming. Did he enjoy working in the fields? What was poignant (bittersweet) about his memories?
2. Did he perceive more dignity and respect for the rights of others displayed by those living in the city or by those working in the country? What did he daydream about?
3. Describe evidence of the benefits of teamwork and simple pleasures as described in Chapter Four.

Integrated Content: Math

Evaluate the Value of Work: Challenge students to use their survey skills to evaluate the work project performed as a group to ask: What aspects of the work are most enjoyable—the detail work, the mental challenge, the outdoor exercise, the sense of working together to achieve a goal?

Conduct a silent survey with three parts. Each classmate writes down: 1) the number of hours they have spent on the project; 2) the level of their satisfaction while performing the service, with the number one indicating unhappiness and the number five indicating joyfulness; and 3) the level of satisfaction they feel others took in their service, using the same one-to-five ranking. Tally the results.

Looking at the anonymous surveys, note whether there is a relationship between the enjoyment of the work, the perceived value of the work and the amount of effort put into the project. Discuss as a class whether industriousness brings greater joy or whether purposeful work inspires industriousness – or both.

Survey skills and productivity statistics help us measure the value of work as well as the quality or quantity of goods produced. Brainstorm examples of the ways we can use these skills to measure and improve the benefits of work for our families and for our community. List specific entrepreneurial projects as well as charitable projects. What would we measure? How would we measure it? What equations would we need, and what information-gathering process would we need to acquire it? Let each student conduct an independent math research project to assess the benefit of a particular work project on the quality of life for a family or community group.

Integrated Content: Poetry

Reproduce or write on the board the poem *The Long Hill*, located in the Resource section: Carry out the following discussion questions and activities.

- Have you ever known an older person who gained a great deal of wisdom through the years without realizing it? They may have been industrious all their lives, working hard to protect or feed and care for their loved ones or community members. When they looked back, they realized that the best years of their lives were the years they spent working to serve others. Do you think this was the case for the adults in *The Dark Child*?
- As a writer, how would you convey this same concept in the space of a short poem? Read *The Long Hill*. Do you think Sara Teasdale was referring to that same feeling of being so involved in life that you don't realize when you are truly at the peak? Have you ever climbed a hill or mountain and looked forward to being at the top? Why was she disappointed?
- Study the structure of the poem. How does it differ from the other poems in the unit, which are all free verse? Do you know of any poems about daily work, perhaps written by people in your community?
- Think of someone you admire in the community, other than a parent or grandparent. Think specifically about what this person has taught you or others about the value of work and service. Would your gratitude extend their "peak" by showing them they have taught industriousness in a way that will help the community's strength outlive theirs?

- Observe an older person in your family as they go about the daily tasks that help provide for the family. Write a free verse poem about their motions using the template on the Resource Sheet *Visible*. (Each poet may add a description of the work to each line or may use the template as a guide for writing a similar verse.) When all the poems are put together, the class will have group poem about how their families contribute to the work of the community. This may be displayed at the culminating event at the end of the course, along with the mural from a later unit.

Integrated Content: History

Using the history or social studies book designed for your locality, review recent content with the current habit-of-heart in mind. Challenge students to demonstrate their understanding of the advance and decline of civilization partly in relation to the development of industry and the work ethic of the people.

Return to the game of Obey the Sage, which follows. Have student Sages act as captains of industry. Each one must make decisions about which industries will benefit their communities. Knowledge of what historically played out will inform the activity.

Show It

In a weekly game of **Obey the Sage**, various students have the chance to play the sage, who shows wisdom when counseling the class in challenging situations.

In this unit, for example, the sage may have to advise on choosing between building a seaport or improving the safety practices in ore mines. Opposing owners of companies act out alternate positions on the conflict bridge.

To play:

1. The teacher reads or summarizes the history passage or current event, as needed.
2. The teacher then poses questions to the sage about what could be done to solve the problem, integrating the current habit-of-heart into the solution.
3. The sage calls on assistants in the class to then act out the wise ending to the story, as the sage advises them. They may use the conflict bridge, as needed.

Sing It

Introduce the Full-Circle Learning song *Working Together or Move Those Mountains* and any other song you have created as a class. (A song book and CD are available to help teach this song.)

Share It

If you have not yet done so, conduct a project that applies students' unique skills to a specific community project requiring group service. For example, one student might know how to plant trees; another might know a grower who can contribute trees; others might be good writers and could write request letters; others live near the hillside where they will be planted and can water them; others are good organizers and can encourage families to each adopt one tree to water over time. Set a goal for evaluating and reflecting on the project with the community at a special meeting.

Students who documented the value of industriousness in the standards-based activities may want to consider ways to work as a team on future projects that require unique skills but equal dedication to the work.

Send It

Activity 1: Students evaluate the practices of an industry that has contributed jobs to the economy and brought meaningful work to many people. They write letters of congratulations to a key developer of such a company, health care provider or agricultural enterprise, and they ask for advice in starting their own small enterprises that will contribute to the well-being of the community. Their letters invite such a person as a guest presenter.

Activity 2: Students each think of someone they admire in the community, other than a parent or grandparent. They think specifically about what this person has taught them or others about the value of work and service. Discuss ways to extend the elder's "peak" by showing a sense of appreciation for these lessons. Write thank you letters or poems describing the lessons learned about life, work and service by observing them.

Each student will send a personal message about the impression made by someone who taught them the value of work and service. These individuals will later be invited to the culminating event at the end of the course. You may write them as structured poetry.

Sustain It

Reserve time for reflection.

1. Discuss the value of letting people know the impact of a lifetime of work. Students make a mural or poetry collection reflecting the contributions of the elders, to post in the community.
2. Discuss what the world would look like without the industriousness of the past generation.

3. Discuss what the world will look like with the dreams of the current generation. Each person writes down one thing they want to contribute. The class makes a poster or drawing of a community in which these works have all come to pass. They post this picture as a reminder of their sustained commitment to industriousness.

Industriousness Resource Sheets

The Long Hill

I MUST have passed the crest a while ago
And now I am going down--
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
But the brambles were always grabbing at the hem of my gown.
All the morning I thought how proud I should be
To stand there straight as a queen,
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me--
But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen.
It was nearly level along the beaten track
And the brambles caught in my gown--
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
The rest of the way will be only going down.

