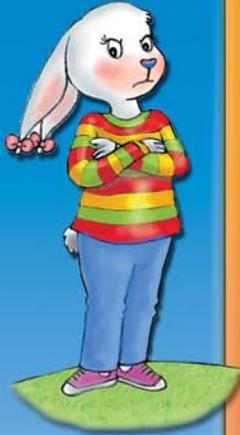


# CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

## MISERABLE MILLIE

### Story Description



Millie thought the whole world was unfair. Even though she had a nice house and a loving family, she was always miserable. Whenever things didn't go her way, Millie constantly complained.

Millie became so miserable that she decided to run away so she could do whatever she wanted. She takes a bus to the big city, but instead of having fun, she encounters one disaster after another. Millie is alone and scared, and ends up with no money, no food to eat, and nowhere to sleep. After getting caught stealing candy, the police call her parents. Her parents are overjoyed that she has been found. Millie finally appreciated what she had and became, "the happiest girl in the whole world."

### Major Objective

To define and present the following virtues so they can be integrated into the life of each student:

- Respect for others: valuing other people's differences and similarities by giving them opportunities to be who they are
- Kindness: having a desire to do good to others
- Friendship: being a companion by listening, recognizing, and valuing others



### Story Time Interaction

Read the story, **Miserable Millie**, and then write these three virtues on the board: respect, trustworthiness, and fairness. Define and discuss these virtues. Discuss the main characters:

Pappa	Mama	Friends
Teachers	Park Boys	Store Owner
Millie	Willie(older brother)	Betsy (older sister)

Ask: What was the main problem Millie had with everyone? The main problem Millie had with everyone was that she wanted everyone to do things her way. Millie was very selfish. Millie never listened to anyone; the only person she listened to was herself. Whatever she thought had to be right.

Ask: What was the result of Millie's selfish and proud behavior? She left home very happy, but her life ended up in total despair. Millie became sick from not eating properly. She had a scary encounter with boys in the park. She spent a miserable night on a park bench. Millie walked around in the freezing rain looking for something to eat. She ate someone's sandwich and became sick. She spent a miserable night in a cardboard box moaning, shivering, and throwing up. Millie stole candy and got caught. She sat in a police station wondering what would happen to her.

## Problem Solving

Millie had a serious problem about thinking of others. She wanted everything to go her way. Everyone faces problems at one time or another. How do people solve problems peaceably?

Make a poster for each of the following words with a definition for each one.

Negotiations: Two interested parties figure out a problem

Mediation: A neutral third party encourages the conversation and sets the rules

Arbitration: A neutral third party tells how to solve the problem

Ask: How do conflicts start?

*Conflicts start when two or more people don't agree about something. Sometimes it is very difficult to solve the problem, but by taking time to work through the problem, it can usually be resolved. Sometimes people need outside help.*

Ask the class to brainstorm some problem ideas.

Examples: Home—Who will take out the trash, do the dishes, clean the table, vacuum the house, etc.

Yard work—Who will weed the front yard, backyard, mow the lawn, rake the leaves, etc.

Game—Two students take opposite positions on how the game is to be played.

Classroom—Take Millie's argument that the teacher always picked on her for talking. One roleplays the teacher, the other plays Millie.

Pick four students to roleplay. Two students take the opposite sides of the issue. One student roleplays as the mediator (gives rules for trying to talk and encourages discussion), and the other student roleplays the arbitrator (helps by giving solutions). They are to try to have both sides come to a mutual agreement.

You can use the entire class as the arbitrator. Students offer suggestions on how to solve the conflict.

## Thinking of Others

Discuss various ways that students can present or use their talents to help their class, family, or community. Help students find a creative way to use their talents.

Ideas (which are limited only to the imagination!) include:

- Think of something to do that would make dad and mom happy.
- Perform a pantomime for the class or perform it for children in the hospital
- Volunteer for a class activity

- Write a poem or a song to share
- Sing a song or play a musical instrument for an elderly person in the community
- Offer to run an errand for a homebound neighbor or friend
- Help someone with a project
- Spread cheer with a smile and “Thanks!” to dad, mom, friend, or a neighbor
- Cheer someone up by giving them a sincere compliment
- Do a kind deed for someone who does not like you

## Food Guide Pyramid

**Goal:** To teach children that to be healthy, they must eat the proper foods. Millie soon discovered that eating improperly can lead to negative results.

Get a copy of the “Food Guide Pyramid” and teach the guide to the students. If one is not accessible, go on the Web and put “Food Guide Pyramid” into the search engine. Stress that eating and exercising properly are essential for good health.

Ask: What was Millie’s complaint about eating?

*Millie complained, “I can’t eat whatever I want.”*

What did Millie order for her first breakfast?

*Millie ordered a large hot fudge sundae with lots of whipped cream.*

What happened after she ate the hot fudge sundae loaded with whipped cream for breakfast?

*After eating the hot fudge sundae loaded with whipped cream she got a stomachache.*

What did Millie order the next time she ate breakfast?

