I AM WORTHY Facilitator's Guide

Older Elementary – Middle School

#6 | I Am a Caring, Attentive Listener

Lesson Overview

In this lesson (35–45 minutes), students learn the importance of listening with care and attention. They will explore why listening matters, when it can be difficult, and how attentive listening helps build stronger relationships and understanding. Students will practice giving their full attention with their eyes, mind, and body. They will also learn that caring about what others say can help them become wiser, kinder, and more respectful leaders.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Define what it means to be a caring, attentive listener.
- Identify situations when listening is easy and when it can be difficult.
- Practice attentive listening using eye contact, focused attention, and body posture.
- Demonstrate care for others by paying attention to the emotions they may be expressing.
- Understand that it is not their fault when someone else is not a caring, attentive listener.

Supplies Needed

- Paper and markers for each table
- Student journals, if available
- Bluetooth speaker
- Access to an "Annoying Sounds" playlist on Spotify or a similar platform
- Whiteboard or poster board and marker

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Introduction: Being a Caring, Attentive Listener (5–7 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say: “Today we’re going to learn how to be a caring, attentive listener. That sentence is packed with important ideas, so we’re going to break it down together.”

Write on the board or poster board:

I am a caring, attentive listener.

Talk It Out (2–3 minutes)

Table Leaders

Ask:

- “What does it mean to be caring? What does it mean to be uncaring?”
- “What does it mean to be attentive? What does it mean to be inattentive?”

Allow students a few minutes to discuss their ideas at their tables.

Large Group Activity: What Is Listening? (5–7 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Ask:

1. “What is a listener?”

Allow students to respond.

Explain: “A listener is someone who listens to another person with care and attentiveness.”

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Ask:

2. “Is it easy or hard to listen?”

Allow students to respond.

Explain: “It depends. Sometimes listening is easy, and sometimes it can be difficult.”

Ask:

3. “What is easy to listen to?”

Possible responses:

- Favorite music
- A good movie
- Your best friend

Ask:

4. “What is hard to listen to?”

Possible responses:

- A boring movie
- Someone who speaks with no emotion
- Loud or annoying noises

Using the Bluetooth speaker, play several sounds from an “Annoying Sounds” playlist to illustrate how some sounds are harder to listen to than others.

What Did You Notice? (4–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Ask:

- Is it easy to listen when you’re tired? Why or why not?
- Is it easy to listen when you’re angry?
- Is it easy to listen when you’re happy?
- Is it easy to listen when you’re sad?
- Is it easy to listen when you’re content?

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Allow students to respond.

Explain: “Emotions can make listening easier or harder.”

Ask: “Why do you want people to listen to you?”

Allow students to respond.

Write on the board or a large piece of paper:

Why is it important to listen to others?

Have students say the following statements together. Students may also write them in their journals, if available.

Students repeat:

“Listening makes me wise!”
“Listening shows I care!”
“Listening helps other people!”

Teaching Truth: Be Caring and Attentive (5–7 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say: “It’s one thing to hear someone talking, but it’s another thing to be a caring, attentive listener.”

Ask: “During your table discussion, what did you decide it means to be caring?”

Allow students to respond.

Ask: “What did you decide it means to be attentive?”

Allow students to respond.

Say:

> “Being caring means we not only pay attention to what someone is saying, but also to what emotions they may be feeling, and we choose to care!”

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"Being attentive means giving someone our undivided attention, just like we talked about in our previous lesson, 'I am worthy of others' time and attention.'"

"We can show others that we care and are being attentive with our eyes, mind, and body."

With Your Eyes

- Make eye contact.
- Don't look at a screen or device.
- Don't look around the room.

With Your Mind

Say: "Sometimes when someone is talking, we start thinking about other things or about what we want to say next instead of really listening. We can choose to stop and refocus on the person talking."

With Your Body

- Turn your chair to face the person.
- Sit in a way that shows you are paying attention.

Lead Teacher

Ask: "How can phones, group chats, or thinking about what you want to say next get in the way of really listening to a friend?"

Allow a few students to respond.

Small Group Activity: Practice Caring, Attentive Listening (10–12 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

"Now, let's practice being caring, attentive listeners."

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Part 1: Practice Being Attentive

Table Leaders

Share with your table group why you love volunteering with this group and being there with the students.

Remind students:

As you listen, practice:

- Making eye contact
- Staying focused on the speaker
- Turning your body toward the speaker

After sharing, affirm students for the ways they listened attentively.

Ask:

- “What emotions did you notice while I was speaking?”
- “Did noticing those emotions affect how you felt?”

Part 2: Practice Being Caring

Table Leaders

Invite one student to share something sad or difficult that happened recently. Remind students to share only what they feel comfortable sharing with the group.

Students may choose not to share, and the Table Leader may model with a simple, age-appropriate example instead.

The rest of the table group practices:

- Caring as they listen
- Being attentive as they listen

Ask the listeners:

> “What emotions did you notice while the student was speaking?”

Ask the student who shared:

> “How did it feel to have caring, attentive listeners as you told your story?”

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Table Leaders say:

> “You all did a great job sharing and listening! If someone is not a caring, attentive listener when you’re talking, it’s not your fault. Sometimes people, including students, friends, adults, and family members, have not learned yet how to be caring, attentive listeners.”

Journal Reflection (3–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say: “Take a few quiet minutes to think about what you learned today.”

Journal Prompt:

> How could being a caring, attentive listener affect your friendships, teamwork, or the way people trust you?

Allow students a few minutes to write quietly.

If time allows, invite a few students to share their responses.

Closing Affirmation (1–2 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

> “As leaders in your school, you can be caring, attentive listeners. Listening helps you learn, helps other people feel valued, and helps you grow into wise and thoughtful leaders.”
>
> “Let’s say today’s affirmation together.”

Students repeat together:

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I am a caring, attentive listener.

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