By Sara Teasdale, Anthology of Magazine Verse, 1920.

Student Resource

Visible

Work is love made visible, the posted sign read.

So I saw love today.

I saw the flicker of hands _____

I saw the passing of feet _____

I saw the speaking lips _____

I saw the rhythmic sighs _____

In many ways, before my eyes, yes, I saw love today.

By _____

The Habit of Refinement

Learning Unit 4: Teacher's Planning Steps

Sense It.

- Ask students to place their fingers of their right hand against the back of their left hand.
- As you count, have them stroke their hand back and forth once with each number.
- Start counting slowly, and then count with increasing rapidity.
- What started as a very slow motion across the hand should gradually become a very swift motion back and forth for each student.
- Ask: What has changed? Does the hand you rubbed feel any different now than it did in the beginning? (The back of the hand should feel much hotter, due to the friction they have created. Make sure everyone feels the warmth increase before stopping the demonstration.)
- Ask, How warm did your hand feel after just a few strokes? How did it feel when we repeated the same action many times and increased the speed of the action?
- We have experienced the heat created by friction in a self-conducted experiment. Just as science teaches this lesson in the natural world, it bears out in many other applications. When we repeat the frequency of an action, we influence not only the speed with which we are able to accomplish it, but we also influence the outcome. In other words, by staying with the task and changing the way we do it, at last, we get results. We create heat!
- We refined our experiment as we changed the motion. We refine our character as we reflect and consider what we need to change. We refine our study habits as we consider the results of our habits and take steps to improve the outcome.
- Refinement means to put aside reasons for where we are now and polish and improve our efforts until we get where we need to be. Without refining their efforts, the people who first discovered that friction creates heat may never have learned how to build a fire. We can build a fire under ourselves as we develop plans for continual improvement, for the goals of a sage last a lifetime.

See It. Say It.

Write the habit-of-heart Refinement on the board. Say it together. Divide it by syllable. Re means “again.” Refinement means to make something fine again or finer than it was.

Shape It.

Draw a shape around Refinement. Perhaps it looks like a forest fire, to remind students of the object lesson and to recreate instant word and concept recognition. Use this shape later in the unit, perhaps symbolically when the group gathers around a symbolic “fire” to discuss their totems.

Symbolize It

Choose a gesture that means refinement. Perhaps it looks like rubbing an eraser against a paper or rubbing fingers against a hand. This can become a nonverbal signal to make a paper neater, to correct posture or speech, etc.

Synchronize It.

Choose three students to each sing a note—one for each syllable of the word *Refinement*. Syncopate the rhythm together. Take five minutes to create a group song, to help the class remember the word. You may choose to use the song in your morning routine or as an impromptu celebration song whenever students practice the habit-of-heart.

Storytell It

The Dark Child continues as the featured literary text. Students will study Chapters 5 and 6 as they apply the habit-of-heart Refinement. Some writing assignments will be required.

The follow-up activities appear in the next section, on Standards-based learning. (See the suggestions in the first unit to determine whether to have students read individually or as a group.)

Standards-based Learning: Humanities

Reading book: *The Dark Child*, by Camara Laye

Chapter Five Discussion and Activities

1. Laye said, “My father never dreamed of despising anyone.” Describe the impact this example probably had on Laye and his siblings. His father claims to have started out as an ordinary man, but as he listened to the guidance given to him, his skills and character became refined. Did his habit-of-heart affect his children’s character and their happiness? Can you think of anyone like this in your life? When continually improving, are they more at peace in their surroundings than others? How does their example affect you?

2. His mother, though more authoritarian, also had special powers and performed miracles, according to Laye. What quality did he ascribe to his mother?
3. How does his Uncle Lansana's twinship affect his mother's role in the family?
4. What is a totem? How is it like an inner guide or sage? How do its qualities become your qualities? If you had one, describe what habits-of-heart it would show. Draw it. (See examples on the resource sheet at the end of the chapter, *Totems Representing Unity and Refinement*.)
5. **Journal Questions:**
 - a. As people began to use animals less frequently, they still called upon higher powers for help. Discuss what you see as the relationship between modern religion, ancient religion, and the innate sense of conscience that tells us how to live a good life. Do you think every culture seeks answers to life's mysteries? Do you think most people want to cultivate their instinct to "do good"?
 - b. A new book called *The Angels of our Better Nature*, by Steven Pinker, shows that violence has decreased in every century, even with the current wars that exist in the world. What does this suggest about the striving of the human race to improve its qualities?
 - c. What are your personal goals for refining your own moral character? Write down at least three, with a plan for achieving the goal.

Chapter Six Discussion and Activities

1. **Group Action:** Apply the habit-of-heart, Refinement, to the conflict bridge to help Kouyate and Himourana resolve their conflict. How will they smooth over the rough edges of their character to better resolve their conflict? How will they redefine honor?
2. Apply the same habit to resolve the conflict between Laye's father and the school director? Normally quiet men, they have lost their tempers. Help them refine their character and find a way to resolve this conflict.
3. **Discussion:** Thinking about this resolution, what are the ultimate benefits for Himourana and the school director? For the watching students? For Kouyate and Laye's father? How would you help them further refine their solution?

Integrated Content: Poetry

Allow time for students to study and write poetry within each unit.

Reproduce or write on the board the poem *Little Father*, located in the Resource section: Carry out the following discussion questions and activities.

