



CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

SOMMER-TIME STORIES
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THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

Story Description



While a little fun is essential for a happy life, wise individuals know that prosperity begins with hard work. Gary and the other grasshoppers want to play all day and they cannot understand why the ants work so hard and miss all the fun. Alex and the ants know they must work during the spring to have food for the winter.

Sure enough, when winter arrives early the lazy grasshoppers have nothing to eat. Passage of a new law that requires the ants to share their food with the grasshoppers transforms the whole community into a fun-loving crowd.

Will the grasshoppers learn the meaning of hard work before it is too late? This retelling of Aesop's famous story highlights the importance of diligence and a good work ethic.

Main Character Traits

Diligence / Fairness / Self-Discipline

Other Character Traits

Proper Work Ethic

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Diligence, Proper Work Ethic, Self-Discipline

“Why are you working so hard?” asked Gary, the leader of the grasshoppers. “There’s plenty of time to get food. I’m putting a band together. Come and join us.”

“I’m working now so we’ll have lots of food for winter,” explained Alex the ant.

“Aw, quit worrying,” said Gary. “You need to take some time off and have fun.”

Alex pulled out a weed and said, “If I don’t get rid of these weeds, they’ll crowd out the plants. We ants know that hard work in spring provides food for winter.”...

Then Gary saw some grasshoppers resting. “We’re putting a band together,” he said. “Want to join us?”

“Sure!” exclaimed the grasshoppers.

News of the band spread quickly and many grasshoppers joined them. When the band played, the grasshoppers danced. “This is great!” said the grasshoppers.

Then Gary laughed and said, “The foolish ants are missing all the fun by working all the time. We need to do this more often. We’re having so much fun.”...

However, that year winter came early and it was time to find food. The grasshoppers began complaining, “It’s too cold and too hard to find food.”

“Why don’t you ask the ants for help?” suggested Gary. “They have plenty of food.”

The ants knew the importance of finishing their work before playing, but the grasshoppers thought the ants’ work philosophy was foolish and attempted to talk the ants into playing first. However, the ants were self-disciplined and kept themselves working so they would have food in the winter. When winter came, the grasshoppers didn’t have food and didn’t want to hunt in the cold for food. This proved that the ants were correct in their thinking.

Fairness

All the grasshoppers were complaining about how unfair and selfish the ants were.

“It’s not fair that the greedy, selfish ants won’t share!” shouted Gary.

All the grasshoppers began to chant, “It’s not fair! It’s not fair!”

Then Gary said, “There are more grasshoppers than ants. Why don’t we vote and make it a law that those who have food must share?”

“Yesssss!” shouted all the grasshoppers.

The grasshoppers and the ants voted and the law passed that stated: “Anyone who has food must share it with others.”

The grasshoppers danced for joy over the law.

When the ants heard about the law, they were furious they had to share their food with the lazy grasshoppers. But in spite of their complaining, they had to obey the law. When spring came, Alex, the leader of the ants, called a

meeting. “Why should we work so hard?” he asked. “The grasshoppers don’t work, and they get food. Why don’t we do the same?”

“Yesssss!” shouted the ants.

The next day the ants found the grasshoppers playing their fiddles and dancing. “We’d love to join you,” said Alex. “Do you mind?”

“We’d be happy for you to join us,” said Gary. “I’m so glad you finally learned to take some time off and have fun.” While they were dancing, Gary walked over to Alex and asked, “Are you having fun?”

“This is great!” exclaimed Alex. “I’ve never had so much fun in all my life. This is much, *much* better than working.”

The grasshoppers claimed that it was selfish and unfair of the ants not to share their food, so they made it a law that everyone with food had to share. When the ants realized that they had to share the food that they had worked so hard for, they decided to stop working and just have fun. At first this seemed wonderful.

The Results of No Diligence or Work Ethic

However, when winter came, the grasshoppers and ants had little food. They went to other insects to buy something to eat. This went on year after year until they had no more money. One day Gary called a meeting. “I have some very bad news. We don’t have any money left to buy food, and no insects will sell us food unless we pay for it.”

A grasshopper yelled out, “Did you ask the beetles? I know they have lots of food.”

