



COURSE GUIDE

This document offers an overview of the Compassion Matters course outlining how to best use the course in your school. We hope that this provides all of the information you need, but if you have any questions, do not hesitate to get in touch at contact@compassion-matters.org.

1. Project Background

1.1 What is Compassion Matters?

Compassion Matters is an educational outreach project that shares and develops learning resources with schools and education charities to enable the teaching of values and secular ethics. Our resources equip children to think critically about ethical issues leading to a positive impact on the children's socio-emotional learning, mental wellbeing and academic attainment.

We are focused on supporting children to see that compassion and its corresponding values are the key not only to a happier, more harmonious society but also to individual wellbeing.

1.2 The Dalai Lama Centre for Compassion

The Dalai Lama Centre for Compassion (DLCC) is a registered charity based in Oxford and seed-funded by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Its purpose is to advance individuals' and society's understanding of compassion and related values. The Centre, which boasts some of the world's leading thinkers amongst its Fellows, carries out research and educational projects in pursuit of this purpose. More information can be found at www.dlccoxford.org.

1.3 Our Approach

Compassion Matters was founded to address several urgent issues and challenges for young people that have manifested in the UK and internationally over the past twenty years including:

- To make ethics and values education an essential part of education at multiple stages in children's lives.
- To develop high-quality learning materials that are available to all regardless of financial resource or location.



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- Help children develop social-emotional learning skills through engaging with ethics and values through intellectual challenges promoting compassionate action.
- Contribute to the improvements to children's mental health and wellbeing.
- Support children to develop tangible and transferable academic skills that enhance their learning in and out of the classroom.

Compassion Matters has chosen to specifically engage with children at an early stage in their education, primary school, to facilitate the early development of these skills. As well as a generation of students progressing with enhanced social-emotional skills we want to see children flourish into adults with a core of strong values and the ability to use skills derived from ethics to manage the challenges they will face as young people and onwards into adulthood.

2. Guidance for teaching Compassion Matters

2.1 The Course

The DLCC has developed a four-module course exploring the themes of; Compassion, Courage, Happiness and Wisdom. The course is designed to support children and teachers to explore ethics together via human stories, examples, games and activities. Teachers do not need to have experience of philosophy or ethics to teach Compassion Matters. The course was designed to guide teachers through each lesson with enough support to enable any teacher to use the resources effectively in their classroom.

We suggest that the optimum time one module of the course is taught per term or half term. Our participating schools have taught the course on a one-module-per-term basis, and this has allowed them to develop other cross-curricular lessons and materials and given the time for the ideas in the modules to be explored fully.

If the school is only teaching the core module lesson plans provided, a focus across a half term (eight weeks) should allow enough time for reflection and meaningful engagement with the themes. We do not recommend that the course is taught in a week or two weeks as this will not allow enough time for reflection by pupils and other members of the school community.



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However, we understand that all schools are different and that it might make more sense in your school to teach the course in a shorter or longer time-frame.

2.2 Modules

Each module includes:

- Guidance for teachers for each module explaining the research behind the lesson.
- A short documentary film.
- Four/five lesson plans.
- PowerPoint presentations for each lesson with audio and films embedded.
- Audio practices.
- Worksheets to support group and independent learning.
- Reading lists.

Course materials have been designed in partnership with teachers and educational publishers to ensure they are child-centred, interactive and accessible for teachers and children. Our learning resources are designed to be used **'out of the box'** and include guidance on how to deploy our lesson plans and other resources.


The beginning of each module should start with the showing of the film, which tells the story of an individual who encompasses the theme of the module. The film can be revisited if required later in the module, to reinforce points or support specific lessons. Lessons are then taught in the order

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2.3 Lesson plans

Each lesson plan has been designed to provide the information needed to plan and deliver the lesson effectively. Each lesson plan features the following:

- Timings
- Learning Objectives
- Success Criteria
- Key learning points
- Worksheets
- Resources.



Compassion Lesson 1: What is Compassion?

Lesson Guidance

This lesson is designed to last approximately one hour. Children could sit in mixed-ability pairs for the activities, though you may wish to support some with the independent drawing and writing activity.