- Carefully read this poem by Indonesian/Chinese writer Li-Young Lee, which expresses universal emotions about the wisdom passed through the generations. Here the poet had lost his father – either through death or estrangement. How did he rediscover him? How does the poem describe the relationship between the grandfather and the newborn son?
- Find the phrases in the poem that describe the importance of passing wisdom from one generation to the next. Who is the “parent to the future?”
- The last line is, “Little father I ransom with my life.” By early parenthood, each generation experiences the sacrifices of childbirth and early childrearing. How can they sense what role the next generation will play? Do you think the poet, as a new parent, has a new awareness of the sacrifices and challenges all parents make? How can we gain such awareness without waiting to have children of our own?
- If each generation is “the parent to the future,” what value is there in honoring the potential we have inherited from the past generations?
- Write an 8-line free verse poem about the work your parents or grandparents have done in their lifetime or about the positive habits-of-heart they developed. Note how Li-Young Lee used images such as a grape or root or un-sprung clock to represent an embryo. Practice choosing appropriate images for the people or actions in your poem.
- Practice the habit of Refinement-- the art of continual improvement. Read your poem aloud after you have let it rest awhile. Pretend you are hearing it for the first time. Do the sounds, images and meaning still work for you? Rewrite it as needed. Read your poem to the class. Are there any word choices you still want to change?
- Make a final presentation copy of your poem, to present at the ceremony to honor community Sages. At this ceremony, you may also want to include prior compositions that were extensions of *The Price* or as letters related to *The Long Hill*.

Integrated Content: History

Using the history or social studies book designed for your locality, draw a historical timeline of your students’ current period of study. Keeping the current habit-of-heart in mind, challenge students to make a character study of each of the people who

contributed to that history. For example, how did the careers of Kenneth Kaunda or Nelson Mandela or Ellen Johnson Sirleaf influence the current history of their respective regions? What other participants in history frustrated or complicated the events of the same period, recent or past?

Plot on a horizontal graph the major events of the period with lines and dots. Separately plot the actions of each major historical figure who played a role in those events. Discuss the lives of the historical figures. The chart should indicate with ascending and descending lines where the figures' decisions or actions reflect that they refined their character and skills over time. Evaluate how the refinement of the historical leaders might have influenced the events in history. Does our own progress have an exponential effect on history? (Does our own refining of skills and character when expanded a little, have a multiplying effect on society?)

Study the arc of history from a personal perspective

Distribute graph paper, or have students mark off their paper with vertical and horizontal lines. Ask each student to draw a stick figure representing themselves on a piece of graph paper or in a journal. (Graph paper is ideal for this exercise.) Have each one choose at least one future role they hope to play in society, such as civic employee, health care worker, parent, writer, farmer, machine shop owner, social worker, teacher, scientist, etc. Invoke them to also bring the skills of a sage to the work with them, refining their skills and character as they grow.

Next, list a series of events to which each of them must react, deciding how their future sage will influence the destiny of other members of the human family by refining and improving areas where growth is needed.

Event 1: You meet someone who likes you very much and gives you a job or an opportunity to extend your education. Another friend wants you to enter a life of crime, saying this will be an easier path to making money. You think of what an education could do for you. How many more people could you help in your field, over the course of 30 years, with a good education? For every ten people you might help, draw a line from yourself to the next block upward. If you chose a life of crime, how many people would be hurt or destroyed in 30 years, including, possibly you? Draw a diagonal line downward if this is the path you took.

Event 2: You learned excellent skills in the field you chose. You were industrious and intelligent. You learned to correct your mistakes. There was still, however, one aspect of your character that you needed to refine. Think about what it might have been. Maybe you did not practice patience or humility or honesty. What was it? You must now work to refine it. If you do, the people you work with will have new confidence in you. You may get a promotion, gain new customers, be asked to give a speech, be given a grant to do your work...imagine what good thing happens because you have improved your relationship with workmates. Now draw a line to show how many lives you improved due to your new opportunity. If you were unable to refine this quality, perhaps you lost

your job over it. Your family may be hungry now or your potential lost. Draw a line downward to show how many lives were hurt when you chose not to work on continual refinement of your capacities.

Event 3: Now a natural disaster has come to your area. Suddenly, everyone needs the help of someone with the skills of a sage. Whether you are a farmer with extra food, a health care worker, a social worker, a civic worker, someone who can comfort and heal and communicate or can provide mechanical skills and building skills, you will also need a refined sense of love, caring, wisdom and selflessness. You will need to step in as a sage. 500 people need help. How many do you think your skills will serve? Draw a line upward.

Look at your life. Once you make the choice to reflect each day on what you said and did, to improve your skills as well as your deeds, you will make refinement a habit. By striving together, refining our skills to serve, together we will make history.

Show It

In a weekly game of **Obey the Sage**, a different person each day is called upon to show the wisdom of a sage when faced with challenging situations.

In this unit, for example, a refined Sage knows that his or her strength lies in giving strength to others. The Sage may want to encourage two historical figures to refine their character but not to sit in judgment as they mediate the conflict bridge. Both the sage and the players assigned to historical roles see if they can improve on history by making decisions differently in later life. Choose characters from the past who had a negative impact on history.

Next, personalize the Show It step by discussing ways to reflect on and refine personal character and habits today. Allow time each day for students to make notes in a personal refinement journal such as the following:

Journaling for Refinement

Encourage students to create three columns and complete and date a daily log.

Strengths Reinforced	Words/Deeds Refined	Corrections Needed
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Examples:

<i>Studied mathematics</i>	<i>Held temper with friend</i>	<i>More patience reading</i>
<i>Fixed widow's cook stove</i>	<i>Respected father though disagreed</i>	<i>Shouted at brother</i>
<i>Designed cook stove</i>	<i>Apologized to brother</i>	<i>Incomplete book report</i>

Sing It

Introduce the Full-Circle Learning songs *Polished Stones*, *Mastery*, *Beauty Is What You Do*, *I Am a Twig* and/or *Sages of the Ages*, along with any other song you have created as a class. (A song book and CD are available to help teach the songs.)

Share It

Some indigenous groups construct totem poles or stacked carved faces showing the characteristics of the people in a family. Have each student use clay, sand or soap to make carvings of family groups or those with whom they live, featuring the predominant best quality of each one. In their own case, they should feature the qualities to which a student aspires.

Each person is a potential Sage or role model for those younger. Stack the heads end to end, in order of ages in a family or group. For examples, refer again to the Totem resource sheet.

Display the totems at the school. Invite families to come to a gathering where students sing for them, honor them for their best qualities, and present each family with a totem. Some totems may be saved for the culminating performance.

Send It

Tell students:

As a young sage, you are a parent to the future. We will write and compile a group of poems called *Parent to the Future*. Write them as if you want the next generation to remember the lessons of the elders but also to know the wisdom you have learned so far about how to refine your character and to influence history.

