

OVERVIEW

Delightful gifts, rewards, or the cornerstone of an introductory science lesson — cute growing bookmarks help grow everyone’s character.

This lesson plan uses the seed paper to conduct a simple experiment to monitor the growth of the seeds. It also encourages students to reflect on the values of the Six Pillars of Character.

MATERIALS

- Grow Your Character Bookmarks (one per student)
- Shallow trays with soil for planting (one per student)
- Scissors
- Observation Handout
- Growing Handout

Ethics is a set of standards that tells us how we should behave. It’s based on moral duty and a code of values that guides our choices and actions. No person with strong character lives without such a code. Ethics is more than doing what we must do; it’s doing what we *should* do. Therefore, it is an exercise in self-control.

The values of the Six Pillars of Character – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship – are integral parts of the ethical decision-making process. Could a decision cause you or someone else to suffer physical harm or emotional pain? Could it undermine your credibility or damage a relationship? Could it impede the achievement of a goal? Often times doing the right thing can cost more than we may want to pay in terms of friendship, money, prestige, or pleasure. Practicing ethical decision-making, like exercising good character, takes courage.

Effective decision-making accomplishes something we want to happen. It becomes easier when we take choices seriously and recognize which decisions are important and which are not. It’s easy to simply go with the flow, but sometimes a situation demands more care and thought to achieve what we want. Taking time to choose the most ethical alternative is always best.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will learn good character by:

- Learning and understanding the meaning of the Six Pillars of Character
- Applying the meaning of those values to their own lives
- Learning to take responsibility by monitoring the growth of the seeds
- Learning basic elements of scientific experiments
- Learning about the growing process from seed to flower
- Understanding the significance of growing their own characters

ACTIVITY

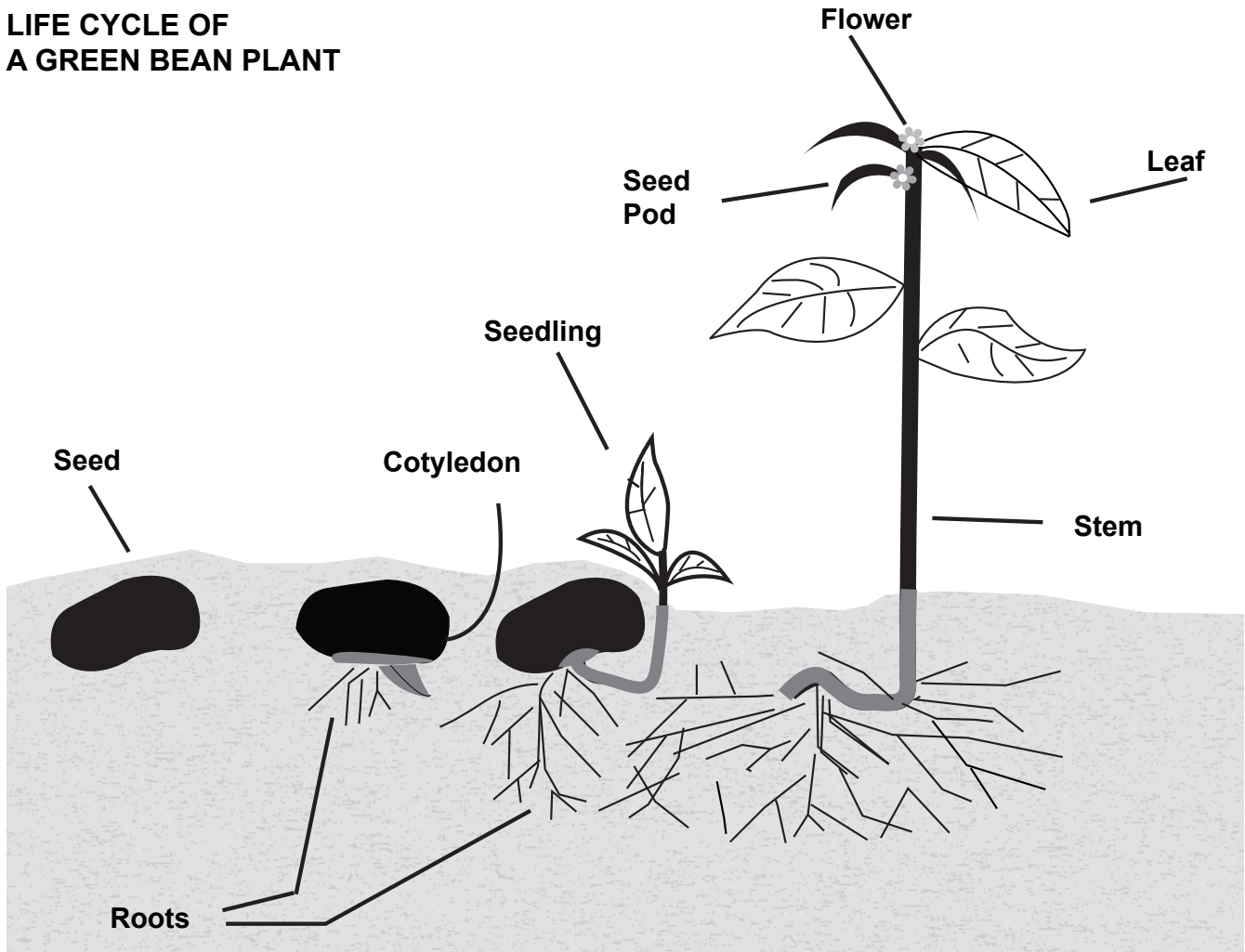
1. Show the Grow Your Character Bookmarks to the students and ask them what they think they are.
2. Ask them if anyone knows how flowers grow. As they make suggestions, draw the cycle on the board. Use our Growing Handout as a template.
3. Lead them into describing the stages of growth. What do flowers grow from? (A seed.) How does the seed turn into a flower? (The seed absorbs water and the radicle emerges, followed by the plumule.) Use the Growing Handout to illustrate the vocabulary and process.
4. Ask them what seeds need to make them grow. (Water and sunlight.) Tell them they are going to do an experiment with some seeds. Model the experiment by taking the seed paper out of the bookmark, cutting it in half, and placing each half in a shallow tray making sure to cover both halves with soil. Water the entire tray, then cover one half. This half will not receive any sunlight.
5. Tell the students they are each going to have a tray divided in half and will monitor the growth of their seeds over a period of time.
6. Distribute the bookmarks, scissors, and trays (you may want to prepare these with soil prior to starting this lesson). Make sure the students cover one half of their tray.
7. Finally, distribute the Observation Handout and explain that the students must make sure to water their seeds and record what they see each morning for both sides of the tray. Remind them to water both halves of the tray, making sure to re-cover the same half each time.
8. The seeds should begin to sprout within a few weeks. Monitor their growth as a class. What has happened to the half that didn't receive any sunlight?
9. What do they think is important for the seeds to grow into flowers? When the experiment is over, ask them to think about themselves and people in general. What do people need to grow into healthy and strong people?
10. Guide the discussion to the Six Pillars of Character. Look at the bookmarks again. Each bookmark has one of the Six Pillars on it. Why do they think the Pillars are important to them? (Visit our website for more information on the Six Pillars of Character: www.charactercounts.org.)
11. What did they learn about the Six Pillars as they conducted their experiment?

GROWING HANDOUT

PARTS OF A SEED



LIFE CYCLE OF A GREEN BEAN PLANT



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GROWING HANDOUT

DATES	OBSERVATIONS