



## UNIT PLAN : THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT



**“You reap what you sow.”**

**AGE RANGE** 5-17

**LENGTH OF TIME** 6 lessons, 45 min to 1 hour

**TAGS** karma, cause and effect,

### **SUMMARY**

This compilation of materials helps students to learn about karma, the law of cause and effect, and that whatever we do with our body, speech, and mind will have a corresponding effect. This Unit has 10 “lessons” including books, videos, activities, contemplations and a ritual. Many of these have separate lesson plans available as PDFs.

### **OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

Students will know about the importance of the law of cause and effect/ karma and understand their personal responsibility to do no harm, to do good, and to work with their minds. Students should be able to develop the habit of examining their actions, and be encouraged to choose actions which bring happiness and reduce suffering for themselves and others.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- Which positive and negative actions can I do with my body, speech, and mind?

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- Do positive actions make myself or others happier?
- What are the consequences of negative actions



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### ESSENTIAL TEACHING

The law of cause and effect, karma, the essence of Buddha's Teaching:

“Do not perform any negative actions whatsoever.

Thoroughly undertake the practice of virtue.

Completely tame your own mind.

This is the teaching of the Buddha.”

### RESOURCES

- **Video:** “Lion and Rat”

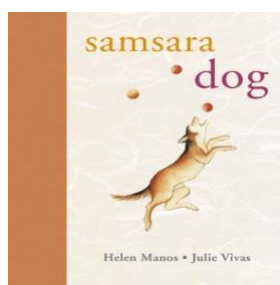
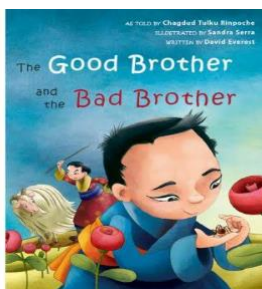
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IkvOft2tmU>

- **Book:** *Good brother, Bad brother*, by Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche

- **Book:** *Samsara Dog*, by Helen Manos

- **Video:** “How can I stop being bad to someone who has been bad to me?” by Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche

[middlewayeducation.org/resources/dzigar-kongtrul-cause-effect](http://middlewayeducation.org/resources/dzigar-kongtrul-cause-effect)





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### MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

*(depending on the activities you choose for your group)*

- Boomerangs on cardboard
- Coloured water
- Marbles or candies
- Preparation of Saving lives ceremony

### ACTIVITIES

*Teachers can adapt from the materials below depending on the age group and time available. We recommend always including the opening and conclusion.*

#### Opening: Settling and motivation

5 – 10 Min (all ages)

At the beginning of each lesson, allow students to settle down with a physical warm-up or body scan and a short meditation. Establish a kind attitude and good motivation to benefit oneself and others.

#### Exercise: Drops Of Goodness Fill A Pot

10 Min (all ages)

Students reflect on the positive acts they did the previous day, and for each



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positive action, they add a drop of coloured water to a pot full of clear water. (alternatively, you can use clear and opaque marbles, light and dark pebbles, or different coloured candies).

### Video: Lion and Rat

15 min (ages 4 - 7)

Watch and reflect on the animated story. Looking closely at the choices each animal had and how that affected the outcome. For example: the lion lets go of the rat, so the rat is grateful and later saves the lion's life by chewing through the net he was caught in. YouTube: "Lion and Rat"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IkvOft2tmU>

### Read Aloud

30 min (ages 4-7)

Read one of the following stories and reflect on it with the students.

*Good brother, Bad brother*, by Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche.

*Samsara Dog*, by Helen Manos.

### Video: Reflection and Teaching

15 min (ages 8 - 17)

Ask students reflect on the following question: "How can I stop being bad to



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someone who has been bad to me?" Play the Video teaching of Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche (from Lerab Ling 14 July 2011)

[middlewayeducation.org/resources/dzigar-kongtrul-cause-effect](http://middlewayeducation.org/resources/dzigar-kongtrul-cause-effect)

Summary of Video Teaching: When someone has been bad to you, it makes you feel hurt, and you may want to hurt them in return. Although it's easy to do this, it's more difficult to be a more tolerant person, and this will make you stronger.

After the video: Ask students what they heard and what they felt is important for them.

### **Presentation & Guided Contemplation: The 10 positive and negative actions**

10 min (age 8 – 17)

*Be careful to present these actions as "guidelines that help us to be happy" (so that children do not carry a sense of being a bad person if they go against one of the guidelines).*

Guided contemplation: <https://middlewayeducation.org/portfolio/activity-10-positive-negative-actions>

### **Activity/Teaching: How to Hold a Debate**

45 min (ages 8 – 17)

"It is more important to be truthful than to be kind."