Write as if you are speaking to your own children, telling them what you want them to know and carry forward into their future.

Refine the rough drafts by checking for spelling, punctuation and neatness. Create a checklist for refinement. Is each poem the best it can be? Each student may write one copy to save for future children and one copy for the class compilation.

The class may send copies to government or education officials, with instructions that it be opened in a certain year – perhaps between 5 and 10 years –to be shared with the children attending schools at that time.

In a class discussion, have everyone list one key point from their poem as a scribe writes down the points. Send this list of suggestions in a letter to another classroom, as a wisdom exchange.

Sustain It

In small groups, use a talking stick or stone to discuss changes in personal habits over the course of the unit. Did each Sage become more aware of their personal progress toward goals? What activities did they find most helpful? What tools for refinement will each sage continue to use? Each group records its suggestions to share with the class.

As a class, determine whether others in the community noticed the refinements in our thoughts, choices, words and deeds, or in our study habits. How did others benefit from our practicing refinement? Each student now pledges to sustain this habit in their lives. Complete the unit with celebratory songs.

Refinement Resource Sheets

Little Father

I buried my father in my heart.

Now he grows in me, my strange son,

My little root who won't drink milk,

Little pale foot sunk in unheard-of night,

Little clock spring newly wet

In the fire, little grape, parent to the future

Wine, a son the fruit of his own son,

Little father I ransom with my life.

By Li-Young Lee

Student Resource



Totems Representing Unity and Refinement

Totems are used worldwide to show concepts about character or community. Tree of Life totems depict the cycle of life. The examples above, come from the Makonde of Tanzania, who work mostly with ebony. All the figures interlock and give support to the others, in a display of unity. On the opposite side of the world, First Nations People in the Americas use animal totems to represent the specific characteristics of family members, as in the example below, located mostly in Northern climes such as Canada but as far south as Peru.



The Habit of Transcendence

Learning Unit 5: Teacher's Planning Steps

Sense It.

- Have two students come to the front of the room. The person on the left is person A. The person on the right is person B.
- Give each one a different book and point out a paragraph of text to each.
- When you give the signal, each one should start reading at the same time.
- When both finish reading their paragraphs, ask them each to describe the contents of the paragraph read by the other. (It should be difficult, as they were speaking, not listening.)
- Ask side A of the room if they can describe what their reader said.
- Ask side B if they heard the details their reader read.
- Next have each reader read only the first sentence of their paragraph, consecutively, so they can each hear each other.
- Ask, what if one of the readers desperately needed to be heard, because he or she was suffering or because a life was in danger? Would that person be in trouble now?
- Sometimes listening is the most important thing we can do to help someone get through a challenging time. We can be their bridge to safety. To do this, we need to quiet our own voice and be there for them. At some point, they will do the same for us. We take turns listening and, together, we get through the tough times.

See It. Say It.

Write the habit-of-heart Transcendence on the board. Say it together. The syllable trans means across. The middle syllable means to go up or down. So Transcendence means to get over something—to get across rocky waters, for example. We can learn skills to help ourselves get through difficult times and to help others get through their own challenges as well. We can be the bridge.

Shape It.

Draw the shape of a bridge around *Transcendence* for word and concept recognition. If electronics are available, play the song, *Bridge over Troubled Water* and allow students to draw the concept of transcendence depicted in the song. These images can be displayed in class.

Symbolize It

Place your hands in the shape of a bridge. This can be a symbol when signaling one student to give solace to another or when the class needs quiet reflection time.

Synchronize It.

Choose three students to each sing a syllable of the word *Transcendence*. Syncopate the rhythm together. Take five minutes to create a group song, to help the class remember the word. You may choose to use the song in your morning routine or as an impromptu celebration song whenever students practice the habit-of-heart.

Storytell It

The Dark Child continues as the featured literary text for whole group, small group, or individualized reading.

Students will study **Chapters 7 through 9** as they apply the habit-of-heart Transcendence.

The follow-up activities appear in the next section, on Standards-based Learning.

Standardize It

Standards-based Learning: Humanities

The Dark Child, Chapter 7 Discussion and Activities

Konden Diarra struck fear in the hearts of the boys. In the end, they learned to conquer their fears. Have you ever had a fear based on something imagined? How did you transcend that fear? Did you use guided imagery, meditation, singing, praying, or did you forget your fears by helping someone else? All of these strategies have been useful for those trying to transcend their fears.

Do you think that by preparing to face an imaginary threat (Konden Diarra) the boys better prepared themselves for the real pain to come? In the same way, we can develop transcendence tools and practice ways to prepare for the difficulties that will come our way.

Personal Challenge

This week:

1. Learn at least one meditation or a guided imagery story and rehearse it to yourself each day, to use when you are faced with tests. (Your teacher or Full-Circle Learning may be able to provide these.)

2. Memorize at least one song to use when faced with challenges.
3. Look for one other person in need. When you feel sorry for your own trials, focus on reaching out to that other person and offering your listening skills to help them instead of focusing on your fears or worries.

Think about how you respond to anxiety. When you feel stress, do you feel flushed? Does your heart race? Does your stomach feel tight? When you feel these signs and know you are becoming angry or anxious, very slowly count to ten and choose one of the techniques above to quiet your own feelings.

Chapter 8-9 Discussion

Consider the role of the older boys in helping the younger boys transcend fear and pain through the healing process. After Chapter 7, you learned exercises for transcendence. Now think about your own personal role models who show love, give comfort or extend a listening ear, as the characters in the story did.

After reading about the role of the older boys in this chapter, think about members of your community who can benefit from what you have learned about transcendence. These may be younger children in a hospital who would enjoy learning the songs that have helped you; people convalescing in a veteran's hospital who would enjoy the comfort of your stories, music and art cards; or peers who have experienced danger and need a practiced listening ear.

Discuss people with whom you might practice transcendence skills. How would your help benefit them?

Integrated Content: Poetry

Reproduce or write on the board the African Poetry Series, located in the Resource section at the end of the unit. Carry out the following discussion questions and activities.

