

Character and Life Skills: **Self-Control**

Lesson Title: **Red Light, Green Light**

Grade Level: **3-5**



Project and Purpose

Students discuss various strategies to show self-control and use a "red light, yellow light, green light" model to represent how they choose to show self-control in different situations.

Essential Question

What are some different ways we demonstrate self-control?

Materials

- Pens, pencils
- Red, Yellow, Green crayons, markers or colored pencils
- Smart board, white board or chart paper
- **Red Light, Green Light** worksheet
- **Taking Control** handout

Procedure

Note: Before beginning the lesson, draw a big traffic light on the board or a piece of chart paper and color the lights red, yellow and green

Introduction

1. Define the word "self-control" with your students. What does it mean to have self-control? When is it important to show self-control? What happens if we don't show self-control?
2. Review what the three colors of a stop light represent:
 - Red = Stop
 - Yellow = Caution
 - Green = Go
3. Explain to students that today, they will be presented with various scenarios where they must stop and think before they react. They will use the colors of the traffic light to help them work through each step.

Direct Instruction (I do)

1. Draw attention to the traffic light you have drawn on the board or chart paper.
2. Explain to students that just as drivers need self-control to follow traffic lights, you need self-control to stop doing something wrong, use caution if you are not sure if it is right, and go ahead with confidence when doing the right thing.
3. Share with students a time when you had to exercise self-control.
 - Example: Someone has called you a mean name that hurt your feelings and now they are laughing at you.
4. Think out loud as you decide to exercise self-control in this particular situation. Refer to the traffic light to guide your thinking.
 - Example: "My feelings are hurt and they are laughing at me. I'm upset and I have to decide how I want to react. My 'red light' is telling me to stop. I could call them a mean name back, but that doesn't seem very kind. My 'yellow light' tells me to think again, there may be a better response if I think some more. I could take a deep breath, and walk away or I could calmly tell the person that they hurt my feelings. My 'green light' tells me to go."
5. Make sure students understand your thought process and see how you exercised self-control in this situation.

Guided Exploration (We do)

1. Distribute the **Taking Control** handout to each student.
2. Discuss together the different strategies listed on the handout that students could use to exercise self-control in different situations.

Explain to students that today, they will get their own copy of a traffic light (the **Red Light, Green Light** worksheet). Their first task is to color the traffic light. Next, they will work in small groups or pairs to think of a situation where they must show self-control. They will write the situation at the top of the **Red Light, Green Light** worksheet. Next, they should think through the process of how they will respond in the situation and write in the provided blanks the steps they will take. Students should consult the **Taking Control** handout for ideas on how to respond.

Independent Practice (You do)

1. Make sure each student has a copy of both worksheets.
2. Monitor the small groups or pairs as they come up with a scenario and think through how they will show self-control in their response.

Conclusion

At the end of the lesson, have groups or pairs share their traffic lights aloud and discuss how they exercised self-control in their chosen situation.

Vocabulary

communicate (v.)

Definition: to exchange information or conversation with other people by using words, signs, letters, etc.
Context: After Tracey moved to a different state, she communicated daily with her best friend by sending email.

manage (v.)

Definition: to deal with a situation that needs to be controlled in some way
Context: Mia manages to control her temper by counting to 10 each time she feels angry.

self-control (n.)

Definition: the state of being calm; the ability to behave calmly and sensibly even when a person feels very excited, angry, etc.
Context: Coach Gonzalez lost his self-control and screamed at his players after the team missed the field goal.

Teacher Notes

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Activity: **Taking Control**

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Think Happy Thoughts: Peter Pan says that happy thoughts can be helpful. When you're angry, sometimes you begin to think negative thoughts. Try replacing these thoughts with more positive ones.

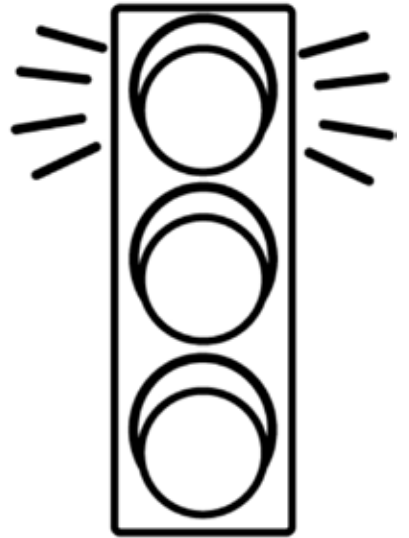
Be a Better Communicator: The first thing to do if you're in a heated discussion is slow down and think through your responses. Don't say the first thing that comes into your head; instead, think carefully about what you want to do. At the same time, listen carefully to what the other person is saying.

Change Your Environment: Sometimes it's where you are that makes you angry. When this happens, give yourself a break. Take a "time out" and just be by yourself for a few minutes.

Practice Relaxation: Simple relaxation tools, such as deep breathing, can help calm angry feelings. Try breathing deeply and repeating a calm word or phrase, such as "relax" or "take it easy"

Stick Your Head in the Sand: If your younger brother or sister's messy room irritates you every time you walk by it, ask nicely if you can shut the door. Don't make yourself look at what irritates you.

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My Name

Scenario

Red Light

Yellow Light

Green Light
