



INTRODUCTION TO LIFETOWN'S LESSONS FOR LIFE

All of the shops in this indoor, realistic “simulated” village are staffed by caring and trained volunteers who, through role-play, help students learn life skills that will better prepare them for similar interactions that they will experience in our community. **The lessons and interactions that take place at LifeTown cannot be duplicated in the classroom and community based interactions most often are not possible with the same level of safety and nurturing.** Unlike the real world, there is no hurry and skills can be practiced over and over again. Best of all, students have tons of fun and there is evidence showing that children increase their learning capacity when they’re doing something they really enjoy!

Each visit starts by working closely with your School Coordinator to determine which of our lessons is best suited for each of your students’ visits. Variations on lessons are available for students repeating lessons and for non-readers. We have found great success in running multiple lessons in the Village at the same time. This allows for individual progress within the classroom and builds greater competencies for those students requiring more time with a particular lesson. The Village is one of the few places you are truly able to handle individual learning styles within a single classroom of students.. Teachers can use this lesson for a select group of students while others work on a different lesson. It is not necessary to have an entire class engage in this or any other lesson at the same time. We strongly recommend that teachers keep students’ completed worksheets as an evaluation tool.

The average student visits LifeTown 4-6 times per year and is able to experience different lesson plans each time. Many of the lessons, especially in the area of transition work skills, require multiple sessions within a given lesson. Created and designed by educators and professionals for students with disabilities, lesson plans focus on a variety of life skill development including but not limited to: time and money management, socialization, financial literacy, etiquette and job exploration. **These lesson plans are sent to you two weeks in advance of your LifeTown visit, giving you adequate time to prepare your students in the classroom for their visit to LifeTown.**

Each LifeTown visit consists of a two-hour experience, between 10 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Students are provided with a clipboard, map of the village, lesson worksheet, withdrawal slip, pencil and wallet to be used during their visit at LifeTown. Students complete a withdrawal slip and get \$12 (real money) from the bank that they will use in the LifeTown village for food, entertainment, services and goods. Students are encouraged to make their own decisions as to how they would like to spend their money. Some of the skills learned during these transactions include:

Independence

- Self-advocacy and self-care
- Socialization and etiquette
- Time management
- Traffic & pedestrian safety
- Fine motor skills
- Sensory integration
- Making healthy choices, hygiene, health and fitness

Financial Literacy

- Budgeting and training in saving money
- Counting currency and mastering transactions
- Banking (making withdrawals and deposits)

Career Development

- Job interviews
- Resume building
- On-the-job training
- Mastering job searching technology (LinkedIn, Indeed, etc...)

How to Judge when to move to a new lesson?

Knowing when to move to the next lesson depends upon observation of the students as they go through the Village to determine when they are ready for the next lesson. Remember that one of the unique features of the Village is the ability to run multiple lessons within a given class. This supports individual students’ differences in integrating information.

INTRODUCTORY LESSONS

Welcome to Life Town

This is the place to start for every student. We have created a lesson that introduces the student to learning at Life Town. The students use the lesson to follow to find the various places they need to visit. They will withdraw money from the Bank and visit the Medical Office and many other places. This lesson has multiple versions that can be used for different learning styles. There are versions that suit non-readers to advance learners.

Students work on skills in the areas of money management, socialization, time management and making choices.

TIME MANAGEMENT LESSONS

On Time

The "On Time" lesson allows students to navigate within Life Town independently as they follow the lesson to practice working with clocks and time management.

The students will gain skills in problem solving, money exchange and safety.

Making Plans and Changing Plans

This lesson is designed for students who have been to Life Town several times. Students create their own plan for where they want to go and what they want to do with another student that they have been paired with by the teacher. We provide the worksheet for the students to use in setting up their day. The surprise in this lesson is that things don't always go the way you plan. Along the way students will encounter a few situations that call for them to make alternative plans with their partner.

Students will focus their work within this lesson on problem solving, money management, time management, socialization, and decision-making by consensus.

FINANCIAL LITERACY LESSONS

Money Matters

The goal of this lesson is to further the students' understanding of various denominations of money and improve their budgeting skills. It is a great second lesson after the students' first experience with "Introduction to Life Town." Students are expected to follow a plan and complete each step before moving on to the next. Basic reading skills are required.

The students will continue to practice the skills of various denominations of money and improving their budgeting skills.

Creating a Spending Plan

Students can work on this lesson alone. The focus of this lesson is on planning and budgeting. Therefore, the students will work on planning, money management, communication and socialization. Once the student has completed the worksheet, he/she will have time to spend money on his/her own.

