



Instructor Guide Unit 1: Lesson 5 Resilience

Objective:

- The child will be able to describe the concept of resiliency and provide examples of resilient behavior.
- The child will identify at least three adaptive strategies that foster or maintain resiliency.

Time Needed: It is flexible. You can choose to do everything in this guide, or you might select just a few parts to do with the kids each day

Materials, depending on which activities you choose:

- Whiteboard or flip board
- For visual art activity: provide drawing paper, markers, and crayons
- *1-5-5 Strategies to Help You Build Resilience* worksheet (1 per student - optional)
- *1-5-6 Assessment Resilience* (1 per student)
- For physical exercise activities, provide basketballs, cones, hula hoops, and chairs.
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
 - [The Do-Over Day by Julia Inzerro](#)
 - [The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh by Supriya Kelkar](#)
 - [Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts](#)
- A copy of *1-5-4 Sharing Circle Script for Resilience*

Key Concepts or Fundamental Skills:

Self-awareness, Identifying emotions, Self-management, Self-motivation, Stress management

Part One: Watch Video for Kids About Resilience

Start by watching the *Resilience Video for Kids*. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.

Part Two: Discussions about Resilience

Essential Question: How can being resilient protect us when we encounter challenging situations in life?

Vocabulary: Adversity – challenges and difficulties we face in life

Introduce the Concept of Resilience:

Introduction to hook students using Spiderman's story:

Lead a discussion by asking students which superheroes or heroic characters they find to be *resilient*. We've provided an example from the original *Spiderman*.

Read aloud:

- Peter Parker, a teenage boy, struggles in many ways. He is bullied by his peers. He is an orphan who lives with his Uncle Ben and his Aunt Mae.
- After he is bitten by a radioactive spider, Peter Parker gains great powers, and he starts to explore his strength.
- But Peter Parker is focused only on using his powers for his own gain, and one night, he fails to stop a robber because he doesn't think it should be his responsibility. That robber ends up killing his beloved Uncle Ben. The preventable death of Uncle Ben creates terrible feelings of guilt and grief for Peter Parker.
- However, Peter Parker responds to his mistake by building his **emotional resilience**. Instead of crumbling and giving up, he decides to change how he views his responsibilities. He chooses to use his powers to fight villains. He copes with his grief and his sadness by getting back up and finding a way to grow stronger.
- Ask students, "How is Peter Parker resilient?"

Teaching Kids About Resilience: Below are five key concepts to discuss. We provide various pop culture examples to illustrate each idea.

Key Concept One: Resiliency is the ability to recover or "bounce back" quickly from a stressful, scary, or painful event or situation. It is important to distinguish between physical strength and emotional strength. The focus should be on emotional strength in this lesson.

- For example, Peter Parker makes mistakes, but he is able to get back up and learn vital lessons from his missteps.
- Another example is Anna of Arendelle, who bounces back time and again after finding herself in scary or stressful situations. In *Frozen 2*, Anna sings the song "Do the Next Right Thing" after she thinks she has lost both Olaf and Elsa.
- Read aloud these lyrics that Anna sings, and ask the students how the lyrics are about resilience:

"Can there be a day beyond this night?
I don't know anymore what is true
I can't find my direction, I'm all alone
The only star that guided me was you
How to rise from the floor?
But it's not you I'm rising for
Just do the next right thing
Take a step, step again
It is all that I can to do
The next right thing
I won't look too far ahead
It's too much for me to take
But break it down to this next breath, this next step
This next choice is one that I can make
So I'll walk through this night
Stumbling blindly toward the light
And do the next right thing"

Key Concept Two: Resiliency is not simply something we are “born with.” Resiliency can be learned.

- Make sure children understand that *anybody* can learn to be resilient, even if they aren’t resilient by nature.
- Simba from *The Lion King* runs away from adversity as a child, especially after evil Scar tells him that he caused his father’s death. Over time, Simba learns to trust his instincts. With help from Nala and his friends, Simba grows more resilient and returns to Pride Rock to overthrow Scar.

Key Concept Three: Resiliency does not mean “invulnerability” or perfection. Resiliency is about how we deal with our mistakes and grow stronger.

- Discuss how every superhero has a version of their own “kryptonite,” and is susceptible to mistakes and failures. Harry Potter’s weakness is his terrible fear of Dementors. As Harry practices the Patronus charm, he develops his resilience. What are some other examples you can think of?
- In our world, mistakes often mean things like miscommunication, making incorrect assumptions about others, or experiencing our own losses and failures.

Key Concept Four: Resiliency does not mean the absence or avoidance of adversity altogether. You develop resilience when you are exposed to hard times, not by avoiding them.

- Harry Potter enters into dangerous situations to confront Lord Voldemort, instead of choosing to stay safe in his room at Gryffindor house. Harry is often challenged and mocked by Lord Voldemort, and this is what helps him grow stronger. Enduring personal trauma and loss through the death of his parents allows Harry to tolerate difficult emotions when times are tough.
- Finn from Star Wars chooses to join the Resistance and fight back against the First Order, even though it endangers his life to reject his identity of Stormtrooper. He knows he is heading into hard times, but he is willing to do so, because he knows that it’s morally wrong to be a Stormtrooper.

