

Free Mini-Lesson!

Trust, Emotions, and Wise Decisions

A ready-to-use English Language Arts
and Social-Emotional Learning lesson
with reflection, discussion, and extension.



ENGAGING & READY TO USE

Designed for classroom teachers,
counselors, and homeschool
educators.



MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION

Engage students in thoughtful
conversation and deeper
thinking.



SEL SKILLS THAT LAST

Build empathy, strengthen
decision-making, and support
real-world connections.



Part of a larger classroom
resource system for
meaningful learning.



Skipper: Friend or Foe?

A Distracting Mystery within
Life's Traumatic Events

by Kellie Sanches



Trust, Emotions, and Wise Decisions

A *Skipper: Friend or Foe?* Mini-Lesson

Based on themes from *Skipper: Friend or Foe?*

TEACHER OVERVIEW

Lesson Focus

Students explore how emotions, assumptions, fear, and uncertainty influence decision-making during difficult situations. Using *Skipper: Friend or Foe?*, students analyze how people sometimes react before fully understanding a situation and how emotional wisdom helps individuals make grounded, thoughtful decisions.

This lesson *strengthens*:

- Emotional awareness
- Perspective-taking
- Discernment
- Empathy
- Reflective thinking
- Responsible decision-making

While *helping students recognize* the difference between reacting emotionally vs. responding wisely.

Objectives

- Students will identify emotions connected to uncertainty, fear, and trust.
- Students will analyze how assumptions affect choices and relationships.
- Students will examine how emotions influence decision-making.
- Students will explore the importance of discernment before judgment.
- Students will reflect on wise, grounded responses during emotionally difficult situations.
- Students will express their thinking through discussion and reflective writing.

Included:

- 2 Excerpts from Skipper: Friend or Foe? A Distracting Mystery within Life's Traumatic Circumstances by Kellie Sanchez
- Complete Lesson Flow
- ELA, SEL Standards Alignment
- ANCHOR™ Aligned
- SEL-in-Christ™ Connection
- Student Reflection Prompts and Student Worksheets

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT**English Language Arts (ELA)**

Students will:

- Analyze character actions and motivations
- Examine how emotions influence choices
- Participate in collaborative discussions
- Support ideas using evidence and reflection
- Write thoughtful personal responses

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Students will strengthen:

- self-awareness
- emotional recognition
- perspective-taking
- relationship skills
- responsible decision-making
- emotional regulation

ANCHOR Alignment

A — Awaken

Students reflect on times when emotions affected their thinking or decisions, specifically in response to uncertainty or fear.

N — Nurture by Naming

Students identify and examine how emotions influence reactions.

- Fear
- Anticipation
- Empathy
- Caution

C — Cultivate Emotional Strength

Students analyze how emotionally charged situations can lead to impulsive decisions, assumptions, or misunderstandings.

H — Hold Space

Students reflect: “What would I do in this situation?”

Students discuss multiple perspectives respectfully while recognizing that people often respond differently during stressful situations.

O — Own Your Voice & God’s Mission

Students reflect on how wisdom, discernment, empathy, and emotional regulation help people respond responsibly.

R — Remain Anchored

Students consider what helps them stay grounded when situations feel confusing, emotional, or uncertain.

Key Truth: Wise decisions often require slowing down before reacting emotionally.

***Skipper: Friend or Foe? A Distracting Mystery
Within Life's Traumatic Circumstances***

by Kellie Sanchez

**Beginning Lesson
Excerpt-1, pages 124-127**

Hearing a rustling noise, they stopped abruptly. "Do you hear that?" Sam nodded.

The rustling sounded like it was getting closer and closer, causing them both to take a step backward in a combination of fear and anticipation.

Out of the bushes he came. Unbelievably, there he stood! Skipper! Slowly, he began limping toward them.

Sam whispered, "He looks like he's hurt."

"I know," Michael whispered back. "No, don't go to him yet!"

Sam paused in her tracks. Looking over her shoulder, she asked, "Why? He's hurt."

"We're still not sure what we're dealing with. We just came out to collect more clues. We don't know if he's wild or tame," Michael said, looking at the clumps of matted hair that suggested caution.

"Okay," Sam said, watching Skipper lie down.

Squatting to sit, Michael said, "Come over here. We can keep an eye on him."

"And decide if he's friendly?"

"Yes."

Closing Reflection

Excerpt-2, pages 130-131

“It would be nice if they could just let Skipper off the hook now, but Mama was probably right...it was better to be safe than sorry.”

Lesson Flow

Opening Reflection — Turn & Talk or Quick Write

Prompt: “Think about a time when you misunderstood a situation or reacted emotionally before fully understanding what was happening? How did your emotions affect your response?”

Optional Follow-Up:

- What emotions were strongest?
- Did your understanding change later?

Read & Reflect

Read the excerpt from *Skipper: Friend or Foe?* aloud or independently.

As students listen or read, ask them to notice:

- moments of uncertainty
- emotional reactions
- assumptions being made
- choices influenced by fear, confusion, or trust

Text-based Questions

After reading the excerpt, either discuss or have students **complete** the following questions:

1. What emotions are Michael and Sam experiencing in this moment?
2. Why does Michael hesitate before approaching Skipper?
3. Why does Sam respond differently?
4. Were Michael’s concerns reasonable? Why or why not?
5. What might have happened if they reacted impulsively?
6. How does uncertainty affect decision-making?
7. What does this scene teach?

SEL-in-Christ™ CONNECTION

Reflection Prompt: “Why is it important to seek truth, wisdom, and understanding instead of reacting only from fear or emotion?”

Scripture Connections:

→ James 1:19

→ Proverbs 3:5–6

→ Philippians 4:6–8

→ Proverbs 18:13

Student Reflection Questions

Questions are included to assist students with reflecting on their own emotions and decision-making.

Closing Reflection Moment

(Use as an exit ticket or a closing reflection discussion)

Prompt: How does the excerpt from pages 130-131 connect to the biblical perspective?

Trust, Emotions, and Wise Decisions

1. What misunderstanding, fear, or uncertainty created tension in this part of *Skipper*?
2. How did the characters respond emotionally before fully understanding the situation?
3. Which emotions appeared most strongly?
 Fear Confusion Worry
 Frustration Suspicion Hope
 Relief Other: _____
4. How did those emotions influence choices or reactions?
5. Do you think any assumptions were made too quickly?
Explain.
6. What might have happened if the characters had slowed down and gathered more understanding first?
7. Have you ever experienced a situation where emotions affected your understanding or decisions?
Explain thoughtfully.
8. What is one emotionally wise response someone could make in a similar situation?
9. What does this story teach about discernment, trust, or emotional wisdom?



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