

## GMRC: NURTURING HEARTS AND BUILDING CHARACTER

*by:*

**Trixia Carla C. Bonus**

*Teacher III, Pantalan Luma Elementary School*

Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) is the emotional and moral backbone of the primary curriculum. In Grade 2, children are stepping out of their insular family bubbles and navigating more complex peer relationships on the playground. They are learning how to share, how to handle losing a game, and how to apologize sincerely. Because character cannot be memorized for a written test, GMRC must be actively practiced and celebrated inside the classroom every single day.

To move away from dry lectures about abstract virtues like "kindness" or "honesty," I introduced a tangible tradition in my classroom called the "Kindness Drop" jar. I placed a large glass jar on my desk, alongside a stack of small colorful slips of paper. I told the students that whenever they witnessed a classmate doing something genuinely kind – like sharing a pencil, helping someone clean a spill, or inviting a lonely peer to play – they should write it down (or dictate it to me) and drop it in the jar.

On Friday afternoons, we gathered in a circle for our weekly ritual. I opened the jar and read the notes aloud.

"Salamat sa;yo, Ben, for sharing your baon sa akin dahil nalimutan ko ang sa akin sa bahay." ("Thank you to Ben for sharing his baon with me when I forgot mine at home,")

I read one afternoon. The look of quiet pride that washed over Ben's face was worth more than any perfect exam score. By highlighting these micro-moments of empathy, the classroom culture shifted dramatically from competitive to deeply cooperative.

Role-playing is another invaluable tool for teaching GMRC. Children often want to do the right thing, but they simply lack the vocabulary to execute it under pressure. Give them real-world scenarios to act out: ‘Aano ang gagawin mo kung mayroong isang tao na nakasira ng iyong blocks’? "What do you do if someone accidentally knocks over your tower of blocks?" ) or “Paano ka sasali sa isang laro na nagsimula na?” ("How do you ask to join a game that has already started?")

By practicing the exact words to use in a safe, low-stakes environment, we empower them with emotional intelligence. GMRC is about teaching children that their actions have a ripple effect on the hearts of others.

#### *References:*

- Gomez, M. G., & Valdez, J. K. M. (2026). *Contemplative Classrooms Empowering Youth With Mindfulness, Resilience, and Well-Being Practices: Through the Philippine Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education*. IGI Global. <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/contemplative-classrooms-empowering-youth-with-mindfulness-resilience-and-well-being-practices/410206>
- Valdez, J. K. M., & Legaspino, L. C. (2026). *Resilience, and Well-Being Practices: Through the Philippine GMRC and Values Education*. IGI Global Books. <https://books.google.com/books?id=V0nXEQAAQBAJ>
- Manners, P. G. (2025). *Flourishing the Filipino Way: Embedding Wellbeing in School*. Google Books. <https://books.google.com/books?id=oXmUEQAAQBAJ>
- Superales, E. G., & Solomon, D. J. Y. (2026). *Cultivating Purpose Amid Apathy: A Phenomenological Study of Values Education Teachers*. *Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Sciences*. [https://gyaanarth.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/vol9-iss26-pg9077-9112-202511\\_pdf.pdf](https://gyaanarth.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/vol9-iss26-pg9077-9112-202511_pdf.pdf)

OECD (2023). Beyond Academic Learning: Social and Emotional Skills for 21st Century Education. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/education/>

CASEL (2023). Social and Emotional Learning in Elementary Education: A Framework for Implementation. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. <https://casel.org>

Jones, S. M., & Doolittle, E. J. (2022). Social and Emotional Learning: Introducing the Issue. *The Future of Children*, 32(1), 3-11. <https://futureofchildren.princeton.edu>

Darling-Hammond, L., et al. (2023). Implications of Social-Emotional Learning for Educational Practice. *Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221148661>