

# CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

## I AM A LION!

### Story Description



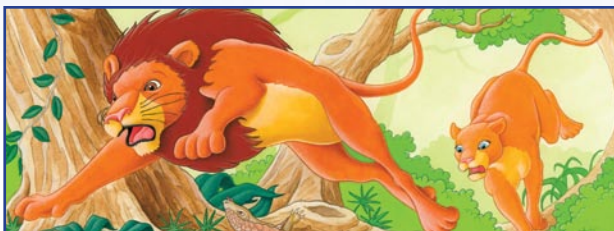
To grow up to be big, little lions have to learn survival skills, but the cub Sangu didn't want to listen to Papa and Mama's lessons—he just wants to play. Getting lost while escaping a charging rhino, Sangu learned how unprepared he really was to be out on his own. Befriended by some kind gazelles, Sangu didn't have the slightest idea as to what a lion should be. Sangu finally learned some valuable lessons—the hard way.

In a powerful story with superb illustrations, Carl Sommer teaches children to be assertive, to value learning, to respect their parents, and to respect themselves for who they are.

### Major Objective

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

- Self-Esteem: having a positive opinion of one's self
- Respect for parents: valuing one's father and mother by making their desires and counsel important considerations
- Assertiveness: expressing ideas or actions toward others with confidence



### Story Time Interaction

Read the story, **I Am A Lion!**, and then write these three virtues on the board: self-esteem, respect for parents, and assertiveness. Then define and discuss these virtues.

Ask the group to list and describe the main characters:

Papa: Strong, but gentle with Sangu, wants to help him learn

Mama: Loving, and eager to help Sangu learn to take care of himself

Sangu: Playful, but doesn't want to learn, and doesn't pay attention to his parents

The gazelles: Caring, but they don't know anything about lions

### Activities

**Objectives:** To use the following activities to help reinforce the virtues of self-esteem, respect for parents, and assertiveness:

## Who Am I?

**Goal:** Discovering the special gifts, talents and abilities of students. Define what each student's special gifts, talents, and abilities are. Emphasize that these are not necessarily flashy or readily apparent characteristics, but may also be gifts that help them to be sensitive to special needs not easily noticed.

Ask students to describe some gifts people have. Possible gifts: caring for others, fixing things, investigating, exploring, helping, teaching, athletic talents, etc.

## Special Things About Me

**Goal:** Have each student create a presentation around the idea "Special Things About Me". It can be a story, a picture or collage, a short play or mime, etc. that reflects something special the student has done or would like to do with his or her gifting.

## I Am Strong When I Do What is Right

**Goal:** To discover what makes strong, dynamic persons. Discuss characteristics that make a strong, dynamic person. Then identify people in your life who encourage you to become the kind of person that wants to do what is right. Pick some outstanding leaders as examples: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King, etc.

## Smoking Role Play: Peer Pressure

**Goal:** Conveying to students the dangers of smoking. Hold up a smoking advertisement and ask students what the advertisement tells us about smoking. Does it make it look like it's cool? Is it telling us that you will have big muscles when you smoke? Read the warning on the label of cigarettes and explain. Explain that peer pressure is the reason many children experiment with smoking. After the lesson presentation, do the role play in the class activity.

### Lesson Presentation:

Ask students how smoking affects someone.

- \* Can raise blood pressure and make a heart beat faster
  - \* Gives people bad breath
  - \* Makes it more difficult to run so playing sports is harder — big muscles in advertisements are definitely misleading
  - \* Makes it more difficult for blood to move around so you can't think as quickly. Plus, kids who smoke are more likely to get in trouble or make lower grades.
  - \* Can cause lung cancer or emphysema
  - \* Costs a lot of money. Find the cost for a pack of cigarettes and calculate the cost for a year if a smoker uses one pack a day.
- Ask students if the annual cost for cigarettes is worth all the

detriments listed on the board.

- \* Encourages kids to use drugs, or become abusive drinkers of alcohol

- \* Causes smoker's cough

### **Class Activity**

You can use this activity to role play smoking, drinking, glue sniffing, or any other activity that is harmful for children. Ask students to list some of the dangerous activities they see around them.