*Millie ordered orange juice, eggs, toast, and milk—the same food her mother often served for breakfast.*

## Understanding the Value of Money

Many times children don’t understand the value of money. Take a magazine, and clip pictures of various items to buy. For example: car, house, vacation trip like fishing or skiing, toys appropriate for your class, clothes, etc. Have various students hold them up in class.

Ask: What is common to all these pictures? It has to do with money.

*Everything you see costs money. Money does not grow on trees. Your parents have to work hard to earn enough money to supply your needs. Then if they have extra money they spend it on other things.*

What are some of the essential things of life?

*Food, shelter, clothing, and transportation are the essential things of life. Some parents make just enough money to pay for these essential items. Learn to appreciate the sacrifices your parents make to supply your needs.*

Hold up a \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills. If you have a \$100 bill, hold this up also. Discuss the minimum wage and how long people must work to earn \$100. Discuss federal, state, and city taxes. (This varies according to where you live.) Even if your parents make good money, they must pay taxes to the government.

Millie didn't understand the value of money. She stole money from her mother's purse and emptied her piggy bank. It didn't take long for Millie to realize it takes lots of money to live.

## **Math—Spending Wisely**

Provide students with a large piece of paper, scissors, glue, and an old catalog or newspaper. They are to cut out items that they would like to buy. Give each student \$\_\_\_\_\_ to spend. They are to add up the items that they would like to buy. Students should be made to realize that they are limited on what they can buy.

Stress: If they apply themselves and get better paying jobs, they will have more to spend. If they quit school, they may get only 50 % of the money to buy something from the catalog or newspaper. If they graduate from high school, they get 75% of the money to spend. If they graduate from college, they get 100% of the money to spend. This is also an opportunity to teach about percentages.

## **Social Studies/ US Government**

### **Why Are Police Necessary?**

Children need to learn that they are living in a society that has been shaped by wise men and women who thoughtfully created rules and privileges so that all citizens of this country could live free and happy lives. Introducing and defining terms associated with government will help them to make these ideas and concepts their own. One of the important roles of government is to make sure its citizens respect the rights of others. If these rights are violated, then punishment occurs.

Millie stole candy from the shop owner, and a policeman caught her. Police are public servants. Those obeying the law have nothing to fear from police; it's lawbreakers that must live in fear.

Ask: Who can define government?

*Government is composed of individuals or a council that administer the laws of a state or nation for the benefits of its citizens.*

Why do we need government?

*Government was created to keep the actions or conduct of people within the limits prescribed by the rules made for the safety of members of a city, state, or nation.*

Why do we need law enforcement?

*Law enforcement was created to enforce decisions made by the government for the public good.*

Notice how the police helped Millie by contacting her parents.

What was the police reaction when they saw Millie's mother wrap her arms around her, and kiss her and say over and over again, "I'm so happy to see you"?

*The police were glad they had saved another girl from the streets.*

### **Art Project—Thank You Notes**

Lead the class in a discussion about the importance of giving thanks for what one has. Let students share about things that they are thankful for. Then have students in the class write a thank you note to someone they would like to thank. Encourage students to write something specific in the thank you note. Use this also as an art project. If the opportunity is available, let students make a number of thank you notes. Encourage students to write a separate thank you note to their parents. Better yet, have them write a thank you note to both parents.

When the students return to class after giving out their thank you notes, let them share the reactions they received from those receiving the thank you notes.

### **Three-Legged Race**

**Goal:** To teach students the importance of cooperation.

*Lesson:* One of the important factors for winning the three-legged race is to have both students fully cooperate with each other. Instead of cooperating with others, Millie always wanted to do things her way. Those who want to win this race must cooperate with their partner.

**Preparation:** This game can be played a number of ways. For all games, students are to have two legs tied together.

*Running game:* All students are on the line. They are to race to a line on the other end. They can also race back. The first one crossing the line is the winner.

*Running game and pickup:* Each student is given a spoon, paper plate, and a piece of candy. The object is to both pick up their candy and carry the candy with the spoon. Hands cannot touch the candy. If the candy falls, the candy must be picked up by the spoon only. The first to cross the finish line is the winner.

### **Roleplay—Playing a Game**

**Goal:** To teach that games are fun only if everyone cooperates

*Roleplay:* Choose an appropriate board game for a group of children to play. Have the children act out fussing over the game. They should also fuss over the rules.

*Class discussion:* How do you think everyone feels playing this game?

**Ask:** What are some ways to have fun and avoid arguments when

playing games?

*Read and follow the rules of the game.*

*Be considerate of other by putting yourself into others shoes. (Follow the Golden Rule: Do to others what you would want them to do to you.)*

*Never cheat*

*Don't be a sore loser*

*Congratulate the winner*

## **Tying It All Together**

Millie tried very hard to be happy, but the more she tried to do things her way, the more miserable she became. Only after she hit bottom did she wake up and learn to appreciate the things she had. Learn to look at what you have and not at what you don't have. It's like the story of the man who complained he had no shoes until he saw a man who had no feet. When Millie discovered what she had, she became the happiest girl in the world. People can live a miserable life of always complaining about what they don't have. Live a joyful life and be appreciative of the things you have. You'll live a much happier and more fulfilling life.