Correctional Education

What is *WiseSkills*?

WiseSkills *is a comprehensive character-building program that equips students with the critical character qualities they need to be successful.* ***WiseSkills*** *includes three separate, yet interconnected, components that help schools, families, and communities cultivate good character in young people.*

WiseSkills provides correctional educators with a variety of ways to develop positive character throughout the school or facility. Because good character and positive choices undergirds all healthy human relationships, ***WiseSkills*** helps educators encourage students to recognize the important role of making life decisions based on principles of character. This involves simple discussions about making good choices, as well as infusing character discussions throughout the academic curricula, including highlighting the choices of characters in stories and the moral fiber of leaders in history. While ***WiseSkills*** was created for educating youth, the materials can easily be modified for adults and used in conjunction with developing GED and literacy skills. In addition, the companion video series ***In Search of Character*** features a diversity of teenagers candidly discussing the importance of good character in their personal lives.

WiseSkills is organized around *Character Themes*, which can be used to unite a school or facility. The chart below shows the resources and character activities for correctional educators that are included in the ***WiseSkills*** curricula for grades 3-12.

Resources & Character Activities for Correctional Educators	*WiseQuotes (3-5)*	*WiseLives (6-8)*	*Wisdom for Life (9-12)*	*In Search of Character* **Video Series**
Reading/Writing Activities	●	●	●	●
Social Studies Activities	●	●	●	●
Math Activities	●	●	●	
Careers & Character			●	
Character Quotations	●	●	●	
Reproducible Activity Pages	●	●	●	
Brief, 10-15 Minute Activities	●	●	●	
Group Discussions	●	●	●	●
Biographies of Positive Role-Models	●	●	●	
Teens Discussing Character Issues				●
Documentaries of Teens Showing Good Character				●

Samples of Activities for Correctional Educators in *WiseSkills*

WiseQuotes (Grades 3-5)

Respect

1. **Chapter Rewrite**
   Have each student choose a character in a book who does not show respect for others. Then have each student rewrite a chapter of the book and have that character show respect for others in the chapter.
2. **Respect Actions**
   Have the class come up with a list of actions that show respect for others and post it in the classroom.
3. **Respect Benefits**
   Make a list of the benefits of treating others with respect or disrespect--including the mental, emotional, and social benefits.

WiseLives (Grades 6-8)

Managing Feelings

1. Make a list on the board of various feelings and what actions people usually take with each feeling. Discuss alternative actions they can take for each emotion.
2. In groups, have students make lists of what makes them angry. Then make a master list on the board. Discuss similarities. Explain that anger usually results when we feel we are being treated unfairly.
3. Have students write short stories where characters experience strong emotions, are tempted to deal with their feelings in negative ways, and finally choose to deal with their feelings in healthy ways.

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Wisdom for Life (Grades 9-12)

Courage

1. **Character Qualities**
   Discuss the qualities that a courageous person needs to have [perseverance, self-confidence, patience, determination, etc.]
2. **Showing Courage**
   Have students tell about times when they showed courage and stood up for what they believed in even when it was difficult.
3. **Review: Courage in History**
   In a history class, review some of the major historical events students have studied recently by highlighting individuals who showed courage. Make a list of leaders who acted upon their convictions and were willing to suffer for what they believed was right and just.

Wisdom for Life (Grades 9-12)

Responsibility

1. **Defining "Accountability"**
   Ask students to define *accountability*. Explain that being accountable for one's actions is part of being responsible.
3. **Responsible Choice**
   Have students write about a difficult decision they had to make where they chose to be responsible.
3. **Letter to a Leader**
   Have students write a letter to an historical leader advising the person about a critical decision he/she needed to make. Have students include reasons why the decision they advocate is more responsible than the one the leader made.