- In *The Dark Child*, the fears and pain association with boys' initiation rites called for the development of the ability to transcend difficulties. Transcendence, as a theme, not only calls upon individuals but also calls upon groups to address the changes associated with nation building, liberation, unification or other societal coming of age stories.
- See how different poets bring meaning to the transitions of a society coming of age. Read the three poem excerpts, *The Stars Have Departed*, *The Search* and *On a Wet September Morning*.

- The first poem refers to the sky looking down at the world through a monocle (an eyeglass for one eye), while the poet “clutches at this hour,” lamenting the lost stars. What do you think the antennae represent—technology? A connection to the universe? To hope? To themes of identity? The obscurity of the poem allows the reader to feel his or her own yearning within these impassioned lines.
- The second poem sends a message about time, using clear imagery. Do you think the poet feels that history informs the present? Does the poet want you to live in the present? Why or why not? Do you think the smoke could refer to future wisdom that rises from the ashes of our heritage? Or could it also refer to mistakes we drag along, pains we cannot transcend and hurts from which we have not healed? If the poet leaves it up to the reader to answer these questions, you could read it as a challenge. What steps can you take to make sure that you take history’s treasures from the cinders, leave behind its traumas, and as best you can, practice forgiveness and restorative justice, so the sweet-smelling smoke of wisdom will rise up into the future?
- Reimagining the future and even stating it as the present is the focus of some meditative practices. Read the third poem. What phrases suggest a hopeful vision of a unified humanity? Does this poem make you feel differently about society’s future than the first two did?
- Which of the poems makes you feel the most transcendent about your own life? Each person is unique and will relate to a different poetic voice.
- Write your own free verse poem about transcendence, in a voice that gives you hope for the future. Create it with the idea that you can read it to yourself each day for inspiration, to help you transcend negative thoughts.

Integrated Content: Social Studies

What local agencies create opportunities to help people transcend in times of trauma? How would students prepare for such careers? Bring in guest presenters who represent the relevant careers in your community. Talk to local representatives of local and international service organizations (NGOS, social service workers, rebuilders, local health care providers, reformers, etc.)

Interview them about their work in bringing peace, security, prosperity, health and well-being to the regions where they have served, and their work helping individual families transcend difficulties.

Ask them to visit the classroom and speak about the geography of their travels, the motivation for their work, the educational preparations they have made, and the age at which they determined they wanted to help society.

Advise them on a topic that ties in your educational goals. Invite these guest presenters to inspire the students as well as providing information.

Show It

Help students learn to provide mutual support as they practice Transcendence skills. Offer the following challenges:

- **Rehearse listening skills:** Meet in groups of two. One person tells how they overcame a childhood fear. The first cannot speak but can only listen and give nonverbal signs of understanding such as a nod or a facial expression. At the end of the story, the listener says, "I hear you saying that you felt _____ when you experienced _____. I acknowledge and empathize with your feelings." They can then switch roles. Rather than giving quick solutions, each one practices listening to the other without judgment, providing encouragement and support for the positive solutions the other one has already applied.
- **Share transcendence poems:** Articulate your thoughts with the classmate who will be your partner. Choose a time to check in with each other each week and share any new thoughts. If either of you feels discouraged, reread your poems to each other.
- **Think of this personal experience as a way to help groups:** Turn your poem into a song, for use in later projects that help others practice transcendence.
- **Observe solutions:** Using the anonymous problems submitted by students, learn from each other how to transcend on the conflict bridge. For example, one student may have been robbed, another ill, another grieved over a loss, another betrayed. As they put their concerns in an anonymous box and others draw out a conflict to resolve, the writer of the conflict can see classmates demonstrate how they would seek resolution through transcendence.

Sing It

Introduce the Full-Circle Learning song *Rise Above*. (A song book and CD are available to help teach the songs.)

Challenge students to write poems about friendship or poems designed to encourage a friend. Help them set their work to music and put it to personal use. Invite local musicians to the school to assist.

Share It

Choose one of the service location options discussed in the chapter activities (hospitals or other locations where people have suffered from fear, pain, loneliness or danger.) Discuss the types of songs, poems, cards, stories and listening skills that group might appreciate on their path to transcendence.

Match students with someone they can encourage and prepare the materials you will take along. For example, in one case, a class sewed words of love on pillows for hospital patients. Another painted healthy cells to hang on hospital walls. Another told stories of transcendence to children or simply sang and read poetry. Think about the special needs in your community as you plan your activity.

Incorporate the music students have prepared, and create gifts with care before your scheduled trip. Prepare for students to offer comfort to those in need of transcendence.

Send It

Send the songs and poems to distant members of the human family who have suffered recent tragedies. This can be done across town or around the world through a contact with a computer. Or they can be sent to UNICEF for distribution.

Sustain It

To reflect on the learning unit, hold conversations in small groups. Discuss the meaning of the word Sage. Why does a sage demonstrate transcendence to others in order to increase his or her own? What experiences led to your own growth as a Sage during the unit? Who felt more transcendent through the work achieved? What habits can we sustain in relation to this process?

Transcendence Resource Sheet

Student Resource Sheet

African Poetry Series

The Stars Have Departed

The stars have departed
The sky in a monocle
Surveys the world under
The stars have departed
And I- Where am I? ?
Stretch, stretch O antennae,
To clutch at this hour,
Fulfilling each movement in a
Broken monody.

By Christopher Okigbo, in William Walsh's *Commonwealth Literature*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973, p.48.

The Search

The past is
but the cinders
Of the present
The future
The smoke
That escaped
Into the cloud-bound sky.

By K. Brew, Walsh, p. 50

On a Wet September Morning

The echo burst in me
Like a great harmonic chord-
Violins of love and happy voices
The pagan trumpet blast
Swamping the lamentation of the horn
Then the heraldic drums
In slow crescendo rising
Crashed though my senses
Into a new present
Which is the future.

By Lennie Peter, in Jaya Lakshmi Rao's *African Postcolonial Literature in English in the Postcolonial Web*.

The Habit of Aspiration

Learning Unit 6: Teacher's Planning Steps

Please note: The steps of this unit are chronologically ordered to allow more time for completion. Your class may not be able to complete every activity, but make sure you study all the options and plan time to finish those which will provide the greatest learning as well as contribute to the community development and personal development of the students.

Sense It Step

Bring to class several objects that can create noise, such as a metal utensil, a ceramic or glass dish, bowl or glass, book, and a broom.