Key Concept Five: Individuals with resiliency are able to see opportunities for growth when they are facing tough times; they can see the “silver lining” in the clouds or even a “call to action.”

- Make sure students understand that the “silver lining” is the positive aspect that comes out of a difficult or painful situation.
- Receiving a “call to action” means that a person (a potential hero), as a result of their own personal struggle, recognizes a need or a problem and becomes motivated to take action to try to solve the problem or improve the situation.
- This is especially true for superheroes when they are discovering their powers for the first time or connecting their origin stories to their missions. For example:
 - Miles Morales (*Into the Spider-verse*) sees the tragic death of Peter Parker as a pivotal “call to action” and dedicates his life to taking up the mantle and responsibilities of Spider-Man.
 - Bruce Wayne sees the tragic death of his parents as a pivotal “call to action” and dedicates his life to ensuring the safety and security of others like him.

Part Three: Activity Options

*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see *1-5-3 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Resilience*.

Activity Option 1: Lead students through an analysis of the gains and losses of resilience using a movie or story they know. The example we provide is Tiana’s journey from the Disney movie *The Princess and the Frog*.

First, introduce Tiana’s story of adversity (or any other story you choose) by reviewing the basic storyline:

- Tiana is a gifted cook who wants to purchase her own restaurant. When the perfect old building becomes available, she plans to use her savings to buy it, but the deal falls through. Desperate to get enough money to buy the building, she agrees to kiss Prince Naveen, who is under a curse that turned him into a frog. Naveen offers to help Tiana buy the building for her restaurant in exchange for a kiss to break the curse.
- Upon kissing Naveen, Tiana also falls victim to the powerful curse, and she is turned into a frog as well. She and Naveen, both vulnerable as frogs, set off on a dangerous adventure through the bayou in search of a cure that will make them human again.

Second, have children evaluate the gains and losses of adversity in the main character’s experience. Again, our example is of Tiana:

- Using a flip chart or whiteboard, draw out two columns, one labeled “Losses” and one labeled “Gains”
- For the “Losses” column, ask kids what things the character may have lost due to adversity (i.e. their privacy, their identity, their family or loved ones, their sense of courage, sense of safety, etc.). Write their answers in the “Losses” column.
 - For example, when Tiana is turned into a frog, she loses her human form, her relationships, her chance to buy a restaurant, her freedom to move through the world as a person, her identity, her job, etc.
- For the “Gains” column, ask kids what things the character may have gained as a result of the circumstance (i.e. lessons learned from the incident, confidence, social support, the feeling of achievement). Write their answers in the “Gains” column.
 - For example, Tiana gains new friends in the bayou, such as Ray the firefly, Louis the alligator, Mama Odie, etc. She develops her own sense of strength and courage and rescues Naveen from multiple dangers. She also learns to let herself love Naveen.
 - After surviving the bayou together, Tiana and Naveen know they can be happy, even if they are frogs, and they accept their situation. When Tiana kisses him again at their wedding, the spell finally breaks. Self-acceptance led Tiana down the path to freedom, and now she can once again follow her dream of owning a restaurant.
- Finally, ask students to “weigh” the columns and evaluate the outcome of the incident. Use the following as prompts if needed:
 - *How might the experience have shaped the character’s resiliency?*
 - *How did the losses and gains affect the outcome?*

Activity Option 2: Analyzing the personal gains and losses of a challenging life event.

Previously, the children identified the gains and losses that Tiana experienced after she suffered an adversarial event in her life (being turned into a frog). Now it is time for them to apply this critical thinking to a challenge they have endured in their own lives.

- Using the handout *1-5-7 Personal Losses and Gains from Challenging Event*, invite kids to identify an adversarial event that they have experienced in their own life.
- Kids will write down (or draw a picture of) the adversarial event, along with identifying what they have lost and gained from working through the hardship.
- Anything that a child perceives as a challenge is a valid adversarial event. There is wide room for kids to identify what they are comfortable exploring. To help kids pick something, here are some examples that include a vast range of emotional intensities:
 - Losing your favorite stuffed animal
 - Death of a pet
 - Not getting the toy or game you really wanted
 - Divorce or separation of parents
 - Moving to a new home
 - Losing your home
 - Having a fight with a friend
 - Best friend moving away
 - Not being able to join a sports team
 - Getting a new sibling
 - Trouble learning to read, write or do math
 - Being quarantined due to COVID-19
 - Having an illness or an injury
 - Being different from other people

Activity Option 3: Brainstorm and share strategies to build resilience.

