



Educator's Discussion Guide

Discussion questions · Character profiles · Classroom activities

Free resource for teachers, librarians & parents



Aligned with social-emotional learning (SEL) standards · Ages 4–10

About the Series



Meet the 10 Characters

"Ten Friends. Ten Virtues. One Magical Garden." Each character embodies a different value, giving every child a hero they can see themselves in.

Character	Their Title	Value	In a Sentence
Noor	<i>The Heart of the Garden</i>	Love & Kindness	A small, curious child with a big heart. Noor sees the good in everyone — and gently helps it grow.
Rayan the Lion	<i>The Courageous One</i>	Courage	Rayan walks chest-first into every challenge. He shows children that being brave doesn't mean not being scared.
Hakeem the Elephant	<i>The Wise One</i>	Wisdom	Hakeem never rushes. He listens before he speaks — and his gentle wisdom has a way of making everything clearer.
Safi the Fox	<i>The Honest Heart</i>	Honesty	Safi always tells the truth — even when it's hard. He teaches children that honesty is one of the most powerful gifts you can give.
Amira	<i>The Brave Leader</i>	Leadership & Bravery	Amira raises her hand first, speaks up for what is right, and never leaves a friend behind. She shows children that leadership is rooted in love.
Farah	<i>The Joyful One</i>	Gratitude & Joy	Farah finds something to celebrate everywhere she goes. Her laughter is the sunshine that makes the whole garden bright and keeps every heart warm.
Karim	<i>The Generous Heart</i>	Generosity	Karim shares everything — from his snacks to his biggest smiles. He shows children that a generous heart always makes the garden grow.
Lina	<i>The Gentle Soul</i>	Gentleness	Lina speaks softly and moves carefully. She reminds children that gentleness is not weakness — it is one of the greatest strengths in the garden.
Sabir	<i>The Patient One</i>	Patience	Sabir takes a deep breath when things go wrong. He teaches children that waiting with a calm heart is its own kind of extraordinary strength.
Amin	<i>The Trustworthy Friend</i>	Trust & Loyalty	If you tell Amin a secret, it is safe forever. He teaches children that being trustworthy is the foundation of every true and lasting friendship.

Teaching Tip: Post this table in your classroom. When a real-life moment arises — a kind act, a brave choice, a patient breath — name the character: "That was so Sabir of you today."



Full Character Profiles

Complete profiles for all 10 characters, as published on gardenofgoodhearts.com.

Noor	THE HEART OF THE GARDEN	Value: Love & Kindness
A small, curious child with a big heart. Noor sees the good in everyone — and gently helps it grow.		<i>Character trait:</i> <i>Curious · Warm-hearted · Compassionate</i>

Rayan the Lion	THE COURAGEOUS ONE	Value: Courage
Rayan walks chest-first into every challenge. He shows children that being brave doesn't mean not being scared.		<i>Character trait:</i> <i>Bold · Energetic · Determined</i>

Hakeem the Elephant	THE WISE ONE	Value: Wisdom
Hakeem never rushes. He listens before he speaks — and his gentle wisdom has a way of making everything clearer.		<i>Character trait:</i> <i>Thoughtful · Patient · Perceptive</i>

Safi the Fox	THE HONEST HEART	Value: Honesty
Safi always tells the truth — even when it's hard. He teaches children that honesty is one of the most powerful gifts you can give.		<i>Character trait:</i> <i>Honest · Brave · Trustworthy</i>

Amira	THE BRAVE LEADER	Value: Leadership & Bravery
Amira raises her hand first, speaks up for what is right, and never leaves a friend behind. She shows children that leadership is rooted in love.		<i>Character trait:</i> <i>Fearless · Caring · Principled</i>



Full Character Profiles (continued)

Farah	THE JOYFUL ONE	Value: Gratitude & Joy
Farah finds something to celebrate everywhere she goes. Her laughter is the sunshine that makes the whole garden bright and keeps every heart warm.	<i>Character trait:</i> Radiant · Grateful · Joyful	
Karim	THE GENEROUS HEART	Value: Generosity
Karim shares everything — from his snacks to his biggest smiles. He shows children that a generous heart always makes the garden grow.	<i>Character trait:</i> Open-hearted · Giving · Joyful	
Lina	THE GENTLE SOUL	Value: Gentleness
Lina speaks softly and moves carefully. She reminds children that gentleness is not weakness — it is one of the greatest strengths in the garden.	<i>Character trait:</i> Soft-spoken · Strong · Graceful	
Sabir	THE PATIENT ONE	Value: Patience
Sabir takes a deep breath when things go wrong. He teaches children that waiting with a calm heart is its own kind of extraordinary strength.	<i>Character trait:</i> Calm · Steady · Resilient	
Amin	THE TRUSTWORTHY FRIEND	Value: Trust & Loyalty
If you tell Amin a secret, it is safe forever. He teaches children that being trustworthy is the foundation of every true and lasting friendship.	<i>Character trait:</i> Reliable · Loyal · Safe	



Discussion Questions

These questions work with any Garden of Good Hearts book. Replace [character] with the name of the character in the story you just read.

