

Dear Parent,

Hot air balloons rise as the burner is released... but eventually, they begin to fall and need to be refilled. They must continue to be filled in order to go up. People are like this. They must be consistently encouraged in order to reach their highest potential. Hot Air Balloons teaches relationship building.

This week, your student learned about relationship skills.

Relationship skills involve the ability to **establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships** with different individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, **listening** actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, **negotiating conflict** constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

While there are a lot of subcategories of relationship skills, we specifically learned about relationship building through the metaphor of Hot Air Balloons. Habitudes are images that form leadership habits and attitudes, and the image of a Hot Air Balloon parallels the human need for encouragement.

Relationship building is the ability to connect with others from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and age groups to create fulfilling, lasting relationships that are built on honesty, encouragement, and empathy.

Hot air balloons need to be refilled in order to rise. In the same way, people need to be encouraged and supported through relationships to reach their highest potential.

Through this lesson, we challenged your child to think through some difficult questions—What would happen in our classroom, group, school, or community if everyone encouraged one another on a daily basis?

Your child has all the information they need to succeed, but they need you to help them interpret it. We challenge you to ask them difficult questions to keep the conversation going at home. Here are a few to get you started: How can you encourage your circle of friends right now? Do you have any friendships that are draining rather than fulfilling? How might you be able to “fill” those relationships? Share your answers to the questions to facilitate a conversation and help your children process what it means to build healthy relationships through encouragement.

Best wishes,  
The Growing Leaders Team

