

# ***The Ripple Effect of Decisions***

Lesson Objective:

Students will understand the ripple effect of their decisions and how small actions can impact their community. They will practice using empathy and accountability to make decisions that benefit not just themselves, but others around them.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 25, *The Ripple Effect of Decisions*
- Pencils and markers
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Ripple Effect Map
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Begin with a brief discussion about how the decisions we make can affect more than just ourselves..

## **Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script**

### **Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:**

- "Today, we're going to talk about how the decisions we make don't just affect us—they affect the people around us, too. Just like how a small stone thrown in water creates ripples, our actions can create ripples in our communities. We're going to learn how to think about others when we make decisions and how even small choices can have a big impact."

### **Discussion Starter**

- Have you ever made a decision that affected someone else?
- Can you think of a time when someone else's actions impacted you, even if they didn't mean to?
- Why do you think it's important to consider others when we make decisions?

## Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

### Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 25 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students and make sure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

### Story Time Teacher Script:

#### Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "Let's read Chapter 25 together. As we read, I want you to think about how the group of friends planned their event and how they considered the people around them in their decisions."
- (Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

#### Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
  - Why did the group want to plan a fun day at the park?
  - How did Harriet show excitement for the event?
  - What concerns did Betty raise about the event?
  - Why was it important for Ollie to get permission to use the park?
  - What did Buzz suggest to keep the event safe?
  - How did the group consider their neighbors in planning the event?
  - What role did Bennie play in ensuring the event went smoothly?
  - How did the friends use their strengths to make the event a success?
  - Why did Harriet pause before putting up posters?
  - What does the term "ripple effect" mean in the context of this story?

## Chapter 25: *The Ripple Effect of Decisions*

As May came to a close and summer approached, Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty found themselves reflecting on how quickly the school year had passed. With only a few weeks left in fourth grade, they were excited about the upcoming summer break but also thoughtful about the lessons they'd learned throughout the year. One lesson, in particular, was about to stand out: how their decisions, big or small, could affect not just themselves, but others, and even their whole community.

It started one sunny afternoon when the group was hanging out in the schoolyard. Harriet had come up with the idea to hold a “fun day” in their neighborhood park over the weekend, and the friends were excited to help plan it.

“We could have games, snacks, and maybe even a soccer match!” Harriet said, her eyes sparkling with excitement. “It’ll be awesome!”

“I can bring my science kit,” Buzz added. “We can do some cool experiments for the younger kids.”

Sammy smiled. “And I’ll bring my guitar. Maybe we can have a little music session, too.” As they brainstormed ideas, Ollie, ever the planner, began organizing the details. “We’ll need to make sure we have permission to use the park,” he said, jotting down notes. “And we’ll need to clean up afterward so we don’t leave a mess.”

Betty, always thinking ahead, raised an important point. “We also need to think about how this event could affect the neighborhood. If we invite a lot of people, we’ll need to make sure there’s enough space and that we’re not disturbing anyone.”

Bennie, calm and thoughtful as always, nodded in agreement. “And we should think about the people who live near the park. Will they be okay with the noise? We don’t want to bother anyone.”

The group realized that, while planning their “fun day” was exciting, they needed to consider how their decisions would affect not just themselves, but everyone around them—including their neighbors and the community as a whole.

### Learning to Consider Others

Over the next few days, as they worked on organizing the event, the friends used their personal strengths to make thoughtful decisions that would benefit not only their group, but also the broader community.

Harriet, with her boundless energy, took the lead in getting the word out about the event. She made colorful posters to hang up around the neighborhood, but before she put them up, she stopped to think about where to place them.

“I don’t want to cover anyone’s property or put them in places where they’ll be an eyesore,” Harriet said, pausing in front of a lamppost. “I’ll make sure they’re only in places where it’s okay to post things.”

Buzz, always full of creative ideas, wanted to make the event exciting, but he also thought about how to keep it safe. “I’ll bring some of my science experiments, but I’ll only choose the ones that are safe for everyone to try,” he said. “That way, no one gets hurt, and we can still have fun.”

Sammy, who always cared about others’ feelings, suggested they invite the neighbors who lived near the park to the event. “If we invite them, they’ll know we’re trying to include everyone, and they won’t feel like we’re just making noise in their space.”

Betty, ever the problem-solver, organized a cleanup crew to make sure the park stayed clean. “We don’t want to leave a mess for the community to deal with after our event. If we take responsibility for cleaning up, we show that we care about the neighborhood.”

Bennie, with his calm and steady nature, reminded the group to check in with the park officials to get permission for their event. “We need to make sure we have the park’s permission so we don’t accidentally cause any problems. It’s about respecting the rules and the people who take care of the space.”

Ollie, ever the planner, made sure they considered the timing of the event. “Let’s schedule it for the afternoon, after most people have had lunch. That way, we won’t interfere with people’s morning routines or be too noisy in the evening.”

### The Ripple Effect of Decisions

On the day of the “fun day,” the event went off without a hitch. Kids from the neighborhood joined in on the games, Buzz’s science experiments were a hit, and Sammy’s music session brought smiles to everyone’s faces. Harriet led a spirited soccer match, while Betty made sure the cleanup crew was ready to jump into action afterward.

As they packed up and cleaned the park, the friends reflected on how their decisions had affected not just their group but the entire community.

“I’m glad we thought about how our event would affect everyone,” Harriet said, picking up trash from the field. “If we hadn’t, it could’ve turned into a big mess.”

Buzz, wiping down his science equipment, added, “Yeah, it’s like our decisions had a ripple effect. What we did didn’t just affect us, it affected the people around us.”