Pass out paper bags and crayons. Assign partners. Ask students to make a puppet out of the paper bag. One person will act as the peer pressure person to make the other person yield. They are to use the puppets in the role play. The student must list reasons why he needs to say no, which would be the detriments discussed earlier. Then switch roles.

**Lesson Learned:** Just like Sangu began behaving like a gazelle because of the new friends around him, we must learn who we really are and resist pressure from friends around us who may want to lead us down a path that is not good for us.

### **Words Do Not Hurt Me**

**Goal:** Evaluating the impact of words and criticism. Discuss the impact of words on self-image and how to evaluate and respond to criticism. Teach that a strong person does not let others influence him or her because of someone's criticism.

People have two ears. Some things said need to go through our ears and out, while some things need to enter our ears and go to our heart. Wise individuals know what words need to go through the ears, and what words need to enter the heart.

### **Bouncing Eggs Science Experiment**

**Goal:** Teaching students the importance of bouncing back when they encounter difficult situations.

**Materials:** Uncooked egg, two hard-boiled eggs, white vinegar, jar or large cup, and water.

**Science:** Before doing the experiment, show the children how to tell the difference between a uncooked egg and hard-boiled egg. Spin each egg around. Then stop the spinning and immediately lift your hand. The uncooked egg will continue to spin slightly because the inside is in a liquid state; the hard-boiled egg will completely stop because the inside is in a solid state.

The chicken egg shell has a high calcium content. When the egg is placed in vinegar, the acetic acid in the vinegar causes the shell to dissolve. After two to three days the egg will have the ability to

bounce.

**Procedure:** Let students in class soak one of the hard-boiled eggs in white vinegar for two to three days until the shell is dissolved. It is important that the whole egg is covered. Place a plastic cup with some water in it on top of the hard-boiled egg to prevent the egg from floating in the vinegar.

**Results:** The vinegar dissolves the shell and leaves the membrane or skin so the egg can bounce. Remove the egg and soak it in water. Let a student hold the egg no more than two to three feet above the table and let it drop. The egg does not break. It “bounces.”

**Egg Dropping Contest and Teaching About a Ruler:** Take the other hard-boiled egg and have an egg dropping contest. Take the hard-boiled egg that was not put into the vinegar and have the students write down their guess in increments of  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch to how high the egg can be lifted and dropped before it will crack.

Put a ruler by the egg and start with  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch and continue in  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch increments until the hard-boiled egg cracks. Have a student add on the board each  $\frac{1}{8}$  increments as you perform this experiment. ( $\frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} = \frac{1}{4}$ ;  $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} = \frac{3}{8}$ ; etc.)

**Lesson:** When others make fun of you or you hear words of discouragement, you need to be like the uncooked egg that was soaked in vinegar and bounce back. Notice how in real life some people take criticism much better than others. Some are like the hard-boiled egg that was not put in vinegar, when they are made fun of or hear something discouraging, they crack and become sad. You need not to be so sensitive to the comments of others. Be winner; not a whiner.

You need to have the ability to “bounce back” when situations and circumstances seem terrible. Sangu “bounced back” when he learned to listen to his parents.

### I Am Special

**Goal:** Show student that each one is special. Remind students that each and every person possesses characteristics that make him or her special. Sangu was ashamed of who he was; likewise, some students are ashamed of who they are. Stress that no one should be ashamed of his or her race or color. People with a healthy self-esteem accept the way they were created.

Have students list the things they *cannot* change about themselves: skin color, shape of their ears, eyes, mouth, height, etc.

Have students list the things they *can* change about themselves: clean or dirty clothes, dressing neatly, combing the hair, clean hands, etc.

Stress that some because of poverty cannot have the latest clothes,

but they are still special. No one in the whole world is just like them.

### **Tying It All Together**

It is very important to understand that there are many decisions that will affect our lives both positively and negatively. Children should trust their parents in helping them make good decisions, as opposed to allowing their friends to influence them.