

CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

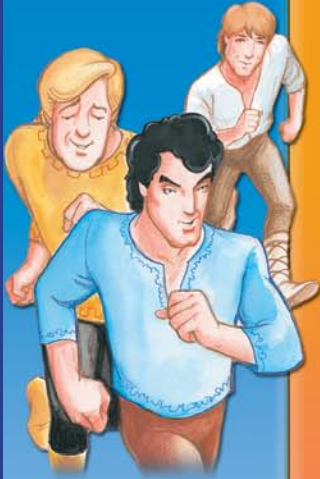
THE GREAT ROYAL RACE

Story Description

It was time for the beautiful princess Elizabeth to be married. Charming Simon and the strong, handsome Thomas came to ask her hand in marriage. And then there was John, the handsome but not-so-flashy commoner whom Elizabeth had first noticed helping an old man get his wagon out of a muddy ditch.

Not sure about the true character of her three suitors, Elizabeth had them run a race to reveal what they were really like in difficult situations. Tempted by distractions planted by the wise king, two of the three runners failed to keep their eyes on their goal. But the commoner John stayed focused on the beautiful princess—he passed the test of the Great Royal Race.

This inspiring story by Carl Sommer shows how goal setting, perseverance, and loyalty will bring success.



Major Objective

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

- Perseverance: continuing to do something until the obstacles are overcome and the task is completed
- Loyalty: giving one's devoted support to another
- Goal Setting: making step-by-step plans to reach a set purpose

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, **The Great Royal Race**, and then write these three virtues on the board: perseverance, loyalty, and goal setting. Define and discuss these virtues.

Activities

Objectives: To use the following activities to help reinforce the virtues of perseverance, loyalty, and goal setting.



Role Playing

Read the book and have students act out the story. Pick a student as the princess, some as ladies-in-waiting, three students to act as if they are racing (they are racing but moving very slowly), and all remaining students can become the crowd. Have a route set up around the room. The racers need to bicker back and forth about who is going to win. Assign a student to discreetly toss some gold coins (or candy) into the path. Let two stop and argue for the coins while the other runs on. When the winner crosses the line, let the class cheer.

Discuss some of the following questions:

- Where did the story take place?
- Was it fact or fiction?
- What was the main lesson of the story?
- What was the solution to the problem?
- What character skills do you think John demonstrated?

Give examples from _____ the story.

- What prevented the other characters from demonstrating these skills? Give _____ examples from the story.

Goal Setting

To win any race, you must set goals. A goal is like a compass—it keeps you on the right course to the destination. Have students go through the following steps to set personal goals and record the goals in a personal journal. (Bring a compass to class, or ask a student to bring a compass to class.) Discuss what a compass does.

- Be specific—Say exactly what you want to do.

I want to buy a new _____.

- Make it measurable—Set a time frame for when you want to accomplish your goal.

I want a _____ by 6 months from today.

- Plan realistically how to do it—"Fail to plan and plan to fail!"

I will save _____ each month from my allowance or from the work I do.

- Give it time—don't expect that everything is possible tomorrow.

Six months will provide time to save the \$_____ for _____

Honoring Parents

It is important to teach children to honor their parents. What did Elizabeth do that honored her parents?

Elizabeth honored her parents by seeking and listening to their advice.

Have children think of ways they can honor their parents. Write their suggestions on the board: doing the dishes, vacuuming the house, cleaning the car, mowing the lawn, weeding the garden, helping with shopping, etc.

Ask children what advice their parents gave them that can be shared with the class: Write them on the board and discuss each one with the class. Get a good education. Listen to the teacher. Don't fight. Pick good friends. Don't take drugs. Don't smoke.

Thank You Cards

Have the children make thank you cards and writing in them something specific that their parents have done for them. Let them first come up with what they want to be thankful for, and then let them design their cards.

What's A Risk Taker?

A risk taker is one who is willing to do something unusual or out of the ordinary to attain a goal.

1. Who was the risk taker in this story?

John

2. What did he do?

Ran in a race with men faster than he was.

3. What attitude did John have as he prepared for the race?

John purposed in his heart, "I may not be the fastest, but I'm going to try as hard as I can." No matter what the obstacles were, John was going to try his best.

4. How did he win?

By not getting distracted—staying focused on his goal.

To be a risk taker, you must give up any fear of failure or embarrassment because worrying about it will distract you from working toward your goal. Whether the goal is met or not, giving up these fears will make you stronger and successful.

Be A Risk Taker

Create an obstacle course. Students compete individually in various timed events. The one (or two) with the best time and most points wins prizes (this can be adapted to fit the group).

Focal points of the competition include completing the course and

having the proper conduct in order to win the race.

Obstacles might include:

- *Car dolly race*—person lies face up on a creepy crawly mechanic's creeper and works through a short race track around various obstacles
- *Candy and spoon race*—student with a spoon must pick up the candy with the spoon only and run to a line and back
- *Plate race*—person balances a paper plate on top of a dowel and carries it to a designated person
- *Hop race*—student is to hop to a finish line (can be both ways)

Who's True Blue?

Loyalty means giving devoted support to another. John showed his devotion to Elizabeth by training hard for the race. Even though he knew the others were faster, he was determined to do his best so that Elizabeth would be his. When he saw gold along the way, he did not miss a step. His heart was fixed on the kind-hearted princess. Only his love for Elizabeth pushed him along. He was going to do whatever it took to win the princess.

- Have students *write a story* about a person they know who displayed this kind of loyalty. The person can be someone they know from personal experience or a historical figure. Ask them to *draw a key scene* from the story to accompany them when they tell their story to the class.

Cultural Differences

Goal: To help students appreciate the differences between cultures

Procedure: Students are to tell of their culture:

- How does their culture celebrate holidays?
- What are some of their family's favorite meals?
- How does the family spend their vacations?

Perseverance

Describe to students what perseverance means. Tell from the story how all the runners persevered to a certain extent, but John would let nothing interfere. Let students research sports stars on how they persevered to become successful. Ask the students to search how much time these sports stars practice to keep their skills.

Tying It All Together

Decide what is really important to you. Setting goals, making a plan to reach the goals, and staying focused on the goals—all are key factors to succeeding. Hard work is the key to making it all happen, along with not worrying about what others will think. Put this motto on the board and then explain it: *Plan the work and work the plan!*