Ask kids to share suggestions for strategies that can build resilience. Write their ideas on a flip chart or a whiteboard. If children need help thinking of ideas, here are some prompts:

- Build a strong circle of friends
- Build good relationships with your family
- Use faith-based groups or after-school groups to find support
- Take the problem or stress one day at a time (only handle what you can handle)
- Visualize how the future might get better (positive forecasting)
- Help other people who may be going through tough times. (You've worked through some challenge: See this as a 'call to action' to help others.)
- Accept that change is a part of life (moving, new school, new family members)
- Set goals and move toward your goals (be self-directed)
- Build a routine (consistency can be calming)
- Journal, write, or paint/draw your experiences
- Avoid unnecessary drama and peer conflict
- Practice deep breathing and other mindfulness techniques to manage stress.
- Practice self-compassion - Treat yourself with the same kindness you'd show to a friend. Imagine what you'd say to a friend who's struggling: then direct those kind thoughts and words toward *yourself*.

After students have had a chance to share suggestions, teachers can opt to give students the handout *1-5-5 Strategies to Help You Build Resilience*, which includes a variety of adaptive, safe ways to build resilience. This handout can also be sent home to foster discussion with parents.

Activity Option 4: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss Resilience.

- Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled *1-5-4 Sharing Circle Script on Resilience*. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

Activity Option 5: Read aloud and discuss a picture book about Resilience.

- We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how they think the story relates to practicing resilience.
 - The Do-Over Day by Julia Inzerro
 - The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh by Supriya Kelkar
 - Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts

Activity Option 6: Physical activity: Children will engage in activities that promote the concept of resilience, which is bouncing back from challenges and adversarial events.

1. **Musical Chairs:** Part of resiliency is learning that you don't always win, and this is okay. Have the children play the old-fashioned game of musical chairs to work on accepting loss in a safe environment.
2. **Obstacle Course Trust Walk:** Instruct the children to make a simple obstacle course with hula hoops, cones, etc. Divide the children into pairs. Each child takes a turn wearing a blindfold while their partner leads them through the obstacle course. This activity helps build trust and resilience.
3. **Bouncing Back:** Put children into pairs or small groups. Give each group a basketball or similar bouncing ball. Have children stand ten feet apart and bounce the ball back and forth to each other. Each time a child bounces the ball, ask them to name a challenge that people have to bounce back from. For example, a child might say "anxiety" or "loneliness" or "COVID-19" or "fights with friends" as they bounce the ball to others.

Activity Option 7: Drama/Theater activity: Invite kids to form groups and create a skit about this week's theme, which is learning Resilience. Below are prompts:

- "You are part of a team of adventurers that is sailing to recover buried treasure from a sunken pirate ship. Your boat encounters a huge storm, and a giant wave knocks all your diving equipment into the sea and breaks your sail. What do you do?"
- "A bus drops you and your friends off at a remote location for a camping trip. While you are swimming in the lake, a bear breaks into your camp and eats all your food. The bus won't be back for three days. You have no phones. What do you do to survive?"

Activity Option 8: Visual Art activity: Invite children to overcome various types of challenges while drawing pictures. Encourage them to see the beauty in what they create instead of seeing the differences as imperfections. Provide drawing paper and markers or crayons.

- **Non-dominant hand activity:** Ask children to place a marker or crayon in their non-dominant hand (right-handed kids will draw with left hand and left-handed kids will draw with right hand). Tell children to draw a picture of anything they choose, but *they must use their non-dominant hand*. Suggestions: draw an apple, write your name, draw a house, draw a tree, draw a superhero, draw shapes, etc.
- **Eyes-closed drawing activity:** Ask children to draw a picture of anything they choose, *as long as they keep their eyes closed*.
- **Upside down drawing:** Ask children to draw a picture of anything they choose, but *it must be drawn upside down*. No flipping the paper upside down while drawing!

Extension Activity

Allow students to journal or write an essay about a time that they have seen resilience in action in real life, or a time that they were resilient.

Part Four: Assessment

If you want to do a formal assessment, hand out one printed copy of *1-5-6 Assessment for Resilience* to each child. This worksheet checks for understanding of resilience and asks children to list strategies to promote resilience. For primary students, you can talk through this assessment.

Additional fictional examples of resilience from pop culture stories:

Black Panther Example

T'Challa, AKA Black Panther, is unsure of how to lead Wakanda after his father's untimely death. When Killmonger usurps T'Challa's throne, T'Challa must confront the difficult realities of his father's poor choices so that he may reclaim his right to rule. Rather than succumb to the same fear that controlled his father, T'Challa decides to face that fear, and lead Wakanda in a new direction.

Batgirl Example

Barbara Gordon AKA Batgirl was brutally shot in the spine and assaulted by the villain The Joker, who left her to die. Barbara fears she will be paralyzed for life but eventually regains the use of her legs and returns to crime-fighting as Batgirl. She undergoes both physical and psychological therapy to overcome the traumatic memory of her assault, yet she utilizes her own fear and terror to actually energize and mobilize herself when facing other villains.

Avengers: Age of Ultron Example

In *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, the character Wanda Maximoff AKA Scarlet Witch loses her entire home, and her country is demolished during warfare. Though she faced a "threat of annihilation" to her personhood due to losing all connections to her home country and culture (in addition to losing her brother, Pietro, a casualty of war), Wanda later joins with Vision, War Machine, and Falcon as a member of the new Avengers. As Olsen put it, Wanda earns a "surrogate family" with Earth's Mightiest Heroes.

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.C

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.D

Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.