Ask students to close their eyes. Tell them you will introduce several sounds to them. Without looking, they should tell you what those sounds suggest.

1. Ruffle the pages of the book. Ask students to silently respond to the question, What do you hear? After a moment, ask, Did you hear a moving wind? Did you hear waves washing over a shore?
2. Tap a metal object against a ceramic or glass dish. Again challenge them to imagine what they hear. Ask, Did you hear the chime of a church bell? A tinsmith? A train whistle?
3. Pound a book against your palm. After giving them time to guess the sound, ask: Did you hear someone pounding grain? An animal going coming home? Someone shaking a rug?
4. Whisk the broom against the floor. Ask, Did you hear sand stirring? Someone walking in a long robe? Someone grooming the coat of an animal?

Reveal the way you made each of the sounds. Ask: How does prior life experience influence the way we perceive reality?

We can use our imagination to bring life to our stories, art forms and to inspire the human inventions we create.

We can shape our goals in ways that inspire positive change when we *expand our awareness of the world of possibilities* – and our awareness of our own *inner possibilities*—along the way.

The word “aspire” means to strive for a high goal. Some people aspire for fame and fortune. What do you think a Sage aspires to do?

As the Sage engages in these thoughts and habits, he or she practices the habit of Aspiration.

See It. Say It.

Write *Aspiration* on the board. Say it together. Define it as “the habit of striving for a worthy goal.”

Synchronize It.

Choose four students to each sing a syllable. Syncopate the rhythm together. Take five minutes to create a group song, to help the class remember the word, which you may use to create a new morning routine and as an impromptu celebration song whenever students complete a project related to the habit-of-heart.

Shape It.

Draw a shape around *Aspiration*. For example, it may look like a mountain peak on a flat terrain, to represent climbing to reach a high goal.

Symbolize It

The symbol for *Aspiration* may be simply to shield the eyes and look up, as if to reach the sun. As a reminder to students embarking on a difficult project, or a student reworking a problem, this may be an effective nonverbal cue.

Show It

Group Activity: Capacities Index

Write your name on a piece of paper. Pass the paper to the next person, who will write down at least one work skill, study skill, capacity or habit-of-heart they see in you.

Pass the paper around repeatedly, until the page begins to fill up. Before it returns to you, everyone will turn their paper over. All have had a chance to write about others. Now it is time to write about yourself.

On a separate piece of paper, list the activities you enjoy most. When do you feel a sense of joy or excitement? When does the time pass quickly? When do you feel a sense of accomplishment about your work? When do you sense that others might find your skills useful? When are others' lives better or happier because you have created something for them? When are *you* happiest? On this basis, make a list of your most valuable capacities.

Now turn in the sheets to their original owners. Everyone should have a list of qualities the classmates see in them and a list of capacities they have discovered on their own. How do the lists compare? Are there vocations or avocations that could make you happy that also draw on your best traits? (Sometimes what people do for a living is only one way of bringing happiness to their lives and to the lives of others.)

Personal Activity: Possible Life Path Index

In a third list, write down My Possible Life Path. Include all the careers, vocations or avocations (hobbies or service pursuits) you think would require the qualities or involve the types of activities you have mentioned.

You will keep this list and continue adding to it. When you see someone applying qualities or skills similar to yours, ask them about their career and how they prepared for it. Note their comments on education, apprenticeship, hobbies, jobs, service, application of a craft, or other types of personal preparation. Write these notes in another column called Career Path Preparation.

Over time, think about the things you can accomplish to make the world brighter if your path aligns with your purpose and your own natural abilities. By the end of the year, you should have met and interviewed at least three to five people whose experience results in new options on your career index. Write your conclusions and plans at the bottom of your career index.

Storytell It

The Dark Child continues as the featured literary text for whole group, small group, or individualized reading.

Students will study **Chapter 10-11** as they apply the habit-of-heart Aspiration. The follow-up activities appear in the next section, on Standards-based Learning.

Standardize It

Standards-based Learning: Humanities

***The Dark Child*, Chapter 10-11**

Chapter 10 Discussion and Activities

Laye is in a very happy and hopeful time of life during this chapter. He has a very innocent, loving friendship with Marie, and he wants to succeed in his studies. What do you think he means when he says that even if God's will were predetermined, and thus our actions were predetermined, our actions influence God's will?

Have you ever wanted something so much that you could talk your parents into wanting it for you, even though they didn't think it was important in the beginning?

Laye has everyone offering up cola nuts and making sacrifices so that he will pass his exams. Do you think his happiness is their goal? Then what is his goal?

An old adage states that *capacities are needs*. What do you think this means? What capacities does Laye feel he has that might help him find his way to the most meaningful life he can have?

Research: Collect news of current events and share stories in class. What issues specific to your region reflect a universal human need (related to poverty, the environment, education, peace, etc.)?

Identify concrete examples of projects that offer solutions to problems. Which solutions utilize your skills?

Examples:

- 1) Creating solar cookers would reduce soot and carbon while supplying cost-effective energy. Students could make solar cookers out of recycled materials.
- 2) To help reduce neighborhood poverty, some people might create co-ops by cooking or making crafts; others might develop co-ops to provide childcare to assist adults working or attending night classes.
- 3) Some teams of people might learn to cook and deliver food for elderly people without families.

What project is appropriate for your area? What current skills prepare you to participate?

Chapter 11 Discussion

Check dies and enters "God's Highway." Laye described this as "far less frightening than the highways of life—the ones we set foot on when we are born and which are only the temporary highways of exile..."

What do you think he meant by this? Is he torn between exercising his talents and passions and being estranged from his homeland? Does he fear uncertainty?

Do you ever think about leaving your homeland to discover your purpose in life? When you think of the place where you were born or the place where you find purpose, which is your true home and which is your land of exile?

Thought Question:

Imagine your own highest aspirations to improve the well-being of your human family. Refer to your list of natural gifts. Make sure it includes not only knowledge and social skills but any qualities such as intuition, creativity, curiosity and talent. How could you apply these gifts to help the community where you live today?