Sammy, strumming his guitar softly, nodded. “And because we thought about others, the event went smoothly. Everyone had fun, and no one was bothered.”

Betty, always the problem-solver, smiled as she looked around the clean park. “It’s about accountability, too. We’re part of this community, and we need to take care of it.”

Bennie, ever the steady voice of reason, added, “When we think about how our choices affect others, we can make better decisions, not just for ourselves, but for everyone.”

Ollie, reflecting on the day’s success, grinned. “And that’s what being part of a community is about. Our choices don’t just stop with us, they affect everyone around us.”

### Reflecting on Decisions and Community

As the group walked home that evening, they felt proud of the event they had organized. More importantly, they were proud of how they had learned to consider how their decisions affected others.

“It’s like what we’ve been learning all year,” Ollie said. “Whether it’s about trust, responsibility, or thinking about others, our decisions have a big impact.”

Harriet, always full of energy, smiled. “And it’s cool to know that we can use our strengths to help the community, not just ourselves.”

Buzz, creative as always, added, “And we can still have fun while doing it! It doesn’t have to be boring to think about how our actions affect others.”

Sammy, thoughtful as ever, nodded. “And it’s not just about events like today. It’s about all the little decisions we make, how we treat people, how we act in school, even how we talk to each other.”

Betty, ever the problem-solver, agreed. “Every decision can have a ripple effect, and it’s up to us to make sure that effect is positive.”

Bennie, with his calm and steady nature, smiled at his friends. “When we take the time to think about others, we make the whole community stronger. And that’s something we can feel good about.”

As the sun set and the group headed home, they knew that the lessons they had learned weren’t just for today, they were lessons they would carry with them as they continued to grow and make decisions that would affect not just themselves, but everyone around them.

And with that, they walked into the warm evening, ready to face whatever decisions came next, knowing that by using their strengths and thinking about others, they could make a positive difference in their community.

### Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** "Now that we've finished the chapter, let's think about how the decisions the group made had a ripple effect."

### Post-Chapter Questions

Ask these questions to help students reflect on the chapter and connect it to their own experiences:

- How did the group's decisions affect the people around them?
- Why is it important to consider others when making decisions?
- What could have gone wrong if they didn't think about the neighbors?
- How did Buzz's decision to use safe science experiments show responsibility?
- What small steps did the group take to ensure their event was successful?
- How did the group use empathy to think about others' needs?
- Can you think of an example in your life where your actions affected others in a positive way?
- How did planning ahead help the group make better decisions?
- Why was it important for Harriet to place the posters carefully?
- What does it mean to make decisions that strengthen the community?

### Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- **Students will** explore the impact of their actions by visually mapping out how one positive choice can create a ripple effect that influences others. They will reflect on empathy, responsibility, and how even small decisions can lead to big outcomes.

### Activity: Ripple Effect Map (20 minutes)

#### Introduce Activity

"Today, we're going to think about the power of our choices—how even a small action can create a **ripple effect**, just like when you throw a pebble into a pond and the water spreads out in circles.

Every kind and thoughtful decision we make can affect not just us, but the people around us, and sometimes even people we don't know!

I'm handing out the *Ripple Effect Map*. You can work on this alone or with a partner.

You'll choose a positive decision, either from our list or one of your own—and write that decision in the center of the map.

Then, in each ripple, you'll write how that decision might impact others: classmates, friends, family, or even the community. The goal is to see how your actions can spread positivity and change."

### Activity Instructions

Distribute the Ripple Effect Map

Students can work individually or in pairs

Choosing a situation either from the list below or one of their own.

Place the statement in the middle of the map.

For every ripple, write down how that decision might impact other people

Example Decisions for the Ripple Effect Map:

- Deciding to invite a friend to join a game at recess
- Helping a classmate with their homework
- Cleaning up trash at the park
- Volunteering for a community event
- Sharing supplies in the classroom

### Wrapping it Up



Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

- "Would anyone like to share what action you chose and one or two of the ripple effects you thought of?
- As you listen, notice how many people can be affected by just one small, kind action. You might even get new ideas for ways you can make a difference!"
- *Encourage thoughtful and specific connections (e.g., "If I help my classmate, they might feel more confident and help someone else too.")*

"You all made powerful connections today between your actions and the impact they can have.

The truth is, we create ripples every day—whether we realize it or not.

When we choose kindness, responsibility, or empathy, we send out waves that can change someone's whole day."

## Review and Reflection Teacher Script

### Gather in a Circle for Reflection:



"Let's sit in a circle and reflect on the ripple effects we explored today.

When it's your turn, complete this sentence:

**'One small action I could take that might make a big difference is...'**

"You can share an idea from your ripple map or something new. You can also pass if you just want to listen."

## Closing

- "Never forget that you have the power to influence the world around you, starting with small decisions.  
You don't have to wait to make a big change—you can start with something simple, something today.  
Keep creating good ripples, and watch the positivity grow!"

## Home Connection Letter

### Sending Information Home:

- "Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. Today, we completed a "Ripple Effect Map" to explore how small decisions can impact others in meaningful ways. Using real-life examples, we visualized how kindness, responsibility, and generosity can spread to classmates, families, and their community."
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave.

## Parent Letter

### Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.



Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Today in class, we discussed how the decisions we make can have a ripple effect, impacting not only ourselves but those around us. Your child explored how their actions, big or small, can influence their friends, family, and community.

We encourage you to talk with your child about a decision they made recently and how it affected others.

As a family, you might think about:

- Examples of positive ripple effects in your household or community.
- Ways to make thoughtful decisions that benefit others.

We hope this lesson helps your child continue to make decisions that have a positive impact on those around them!

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Regards,

# ***Ripple Effect Map***