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How to hold a debate

<https://middlewayeducation.org/resources/how-to-hold-a-debate/>

### **Activity: “Boomerang throwing”**

30 min (all ages)

Play the video: “Boomerang throwing” [www.youtube.com/watch?](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4ihRxoeaPk)

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Ask: Have any of you already thrown a boomerang? How does it work?

What is the lineage of a boomerang?

### Making a Karma Boomerang

Design a boomerang with the thoughts, words, actions you would like to come back to you. Provide students with cardboard boomerangs to work with. Activity here:

<https://middlewayeducation.org/resources/activity-karma-boomerang/>

### **Exercise: Dilemmas about helping and not harming**

30 min (all ages)

Students are in small groups. Share the “dilemma” with them and ask them to discuss it. Have them choose one solution and present it to the others as a 1-minute scene.



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<https://middlewayeducation.org/resources/helping-not-harming/>

### Ritual: Saving lives

1 hour (all ages)

<https://middlewayeducation.org/resources/activity-saving-lives/>



### Assignment: Daily Life

10 min (all ages)

Give a “homework” assignment in order to integrate into daily life what the students have learned. Invite each student to choose just one positive action and to try to do it for a certain period of time (to be defined depending on the context, e.g., one day....). Students can also be asked to write down or draw 5 positive actions they do during a day or week on a green card and 5 negative actions on a red card.





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### Conclusion

5 min (all ages)

Close each lesson with a short meditation and dedicate the benefits to all beings and towards peace in the world.

### ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Students should be able to observe their positive and negative actions as well as those of others around them and report back after a week what they discovered.

### DIFFERENTIATION

Age group differentiation is already noted within the lesson plan.

### RELATED LESSONS

Interdependence, Essence of Buddha's Teachings, Taming Your Mind, Saving Lives.

### RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS:

**Book:** Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, Chapter 4, Actions: The Principle of Cause and Effect, p. 101-131 (Boston: Shambhala, Revised edition, 1998.)



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**PDF:** Chatral Rinpoche, About the Benefits of saving lives

<https://middlewayeducation.org/resources/chatral-rinpoche-benefits-saving-lives/>

**Websites:** Rigpa Wiki

- [LINK](#) about **Karma:**
- [LINK](#) about the **10 positive actions or ten virtues**
- [LINK](#) about **the 10 negative , unwholesome actions**



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### APPENDIX I: 10 positive actions or ten virtues

1. to renounce killing, and instead protect life
2. to renounce taking what is not given, and instead practise generosity
3. to renounce sexual misconduct, and instead follow the rules of discipline
4. to renounce lying, and instead tell the truth
5. to give up sowing discord, and instead reconcile disputes
6. to abandon harsh speech, and instead speak pleasantly
7. to renounce worthless chatter, and instead recite prayers
8. to renounce covetousness, and instead learn to be generous
9. to give up wishing harm on others, and instead cultivate the desire to help them
10. to put an end to wrong views, and instead establish in yourself the true and authentic view.

### APPENDIX II: 10 negative actions or ten virtues

1. taking life
2. taking what is not given
3. sexual misconduct
4. lying
5. sowing discord
6. harsh speech
7. idle gossip (or worthless chatter)
8. covetousness
9. ill will (or wishing harm on others)
10. wrong views



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### APPENDIX III: The Sutra of the Wise and Foolish

Do not take lightly small misdeeds  
believing they can do no harm  
even a tiny spark of fire  
can set alight a mountain of hay  
Do not take lightly small good deeds  
believing they can hardly help  
for drops of water one by one  
in time can fill a giant pot

### APPENDIX IV: About Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche

#### About the story:

*The Good Brother and the Bad Brother is a delightful tale from old Tibet, brought to the West by Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche. As this captivating story unfolds, it demonstrates how karma, or the consequences of one's actions, leads to an unexpected but logical conclusion.*

#### About the author:

*Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche was born in Tibet in 1930 and came to the United States in 1979, bringing with him a wealth of ancient knowledge, wisdom, and stories. He was regarded as a great Buddhist master, and well known for his accessibility and immense kindness. Children adored him, especially his storytelling, which was playful but always had the central point of maintaining a good heart. Through his own example he inspired students from all over the world, until the time of his passing in 2002.*

*(from: Patrul Rinpoche, The Words of my perfect teacher, p. 123, 124)*