Writing Activity:

Write a vignette about a day in your future life when you apply your fully developed skills to help your community. Show how you exercised the habit-of-heart to make this life's path possible. Evaluate what a difference your aspirations made in the process.

Integrated Content: Poetry

Two poems, *The Pride to Be an African* and *Can't You* appear in the Resource section of the Aspiration unit. The following activities include an art project related to the first poem that may require additional time and collaboration outside class. The second poem includes writing activities.

Poem #1 Discussion and Activities: The Pride to Be an African

- This poem combines the repetition of call-and-response poetry with fresh ideas in each line. Its series of descriptive clauses portrays the strengths and wisdom of an African. Readers will resonate most with the concepts that relate to their personal experiences. The more the readers know of Greek culture, for example, or the more they may have thought about the many natural resources of Africa, the more emotionally they might respond to the first two stanzas.
- Each reader, of course, will have their own definition of African hospitality, great leaders or learned youth. By not painting scene-based pictures, the poet forces the reader to conjure up their own images that support each line and to also ensure that each line remains true in the future rather than belonging to a stagnant past. For example, if only one example of a learned youth appeared in the poem, would all young readers aspire to wisdom? How did you feel about this comment on the role of youth, as it relates to you and your own peers?
- The last line of the poem is especially intriguing. What do you think it means that every African should earn a Nobel Prize in existence?

- Together, create a mural of the poem, supplying scenes that relate to your own interpretation of the poem. Remember that the goal is not extreme nationalism or competition with other countries but, rather, recognition of your own potential and rich cultural heritage. Work with your math teacher, if needed, to learn how to measure small squares and project them onto larger panels of paper or cardboard. Each classmate may then have one square in which to add an image to the mural.
- Post your mural on the side of the school or in a public place, to remind the community of its highest aspirations.

Poem #2 Discussion and Activities: Can't You

- Ehsan, a young Sudanese high school student, calls her readers to their highest aspirations in this poem. The effectiveness of Ehsan's poem stems from the pattern of the verses.
- In each verse, she conjures up details related to one of the five senses.
- She alternates pleasurable sensory descriptions with ideals that challenge our sensibilities.
- Do you think the poem suggests that we can best enjoy life's pleasures when we know others are well-fed, peaceful and living in harmony with nature?
- The poem increasingly paints a picture of an ideal that affects all humanity or speaks to the greater good. What does it say about Ehsan's aspirations?
- What does she hope the reader will do?
- How does the poem "show" rather than "tell" about the poet's aspirations?
- How do you prepare to persuade when you sit down to write? What topics relate to your own aspirations?
- Ehsan read her work publicly to persuade others. Who needs to hear your message? Where would you read it? If you print or publish it, who needs to read it?
- Choose a theme of great importance to you. Craft a poem related to your aspirations to improve conditions in the world or in your community. Write a step by step plan for presenting the work to those who need to see it:
 - Brainstorm ideas.
 - Craft a draft of the poem. Let it sit for a day.
 - Refine and revise the poem.
 - Copy it again.
 - Define the type of listener or reader whom it might inspire.
 - Where will you find this audience? How will you reach them?
 - Identify others in class who have written for the same audience.
 - Create a plan for an informal collective poetry reading at a location accessible to this group. Who can help make it happen? How will you invite people?
 - Practice reading clearly, with emotion, to persuade your listeners.

Integrated Content: Mathematics/Art

Review the activities for the poem, “The Pride to be an African.” A local artist or art teacher may want to help students interpret the themes of each verse and translate them into individual pictures. The mathematics teacher may want to help them determine how to project small images onto a large-scale mural, to be painted on a rock wall or onto the side of a building.

Send It

Exchange wisdom, to learn from people in another location about the varying ways to address a human problem. This can be done by postal mail, though a local internet service or by sending word through a traveler.

Ask how distant students are applying their skills to bring solutions to community needs. Do you think others’ solutions to universal challenges or ideas will be unique or similar?

Challenge the class to think about these considerations: How can the combination of diverse talents and perspectives bring fresher ideas than just applying one skill set or the other? What do we need to know about the special circumstances of each region to customize our skills to a need?

Design a short-term project that will help address a universal challenge, using all the talents of your group members. Exercise the habit-of-heart throughout the process, and challenge the global partner to do the same.

Sing It

Learn the song *I Aspire*, available through Full-Circle Learning. Rehearse this and/or other favorite songs from throughout the course, and add dances, to prepare for the culminating Sages Mastery Ceremony.

Share It

Share It Activity 1: Review the current events students shared about solutions to community issues. Which solutions utilize the special qualities of class members or take advantage of the special skills logged in their index?

Examples:

- 1) Creating solar cookers would reduce soot, make use of energy and reduce carbon.

- 2) To help reduce poverty, some might create co-ops to start new business enterprises selling items they had made; others might provide childcare on Saturdays for working parents.
- 3) Some might cook food for the elderly or ill.

Choose one or more class service projects that allow students to apply their special talents and unique habits-of-heart for the common good.

Share It Activity 2: Based on the activities for *Can You*, hold poetry readings for relevant audiences -- or challenge students to individually present the poetry they have written reflecting their aspirations.

Share It Activity 2: Prepare for the culminating Sages Mastery Ceremony.

This process may take several weeks, so begin the process early. A checklist of needed preparations might include:

1. Prepare and refine selected poems written throughout the course.
2. Practice the presentation of these poems.
3. Prepare the written work and songs students have learned, to honor community Sages.
4. Invite the elders, families and community Sages suggested throughout this course.
5. Prepare suggested awards or gifts and mastery certificates for honored Sages as well as Student Sages.
6. Complete and displaying the mural of community aspirations.
7. Ask students to use their special skills to help prepare some foods in advance—perhaps the favorite foods of the elders.
8. Allow time at the end of the program for elders to share wisdom through stories.
9. End with celebratory chant devised by the group through the Synchronize It step.

Sustain It

Students first gather in a circle to reflect on any lives they touched in the community through their performances.

- How did the community sages feel when honored for their lifelong contributions?
- How did the community feel when shown the mural depicting their community aspirations?
- How did students feel about each other when contributing to their list of positive qualities, to guide the process of developing group and individual aspirations?
- Also consider the work in developing projects on universal themes. Was it helpful to consider the role of regional understanding and common human needs in our understanding of aspiring to help the human family?