Understanding Feelings

Q1 How did [character] feel at the start of the story? How can you tell?

Helps children name emotions. Point to illustrations for visual cues.

Q2 Have you ever felt the same way? What happened?

Builds personal connection and validates children's experiences.

Q3 Why do you think [character] made that choice?

Encourages perspective-taking and empathy.

Q4 If you were [character]'s friend, what would you say to help?

Practises supportive language and social-emotional skills.

Exploring the Value

Q1 What value did [character] show in this story? Can you point to the moment?

Direct comprehension — anchors the abstract value to a specific scene.

Q2 Is this value always easy to live by? When is it hard?

Opens an honest conversation about real challenges children face.

Q3 Can you think of a time you showed this value yourself?

Reinforces a positive self-identity and validates lived experience.

Q4 What might have happened if [character] had made a different choice?

Develops consequence-thinking and moral reasoning skills.

Making It Real

Q1 Which character feels most like you? Which is most different from you?

Encourages honest self-reflection without judgement.

Q2 Does this story remind you of anything in your own life?

Text-to-self connection — powerful for both literacy and SEL.

Q3 What would you do if this same thing happened in your class or at home?

Bridges the story lesson directly into the child's real world.

Q4 What is one thing you want to try this week, inspired by [character]?

Closes with a practical, positive commitment to action.



Classroom Activities

Noor's Kindness Jar

Ages 4–7 · 20 min

Love & Kindness (Noor)

1. Place an empty jar somewhere visible in your classroom or home.
2. Each day, invite children to add a paper slip describing one kind act they noticed or performed.
3. At the end of the week, read them aloud together and celebrate.
4. Connect: "Noor sees the good in everyone. What good did we see this week?"

You'll need:

Glass jar · Paper slips · Pencils or crayons

Rayan's Brave Step

Ages 6–10 · 30 min

Courage (Rayan the Lion)

1. Ask children to write or draw something they've been nervous to try.
2. Share in pairs first — less pressure than the full group.
3. Together, brainstorm one small brave step toward that thing.
4. Create a 'Brave Wall' — display steps and celebrate when children take them.
5. Reflect: "Rayan wasn't fearless. He was brave anyway. What's the difference?"

You'll need:

Paper · Pencils · Wall display space

Hakeem's Wondering Questions

Ages 6–10 · 20 min

Wisdom (Hakeem the Elephant)

1. After reading, pose a wondering question: "I wonder why... I wonder what if..."
2. Give children 2 minutes of quiet thinking time before anyone speaks.
3. Invite responses without judging any as right or wrong.
4. Reflect: "Hakeem always listens before he speaks. How did it feel to slow down and really think before answering?"

You'll need:

A quiet moment · Optional: thinking journals

Safi's Truth Circle

Ages 5–9 · 20 min

Honesty (Safi the Fox)

1. Sit in a circle. Introduce the idea: a hard truth told kindly is a gift.
2. Give each child a scenario card (e.g. 'Your friend's drawing isn't finished yet').
3. Ask: how would Safi say something honest AND kind here?
4. Share responses — celebrate both honesty and kindness together.

You'll need:

Scenario cards (write 5–6 simple situations) · Circle space



Amira's Leadership Map

Ages 7–10 · 25 min

Leadership & Bravery (Amira)

1. Ask: "What does a good leader do?" Collect answers on the board.
2. Read a key Amira scene where she speaks up or leads.
3. Each child draws a situation where THEY could lead — at home, at school.
4. Share and discuss: "Amira leads with love. What does that mean to you?"

You'll need:

Paper · Crayons/markers ·
Whiteboard for group brainstorm

Farah's Gratitude Circle

Ages 4–10 · 10 min
(daily)

Gratitude & Joy (Farah)

1. Begin each morning (or close each day) in a circle.
2. Each child shares one thing they are grateful for — no repeats allowed.
3. Facilitator models first: "I'm grateful for [something ordinary] — just like Farah finds sunshine in every moment."
4. Over time, watch how children's awareness of everyday gifts grows.

You'll need:

Circle space · Optional: a talking
object to pass around



SEL Standards Alignment

The Garden of Good Hearts maps directly to the **CASEL framework** for Social-Emotional Learning, making it a natural fit for any classroom working with children ages 4–10.

CASEL Competency	How GGH Addresses It	Key Characters
Self-Awareness	Characters model naming emotions, recognising strengths, and building positive identity	Noor · Rayan the Lion
Self-Management	Stories explore impulse control, patience, and following through on commitments	Sabir · Hakeem the Elephant
Social Awareness	Characters practise empathy, perspective-taking, and celebrating diversity	Lina · Farah
Relationship Skills	Stories show how trust, loyalty, and honest communication build lasting friendships	Amin · Safi the Fox
Responsible Decision-Making	Characters pause to consider others, weigh consequences, and choose with courage	Amira · Karim

Teaching Tip: When a student shows one of the 10 values, celebrate it by naming the character: "That was so Lina of you" or "Real Rayan the Lion energy right there." The characters become a shared moral language in your classroom — one that sticks.



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Free resources for families & educators

