

# Character and Life Skills

**Video Title:** Empathy, Relationship Skills

**Lesson Title:** Just Ask

**Grade Level:** High School



## Project and Purpose

Students select a cause supported by a not-for-profit organization they would like to support and develop an “ask” that appeals to human generosity.

## Essential Question

How do we seek generosity from others?

**Note:** This lesson will most likely take more than one session for the analysis, research, writing, and presentations.

## Materials

- Chart paper and markers
- Access to Internet for videos and research:  
SPCA commercial: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO9d2PpP7tQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO9d2PpP7tQ)  
Save the Children: [www.ispot.tv/ad/AUCs/save-the-children-every-last-child](http://www.ispot.tv/ad/AUCs/save-the-children-every-last-child)  
St. Jude’s: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=h09q8IUHXo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h09q8IUHXo)
- Writing tools and/or computer writing program
- If possible, video recording devices (such as tablets, phones, video cameras)

## Procedure

1. Ask your students how they ask for something they want. What do they say? What do they do? What makes an ask successful?
2. Tell students you are going to give some examples of an “ask.” Begin with an ambiguous “ask.”
  - Ambiguous ask: “Can I get some volunteers?”
  - Add an ambiguous detail: “Can I get some volunteers to help me do something?”
  - Add one specific detail: “Can I get some volunteers to help me move something?”
3. Stop for a moment and ask the people who did not volunteer to help why they chose not to do so. It should become clear that you have not given them enough specifics about what you need and you have not “sold” your idea to them.
4. Explain that there are organizations in the world that want to help people, address an issue, or create some kind of change that ask people for their help and for money every single day. They depend on people’s generosity, and studies show that most people do want to be generous with their money, their time, and/or their talents — we will call these resources. Getting people to know

about the organization and to be generous with their resources is a fine art, but there are four specific things that go into an “ask,” and they all begin with a story about a chance to have an impact on something important. The impact story needs to have:

- Information about the important work being done by the organization and where it is being done.
  - A description of the management of the organization and the activities they do. Often this includes talking about the people involved and the specific actions they take (e.g., organizing groups to clean up the park, have a celebrity leader who volunteers on the big work day, driving water trucks into drought areas, etc.)
  - How each resource donated makes a difference. There might be testimonials or pictures or what each amount of money can accomplish.
  - How giving resources will be a satisfying experience for the giver.
5. Show the examples of commercials and have students analyze them for the four elements of an ask. You may want to assign one commercial to each group to analyze and have them present to each other.
  6. Tell students that they will work with a partner or in small groups of three or four to select an organization that appeals to them and create an “ask.” On the board or a chart, ask students to suggest causes, issues, problems, challenges, etc. that are important to them. Examples might include: the environment, carbon mitigation, health issues, education, special needs friendships, anti-bullying campaigns, anti-tobacco or drugs, racial equity, women’s rights, etc. This list will help them research not-for-profit organizations that raise funds and do good works toward solutions in that area.

Each group will need to:

- Identify the organization
  - Create an “ask” that appeals to people’s generosity using the four elements
  - Have at least one person present the ask live or on video
7. Give students sufficient time to research, write, and rehearse their asks.
  8. When students present, have the other groups take note of the four elements in each ask. They are not to critique the presentation itself; after all, this is not an acting exercise. However, they should be able to identify and determine the power of each element to appeal to people’s generosity.

## Conclusion

Discuss the successful points of each ask and apply to the following questions:

- How do we seek generosity from others?
- Which organization can they see themselves volunteering for or donating to in the future? Why?
- Which ones might they volunteer for or donate to right now? Why?

## Notes

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