Break into small groups to hold talking circles on these topics. Allow time for each Sage to return to their Life Path project and add notes that will help them sustain their commitments and aspirations. They will keep this as they leave the course.

Celebrate their departure day and their accomplishments as the new generation of Sages.

Aspiration Resource Sheets

Student Resource

The Pride to be an African

My Africa My Africa My Africa
My Africa of which everybody imitates
My Africa of which culture exceed the Greek
My Africa of which everyone is jealous of

My Africa My Africa My Africa
My Africa of enormous natural endowment
My Africa of Non-Violence
My Africa of Amorous populates

My Africa My Africa My Africa
My Africa of patriot men and women
My Africa of shelter and vintage hospitality
My Africa of great ancestral mythology

My Africa My Africa My Africa
My Africa that bore fruits of black diamonds
My Africa which is a gift to the whole world
My Africa of great leadership

My Africa My Africa My Africa
My Africa of learned youths
My Africa of a bright generation
My Africa true tradition

My Africa My Africa My Africa
My Africa of black pageant women
My Africa of strong men
My Africa from who we all hail from
For every African deserves a Nobel Prize in
Existence.

By Fasan Paul

Student Resource

Can't You?

Can't you hear it?

The sound of birds chirping

The sound of the world's weapons falling, hitting the ground

The sound of harmony throughout all nations

Can't you smell it?

The smell of clean pure air

The smell of live healthy flowers

The smell of ripened apple trees

Can't you taste it?

The taste of clean fresh drinking water

The taste of that apple... off of a grown apple tree

The taste of the first bite of your meal, after knowing everyone else in the world has a meal, too

Can't you see it?

The sight of locking of hands from country to country, continent to continent

The sight of earth being green instead of brown

The sight of a full healthy human being instead of a brittle hungry one

Can't you feel it?

The feeling of unity between everyone doing this together

The feeling of achieving an impossible dream of making this world a better place

The feeling of a warm sun, instead of a hot sun caused from global warming

The feeling of the Earth being healed

The feeling of GREEN !

By Ehsan Hassabelrasoul, 8th grade, 13 years old, SANAD Academy.

Appendix: Teacher’s Guide to Responses

Responses to Chapter One:

1. Responses will vary. This question may be treated as an essay question, followed by group discussion.
2. Laye worries about his responsibility as the oldest son, knowing that his father is growing older. He thinks perhaps he should be in the workshop with his father. He is not sure what is “the right thing.”
3. He longs to be able to inquire something of the snake and feel the answer in its tremor—to have foreknowledge of life’s events.

Responses to Chapter Two:

1. Laye’s father attributed his skills and powers to the snake and the genies.
2. He thought he was the only one receiving special guidance in his work. He could observe purity and respect of the rituals based on his prior knowledge of the work he would be called upon to perform each day.
3. The lady customers, the praise-singers they brought and Laye’s father all took pleasure in the ceremony and artistry associated with the making of the jewelry.
4. Laye’s mother said his father would ruin his health breathing in the gold dust. She also felt uneasy about the integrity of the process because the use of alloys resulted in a product that was not pure gold.
5. Laye’s father responds a little to the flattery of the praise singers and the women who know the quality of his work. He may struggle with pride, but at the same time, he knows this calling has been given to him as a gift, and he feels grateful for it. His expression of gratitude is to stand ever-ready to apply this gift when he has a premonition he will be called upon to do so. This is one interpretation of the question. Laye’s mother, on the other hand, brings the nature of a rule-giver into the picture. Not only does she care about her husband’s lungs, after seeing others suffer from the smoke of the smelting business, but she feels, morally, the importance of honesty. She is caught between an era when purity and mixed metals in jewelry making and manufacturing are struggling for dominance. She has begun to realize that practicality brings the same question to the use of cotton, and so she placates herself that her husband’s choice to add alloys to the gold is more practical than dishonest. Each one brings a different priority – gratitude and honesty—to the work.

Responses to Chapter Three

1. Laye describes the younger uncle as “good by nature.” He demonstrates how his grandmother is pure and kind, and he greets him with affection and attention, as do the other members of the community. They also show dignity, good manners and character. Most readers will sense that the character of the individuals brings joy to the work, whether they are skilled laborers or whether they are drawn to the contemplative life in the fields or the studious life in the schools.
2. The boys carry out their daily role of chasing birds away from the crops.
3. Uncle Lansana is mulling over “the mystery of things—the hows and whys.” What is your own relationship to nature? Take a walk as a group and mull over the hows and whys of things. Stop at a scenic spot and draw something similar to what you think he saw. What type of things do you think Lansana thought about?

Responses to Chapter Four

1. Laye stared at his uncle and tried to capture his gaze out of admiration, for Lansana “was goodness itself.” He loved being on the farm, the closeness to nature and the rhythm of the work. He enjoyed the pleasure of being accepted as family but felt he was always considered a schoolboy cousin from the city, visiting only temporarily.
2. He felt that the people in the country respected the rights of others and always showed dignity. He daydreamed about his unknown life ahead and where it would take him.
3. The scene at the end of the day showed the people happily singing in gratitude for what they had.

Responses to Chapter Five

1. Laye and his siblings were affectionate and protective of one another. They grew up without malice toward others when they were young. They developed empathy and respect.
2. His mother had dignity and commanded the respect of others.
3. His mother, by birth order, played the role of mediator to older twin brothers, making her a wise authority figure in the family and in the community throughout her life. Everyone regarded her as someone who had special powers.
4. A totem is an animal whose qualities symbolize traits you admire or to which you aspire. It may serve as a guiding spirit. Totems became less common among the people in an educated society as time went on.

Chapters Seven through Eleven

These chapters call for activities carried out in class or on a longer-term schedule. The written artifacts can become letters, books and emails valuable in the community. Challenge students to consider the role of climate, technology culture, etc. in addressing global issues at the local level, but not to consider any local factors a barrier in learning wisdom from distant peers.

Prepare ahead by reading all the activity suggestions and scheduling your plans before the beginning of the unit. Your planning may require some work with the community.

*Ask Full-Circle Learning for examples of guided imagery stories.