The students will be working on the skills of planning and budgeting.

Keeping Track

Students must record all purchases and keep receipts for all of their purchases. They can keep these in their wallets, which we provide. Before they can deposit at the end of the lesson, the student will add up their purchases with their teacher, volunteer or independently. Calculators are provided if needed. They can move on to deposit, if money left over.

The students will work on budgeting, money management and communication.

SOCIALIZATION LESSON PLANS

Special Friend

This lesson is all about relationships, especially friends. Students will gain skills in socialization, communication, following directions, and money management. This is a great lesson around a holiday or as a special class project. This lesson can be customized to your classes needs.

The students will work on socialization, compassion and communication.

A Taste of Etiquette (see School Coordinator for lesson availability - available for MS/HS only)

Today, students will practice many facets of manners. They will wait in line for a table, order from a menu and have a guest at their table who is acting as an etiquette coach. This lesson will continue back into LifeTown as they practice their manners.

This lesson involves skill development in the areas of manners, money management, interpersonal relationships, communication and making choices.

Learning to Care (see School Coordinator for lesson availability)

In this lesson, students will practice the art of caring for other individuals. We will be having different Preschools visit LifeTown so that the students will have the experience of working with young children. In addition, we will be asking some local senior centers to "share" their residents with us so that the students can have the opportunity to interact with elderly people and spend some time with them at LifeTown.

This lesson involves skill development in the areas of interpersonal relationships, communication and making choices.

Excuse Me

Students follow the worksheet provided and visit every venue asking various questions and recording the answers. Every question begins by "Excuse Me" and followed by "thank you" before exiting the venue.

This lesson involves skill development in the areas of socialization, communication and manners.

Taking Care

The Taking Care lesson will work towards teaching the students about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The focus of this lesson will be visiting different venues to learn about self awareness and self care working towards independence. The students will learn different exercises, healthy eating habits, proper oral hygiene and proper hand/face care.

This lesson involves skill development in the areas of healthy choices, independence and socialization.

SAFETY LESSON PLANS

Which Way

This lesson focuses on basic directions in a unique way. Concepts such as left, right, enter, exit and cardinal directions are practiced throughout Life Town. Students follow a sequence of clues to get them to each destination. They must go to the correct location to complete the task.

Communication, problem solving and following directions are all key in this lesson.

Watch Out

This lesson is about safety in your community.. Students will navigate through various obstacles that are a part of everyday life; orange cones, tape to avoid areas, power outages and wet surface signs are a few of the safety items to be used during this lesson. Students must complete at least one lesson at Life Town before the safety lesson. During this visit the students will need to adapt to changes in their immediate environment, some more quickly than others. Often students react differently to some of the changes. It is important to pair those students with sensory or startle response issues with an aid or partner to help them through some of the experiences. This lesson ends with a guest lecturer who will speak to the students about safety in their own community or at home.

Students will gain skills in communication, problem solving and following directions.

JOB LESSONS - THE JOB CURRICULUM

Job Exploration

This lesson is the first in a series that is designed to help students find out about jobs they could have in the future. In this first lesson, the students will explore various jobs in the Life Town by visiting several places of business and asking questions of the workers. They will be given a clipboard and will have their list of questions that they will ask. When they finish asking the questions,, they will indicate whether this is a job that they would like to apply for in the future.

In addition, the students will need to select things to do in the Town before or after questioning prospective employers. They can make appointments, see a movie, have a snack, etc.

This lessons stresses job preparation, time management, communication and making choices.

Application and Resume

This is the second in a series to focus on writing a application and resume. Using the choices that they made in the previous lesson, they will complete an application either at school or here at Life Town. Using an online resume generator, students will create a personal resume to be used during their next LifeTown visit.

This lesson stresses job preparation,, communication, self knowledge and making choices.

Interview

This is the third in the series of lessons that focus on employment. Students will go through the process of two to three interviews. The students will find out their job assignments at the following visit to LifeTown.

This lesson stresses job preparation, communication, self knowledge, confidence and making choices.

On the Job Training

This is the fourth lesson in the series that focus on the student's' employment. Today the students will be working at jobs in Life Town, based on their interviews. They will work at a certain venue for a portion of their visit. They will receive a paycheck which they will cash and use in LifeTown.

We recommend that students work at different jobs in Life Town at different times to give them exposure to trying out doing a variety of tasks and becoming familiar with different employers.

