



Dear Teacher,

Welcome! We are thrilled you've decided to embark on this program with us.

Being a **3Cs Classroom** means more than simply teaching these lessons to your students; it means joining a movement of bridge builders and peacemakers who are refusing to let divisive rhetoric and reductive, binary thinking get in the way of our shared humanity. These lessons are designed to cultivate your students' curiosity, compassion, and courage and to help them begin to think about using those tools to strengthen their relationships and deepen their sense of belonging and understanding.

In this onboarding document, you'll find information on on the 3Cs Classroom program:

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1. What Is the 3Cs Classroom Program?

The 3Cs Classroom program is designed to empower high school teachers with a free curriculum toolkit with strategies to create a classroom filled with connection, deep listening, and authentic inquiry across lines of difference, including classroom culture guidelines and lesson plans that will build skills for you and students to lean on when managing divisive conversations. The program, a collaboration between **Starts With Us** and **Essential Partners**, is intended to make classrooms across America more curious, compassionate, and courageous with the hope that we will build a better, less divisive future for all of us.

The program includes nine twenty-minute lessons with accompanying materials (slides, student handouts, and teacher notes), 3Cs stickers, 3Cs flashcards, and a 3Cs classroom poster.

2. The Arc of the 3Cs Lessons

Each "C" (Curiosity, Compassion, and Courage) has a set of three lessons that work together as one unit that focuses on a single skill. Below is a summary of each "C" and the skill focus of the lessons.

Curiosity

These three lessons teach curiosity through building up the skill of asking curious questions. Not all questions are curious. These lessons invite students to consider crafting curious questions intended to better understand something — in contrast to another kind of question: questions to persuade someone. When encountering a difference of opinion, perspective, or belief, what kind of question will you choose? By teaching your students about different kinds of questions, you will help them learn that they have the power to shift the direction of a conversation, invite deeper meaning, and increase understanding across differences.



Compassion

These three lessons teach about compassion by building up skills of listening in students.

All too often, we're only partly listening when someone is speaking to us — particularly when we disagree with what they're saying. These three compassion lessons invite students to practice listening deeply, on multiple levels, as an act of compassion. When we're truly listening, we hear things — spoken and unspoken — that add nuance and complexity to our understanding.

Courage

These three lessons teach about courage, particularly the courage to speak a differing perspective and the courage of the group to create a space where people can feel permission to share a differing point of view. The lessons invite students to identify what they would need to express a dissenting — or simply different — perspective and what behaviors the group could agree to that would allow those needs to be met. It requires both the courage of an individual to speak their truth when it is not the dominant view and the courage of a group to create a space to invite and hold those unique truths to create spaces where differences can be heard and better understood.

3. How to Use the Materials

There are nine total lessons in this package, three lessons for each “C” — curiosity, compassion, and courage. These lessons build on each other and work together as a unit. Each lesson contains three documents: a teacher plan, slides, and a student handout.

The lessons will work best if the teacher has a chance to review them ahead of time and make them their own. However, for those moments when there is no time, the teacher plan and slides are designed to work without any additional preparation; they walk the teacher through leading the lessons step by step with teaching notes on what to say and when.

Each lesson is intended to be 20 minutes. The timing of the lessons is an estimate. Depending on the teacher, they may be longer, but we do not advise trying to make the lessons shorter, as that will compromise the efficacy of the curriculum. If you are feeling stuck by the timing of the lessons, please feel free to contact <http://whatisessential.org/3cs> for guidance. We are here to help you! Below are some ways to adjust the timing to suit your teaching style and lesson parameters.

- **Combine:** Do more than one lesson in a longer class period. Though each lesson is 20 minutes, combining all three lessons back to back only takes between 30 and 40 minutes because you won't need to do a separate opening and closing for each lesson.
- **Extend:** Extend a lesson by giving students more time for group work, discussion, or conversation activities.



Classroom

We know that you are the expert in your class, *we've intentionally designed these materials to be a flexible framework. Please adapt for your teaching style and classroom needs.* Some ways you might want to make the content your own are to:

- **Change the opening exercises:** swap out the connecting questions for your (or your students') favorite
- **Modify examples:** exchange them for ones that you feel better suit your class or teaching style
- **Adjust the format of an activity:** e.g., from a pair share into triads, quads, or a class discussion
- **Go deeper:** extend the debrief, add some class discussions, do the exercise more than once with different prompts, have students find examples of the skills being used in the real world — if you have time, feel free to extend the lessons or use them as a jumping off point for further related activities in your classroom

We also provide a 3Cs poster to hang in your classroom as a resource and a visual reminder for your students to continue practicing the 3Cs in between lessons. There are also 3Cs flashcards that you can distribute to students to remind them to use the skills of the program. Finally, we've also provided fun 3Cs stickers as an incentive to encourage and reinforce any behavioral changes you see in the classroom after the lessons are administered.

4. Additional Resources

You'll also find a section of additional resources — exercises and variations — that you can use after you complete these lessons. These will continue to reinforce and build skills in your classroom. Additionally, you'll find some ideas for closing activities in case you're looking for a way to wrap up the series of lessons.

For more resources or certified training opportunities, reach out to the content experts at Essential Partners: <https://pardot.whatisessential.org/3cs>.

If you have any questions about making your classroom a 3Cs Classroom or inviting colleagues from your school or district to become a 3Cs Classroom, please email Starts With Us at 3CsClassroom@startswith.us.

5. FAQ

Q: Can I change the script in the teacher notes?

Yes! The script is there to help you better understand the purpose of all the slides and materials. It's also there for those days when you don't have any time to prepare — or to even look at — the materials ahead of time. The notes are designed so you can just put up the slides, read through the script, and successfully teach the class. **However, feel free to change the script and make the lesson and the language your own.**



Classroom

Q: How long will it take me to complete all the lessons? How long should I wait between lessons?

Many teachers complete one lesson a week — but you can do them quicker if you like or group them together as befits your schedule. However, we do not suggest that you wait longer than one week between lessons, since the three lessons inside each “C” build on each other.

Between **each set** of lessons, waiting longer than a week should be okay. For example, if you complete a set of three lessons for curiosity and wait 2 to 3 weeks before starting the three lessons for compassion, that will work fine.

Q: How do I get another poster or more stickers?

At this time, we only have limited availability of the stickers and posters to ensure that all teachers who signed up for the program receive their share. That being said, if your students have been awesome at practicing curiosity, compassion, and courage, please shoot us a note at 3CsClassroom@startswith.us and ask! We might have extra and will let you know.

Q: Where can I find more resources like this? How can I take the next step?

The 3Cs Classroom program is a collaboration between Starts With Us and Essential Partners. Both organizations are here to support you as you continue your journey beyond the 3Cs.



Starts With Us is a movement to empower millions of Americans just like you — tired of our culture of contempt and energized to foster critical thinking and constructive communication across our lines of difference. For more information on how to join the movement, sign up for the newsletter [here](#).



Founded in 1989, **Essential Partners** equips people to connect across differences to strengthen relationships, deepen belonging, and renew hope in their communities. If you're looking for **more resources**, professional development and/or certified training opportunities to dive deeper into bringing dialogue skills to the classroom, we recommend signing up for a **workshop**. For any questions on how to further this work in your classroom, school or district, you can reach us at <https://pardot.whatisessential.org/3cs>.