Eventually the ants and grasshoppers ran out of money to buy food and decided to try to get food from the beetles. This is true in life, too—if you don’t work, you won’t have what you need, things like food and shelter.

Work First Then Play

“I’ve asked the leader of the beetles to help us,” said Alex. “But the greedy beetles won’t share!”

“It’s not fair! It’s not fair!” shouted the grasshoppers and the ants.

“Let’s put an army together and go to war against those selfish beetles so we can get some of their food!” shouted Gary. “We have many more grasshoppers and ants. We should easily win.”

“Yesssss!” shouted the grasshoppers and the ants. “We can beat them!”

The grasshoppers and ants went to war against the beetles. “Attack!” yelled Gary and Alex when they saw the beetles. But the beetles were much too strong.

The leader of the beetles said to the ants and the grasshoppers, “We don’t want to be your rulers. You were once a very rich nation, but now you are poor. We want to help you. For us to help you, we’re going to make you obey our law that says: ‘We will help the sick and needy, but those who do not work will not eat.’”

“Ohhhhh!” groaned the grasshoppers and ants. “Now we all *have* to work.”

When Gary left the meeting, he complained, “Now we won’t be able to have any more fun.”

“You know what?” said Alex. “That’s the way we used to live, and we were a rich nation. We can still have fun. What we need to do is work first and then play.”

“You’re right,” said Gary.

After unsuccessfully going to war against the beetles, the beetles forced the ants and grasshoppers to work. Alex realized that the ants used to work and that it had been a good life with prosperity and fun. Everyone should realize that hard work brings rewards and laziness will only result in hard times.

Diligence and Proper Work Ethic

The grasshoppers and ants went to work, and soon they had lots of food again.

When the beetles saw that the grasshoppers and ants were obeying the law, they had a meeting. “We see you have learned to work first and then play,” the beetle leader said. “We want to make a peace treaty with you.”

“Hoorayyyyy!” shouted the grasshoppers and the ants.

Then Gary walked up to the leader of the beetles and said, “Thank you for teaching us the importance of work.”

“Yesssss!” shouted all the grasshoppers and ants.

Since that time, grasshoppers and ants have never forgotten to work first and then play.

The grasshoppers and ants learned that diligence brings many rewards and laziness results in lack. This is an important lesson for everyone. Sometimes people must work for a future goal for years, but it will pay off.

Questions

1. At the beginning of the story, why were the ants working? *They were getting weeds away from the plants and working so they could have food for winter. They were putting their families first instead of playing around.*

2. What did the grasshoppers do all day every day? *They made music, danced, and had lots of fun.*

3. What was the problem when winter came? *Winter came early and it was cold and hard for the grasshoppers to find food.*

4. What did the ant say when Gail the grasshopper asked for food? *The ant explained that the grasshoppers had danced and played all summer while the ants had worked. She said, “If you were sick or weak, I would be glad to help, but it wouldn’t be right to give you food when you can still find it for yourself.”*

5. The grasshoppers called the ants unfair and selfish. Was this true?

Why or why not? *No, this was not true. The ants had worked for their food, and the grasshoppers could have worked instead of playing around. The ants didn't want to give their hard-earned food to the lazy grasshoppers.*

6. What did the grasshoppers decide to do? *They voted a new law that said anyone with food had to share it with others.*

7. How did the ants feel about the law? *They were furious that they had to share their food with the lazy grasshoppers.*

8. What did the ants do? *They decided to stop working and join the grasshoppers in playing and dancing. The ants (and the grasshoppers) had to buy their food, but they eventually ran out of money to buy it.*

9. What did the ants and grasshoppers decide to do next? *They decided to go to war against the beetles in order to get food from them.*

10. What happened in the war with the beetles? *The beetles were too strong. The leader of the beetles made the ants and grasshoppers obey their law that said: We will help the sick and needy, but those who do not work will not eat.*

11. How did the ants and grasshoppers feel about being forced to work? *They weren't happy about it, but the ants remembered that they used to live that way and had been rich, so they all decided to obey the law.*

12. How did the ants and grasshoppers decide to live? *They decided to work first and then play.*

13. How did it work for them, living like this? *They soon had plenty of food and were glad they had learned to work first and then play.*