**Unit 2: Lesson 10**

**Getting Smarter!**

**Goal: To learn that the *intellectual* positive actions of being curious and learning new things help us feel good about ourselves.**

*Have you ever gone for a walk with a small child after a spring rain? She turns over rocks and checks out the worms, draws pictures in the mud with a stick, jumps in the puddles, and smells every flower. She asks you question after question: “How did this flower grow?” “What makes mud?” “Where do worms go at night? Do they sleep?”*



Life is exciting when we are learning new things. **Being curious** and **learning new things** are positive actions for our minds that help us feel good about ourselves. They keep our minds active and help us stay young. Curiosity brings us face-to-face with life and learning all over again. Children are good examples; they are endlessly curious, and they continually learn new things.

**Being Curious.** Being curious is wanting to know; it’s having a desire to explore, to investigate, and to learn. Being curious is our urge to discover the what, why, and how of things. It’s a positive action we take with our minds.

We are all curious by nature and can easily rekindle our urge to find out what’s happening around us by asking questions. It’s our natural response when we want to know something. Why…? What…? When…? How…? Where…? These words are familiar to all of us. Children use them really well. They know how to ask questions with real enthusiasm, and they don’t stop asking until they get the answer. Why? Because they want to learn new things.

When we follow our curiosity, our minds stay active and never grow old. Each day becomes an adventure into something new, and life is exciting for us. We don’t have time to be bored. The constant flow of ideas continually renews our minds and how we feel about ourselves. Being curious helps us feel good about ourselves because we are continually learning.

**Learning New Things.** Learning new things is an exciting positive action. It gives knowledge and understanding. It stimulates our minds and keeps them active. Learning new things opens our minds and challenges us to think differently. It expands our horizons and increases our opportunities.

We learn new things every day of our lives. There is an infinite number of things to learn and many ways to learn them. We learn formally through instructions, like at school. Schools helps us learn new things as we further our education. Special-interest classes teach us skills to improve our performance, to get a new job, or to enrich our lives. Many businesses offer classes associated with their products such as computer classes at computer stores and do-it-yourself classes at building supply stores. Libraries, Scouts, 4-H, and junior achievement programs offer a wide variety of classes where children can learn new things.

We learn informally by asking questions. Observing, reading, and just listening are other informal ways to learn new things. Joining special interest groups is another way to learn. Groups get together regularly to study the stars, read books, discuss local concerns, or to learn other things. Volunteering is another way to learn something new.

Of course, learning isn’t always structured. Nor does it have to take place indoors. Nature walks, visiting the zoo, or visits to a nearby city are always little adventures for learning something new. We can learn new things wherever we are.

**Everything we learn benefits us in some way.** We have a responsibility to learn positive things because what we learn affects those around us. By being curious and learning what is happening around us, we can make more positive choices for ourselves and our family. Our informed choices can benefit those outside our family, too.

 We can **be curious** and **learn new things** any time and anywhere we want. Learning always begins with a question, either to ourselves or to someone else. Life is more interesting, exciting, and fun for us when we are continually learning something new. Keeping our minds active and informed helps us to feel good about ourselves. So, let’s follow our curiosity and learn more now.

QUESTIONS:

* What is being curious, and why is it important to us?
* Why are being curious and learning new things positive actions?
* What are some formal and informal ways to learn?
* How can we make learning new things a lifelong activity?
* How does being curious and learning new things affect our self-concepts?
* How do you feel about yourself when you are curious and learn something new?
* What things are you curious about?
* In what ways are you learning new things?

Now, select a topic you are curious about. Make a list of what you would like to know about the topic you selected. Go ahead and ask teachers, friends, coworkers and check the internet to help you find out more about it. Pay attention to how you feel about yourself when you are learning new things.

FAMILY POSITIVE ACTIONS

DISCUSSION:

* Why is being curious and learning new things important to our family?
* What topic would we as a family like to learn about?
* How can we learn more about this topic?
* How does learning new things affect us as a family?

Now, let’s choose a topic and see how many different things we can learn about this week.

Let’s see who can find such things as the most unusual information about our topic, the oldest information, and the most recent. It might also be fun to keep track of the number of things we can learn in a week.

Let’s pay attention to how much fun we can have being curious and learning new things together!

*Parent positive actions*

**Ask Yourself**: What things are you curious about as a parent? How can you learn more about them? How can you share the things you learn with your children? Do you allow them to share their enthusiasm with you? How can you help you children see that learning new things is fun and exciting?

**Plan and Do**: Follow your natural curiosity and ask questions every day. Encourage your children to do so also. Take an interest in the events around you. Keep up on local and national events. Pay attention to what’s happening at your children’s school. Follow local, state, and national affairs and think about how they affect you.

Read articles that interest you and learn things you don’t know much about. Keep your mind stimulated, informed, and in the process of learning new things. Encourage your children to do the same.

Share the new things you learn with your children. Talk to them about local and national events that affect them and your family. Show them by example that you value education and learning.

COMMUNITY POSITIVE ACTIONS

Let’s look for places we can practice the positive actions of being curious and learning new things in our community. Let’s include both formal and informal learning situations. Schools are one place to start. Volunteering to help tutor students and helping the PTO are some ways we can be curious, learn new things, and share with others.

We might also want to look to local churches, the YMCA, Scouts, after school programs, and other groups that need volunteers to help with their learning activities. Our community improves as we continue to learn and work toward being the best we can be.

SUMMARY

**Being curious** and **learning new things** are a big part of a small child’s life. They can be a big part of everyone’s life, too. We all feel good about ourselves when we are curious. Asking questions about ideas, places, people, and other things stimulates our minds to learn new things. Whether we learn through instruction or by asking questions; by reading, listening, or observing; or by touching or moving, we always feel good about ourselves. Being curious and learning new things help us deal with the changes around us. They also add fun, enjoyment, and interest to our lives. Our self-concepts become more positive when we take time to be curious and learn new things.

**Word of the Week: Challenge**

A task that call for special effort