Teaching Strategies

Please make use of your preferred classroom strategies to facilitate and record discussion, e.g. talk partners, mini whiteboards or generating group ideas. You could choose to have children discussing in smaller groups or pairs and then feeding back to the whole class.

Approximate timings are suggested but you may wish or need to adapt the lesson plan to suit the pace of your class.

Resources

Lesson 1 *What is Compassion?* Example Sheets

Lesson 1 *What is Compassion?* Worksheet

Learning Objective

We are learning to understand what compassion is.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what compassion involves and how it is more than just feeling sorry for someone.
- I can give examples of compassionate acts.

Key Learning Points

- Compassion is partly a **feeling**, e.g. feeling sorry for or suffering with someone, but it is also **acting compassionately** by doing something to try to make someone feel better.
- Compassion = feeling + action

Each lesson is designed to be between 45 minutes to 1 hour but can be divided to provide shorter lessons if this doesn't fit with your school's timetable. Each lesson has an accompanying presentation (developed in PowerPoint but easily converted for use in other programmes). We recommend using the presentations and lesson plans as an integrated course, although this is not obligatory. If you choose not to use the presentations, there will be points in the lesson plans which focus on famous quotes, that you can skip.

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Compassion Lesson 1: What is Compassion?

Lesson Plan

Let's Check! (5 minutes)

Ask: can you explain what compassion is? Look back at your work from the last lesson. Think about the examples we talked about to remind yourself.

Elicit the key learning points from last lesson:

Compassion is partly a feeling, e.g. feeling sorry for or suffering with someone, but it is also acting compassionately by doing something to try to make someone feel better.

Introduction

Introduce the learning objective: we are learning to consider the value of compassion.

Explain: today we will be thinking about these questions:

- Why should people be compassionate?
- Should people always be compassionate?
- What makes it easier or harder to be compassionate?

Let's Think! (20 minutes)

Resource

- Compassion *Another Way* Film - available via [website download](#).

Explain: In the film, we are going to learn about a man called Richard, who has spent his life helping people who are less fortunate than him, even though many people think he is unfortunate. At the start of the film, you will notice that he is blind. We are going to find out what happened to him and how he was inspired to be compassionate to others.

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Each lesson includes activities categorised as:

- Let's Check! (Plenary and Reflection)
- Let's Discuss! (Debate and discussion in groups and as a class)
- Let's Create! (Art, Drama and Written activities)
- Let's Think! (Engaging and analysing poems, films and other media)
- Let's Practice! (Audio compassion mediation, worksheets and exercises)

Some lessons include optional homework tasks to extend the concepts explored during the lesson and ask children to explore the themes via creative tasks such as writing.

We encourage teachers to be creative with our resources and make any additions and changes they feel would benefit the learners in their group. We will also post additional resources developed and shared by subject teachers on our website. We would be pleased to receive any lesson plans developed by the participating teacher so that we can share with our wider network of schools and support extension of the core lesson plans and other activities.

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Electronic copies of lesson plans can be submitted by emailing to contact@compassion-matters.org

2.4 Example timetable

Each lesson plan includes suggested timings and is organised to allow the appropriate time for the theme to be explored.

Week One
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson One - Film • Lesson Two • Lesson Two - Homework
Week Two
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Three • Lesson Three - Homework
Week Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English lesson on Compassion (teachers' own plans, building on previous lessons) • Science lesson based on the 'Compassion and Science' • RS lesson based on the 'Compassion and Religion'
Week Four
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Four

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- Lesson Five

2.5 The School Community

We encourage the films for each module to be shared, with all members of the school community, including staff, pupils and parents. We have found that sharing the themes of each module enables a broader discussion and focus on the topic for the term/half term during which it is delivered. Parents have responded very positively to the film being shared with feedback revealing it has enabled them to explore the theme with their child/children in greater depth at home.

2.6 Finally...

We encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions, ideas, comments or problems. We pride ourselves on being able to work collaboratively with schools and support their individual requirements and needs.

Thank you for engaging with Compassion Matters,

With best wishes,



Jimi Slattery

Executive Director

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