

# ✕ Caring School Climate ✕

## SCHOOL PROVIDES A CARING, ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENT.

By Abby Ferjak

Edited by Lyle Griner and Marie Sundet © 2006 The Youth & Family Institute, Bloomington, MN

Abby, a connoisseur of Oreos, is a first year student majoring in Youth and Family Ministry at Augsburg College. Abby enjoys random adventures (especially to Australia!) and making music. Because Abby's mother was one of her high school teachers, her school climate was a nice mixture of craziness and extra love.

Philippians 2:1-4 encouragement in Christ...having the same love...look...to the interests of others...

● Tell about a time you did/did not feel cared for in school.

● If you could create the perfect school, what would it look like?

● Describe someone who makes you feel especially cared for. Why might that person act that way?

● What does "united with Christ" mean to you?

● How do you feel about the idea of reflecting Christ's love to your peers in school? Why?

● Why can it be hard to "also [look] to the interests of others?"

● How is your day effected when you are treated poorly in school?

● In what ways are you showing Christ's encouragement and care in school right now?

● Reflecting on Christ's example, what are some ways you could better share Christ's joy, love, and compassion in school?



### So What?

Have each participant write on a small piece of paper one aspect of an attitude or behavior toward classmates that he or she would like to change. Have the participants keep their papers as a reminder of the lesson.



### Candle Time

Begin the prayer and then go around the group and have each person says a one word prayer that each person wishes for him or herself or school (such as unity, acceptance, etc.).



## EXPLORE



- John 13:15 For I have set you an example..."
- Mark 9:37 Whoever welcomes one such child in my name..."
- Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do...do everything in the name of...
- Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ...becoming like him in his death...
- Psalms 19:14 Let the words of my mouth...be acceptable to you...
- Ephesians 4:25 ...putting away falsehood...we are members of one another.



## Leader Page

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### Discussion Goal

Reflecting Christ's love creates a caring environment.

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### Background

What is a caring school climate? Why does a youth's school climate need to be caring? Youth generally spend 35 hours a week in school, that's 140 hours a month, and 1,260 hours in nine months. Many spend even more time in school with extracurricular activities. That's a lot of time! The environment of this time has major influences on youth. In an uncaring environment, youth have a harder time focusing and absorbing information. Also, the attitudes and actions encountered in school have lasting effects. Because so much time is spent in school, it is an important place for youth to show Christ's love.

Philippians 2:1-4 emphasizes that those who find joy and acceptance in Christ can reflect that joy and acceptance to others as a response to Christ's great love. By reflecting Christ's love, we are participating in a powerful form of ministry. Putting this reflection of Christ to practice in school can create an encouraging place for youth to learn and grow. This verse also mentions looking in as well as looking out toward others. Help participants to think of specific ways to create a caring environment in school. Especially, call attention to embracing diversity, refusing to spread rumors, and giving the "weird kids" a chance. Help participants understand that everyone is a child of God, equally loved and cared for. Therefore, we, as children of God, should accept and love our sisters and brothers in Christ.

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### Motivate

Play a round of the telephone game – make up a fun sentence and whisper it to one person, then that person whispers the sentence they heard to the next person and so on until the sentence has been passed through the entire group. When the last person has heard the phrase, that participant should say out loud what he/she heard. Some examples of phrases could be: "The pink snuffleupagus likes ice cream," "Cooky chickens on a mars mission," or "Kangaroos eat cheese from the barby on Tuesdays." Feel free to use more elaborate sentences.

Ask the group to think of what kinds of things happen in school that are similar to the telephone game. Share a personal example of a rumor you have experienced.

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