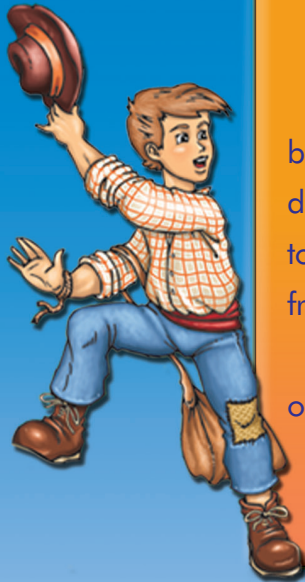


CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF



Story Description

Nicholas knows that guarding the family’s sheep is important, but he also thinks it’s one of the most boring jobs in the world. He decides to make his day more exciting by shouting “Wolf!” so the townspeople will run to help. His practical joke is a huge success from his point of view, but the townspeople are furious.

Nicholas realizes his mistake when the wolf attacks and everyone refuses to respond to his cry for help. This retelling of Aesop’s classic fable carries the story beyond the wolf’s attack, and illustrates the power of honesty and forgiveness.

Major Objective

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

- Responsibility: being trustworthy to complete assignments and duties
- Honesty: being free from fraud, deception, cheating, or lying
- Trustworthiness: deserving trust and confidence

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, and then write these three character traits on the interactive whiteboard: responsibility, honesty, and trustworthiness. Define and discuss these character traits.

Discuss the characters:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Nicholas | Dad and Mom |
| The Townspeople | The wolf |

Activity Objectives

To use the following activities to reinforce the character traits of responsibility, honesty, and trustworthiness. To guide students to consider the importance of caring, citizenship, courage, diligence, forgiveness, listening, obedience to parents, respect for others, self-discipline, and unselfishness.

Simon Says

Discuss with students the importance of your actions and words matching. In other words, if you say you will do something, you need to do it. Next play Simon Says. Afterwards, ask students what happened when you (the leader) said to do something, without saying, "Simon says." (It was hard not to do what the leader did. Of course, they are only supposed to do what you say if you say "Simon says," first, but seeing someone do something is easy to follow and that's how they got out of the game). That is why this is a common saying in life: "Practice what you preach." Discuss its meaning and how it applies to everyone.

A Mouse Trap

Bring in a mouse trap and a fake mouse and demonstrate how the mouse gets caught in the trap and cannot get out. (A sticky mouse trap can also be used). Discuss other animal traps. Inform students that some animals have even chewed off their own foot in order to get out of a trap. Explain that lying is like a mouse trap. Once we get in the trap of lying, it is extremely difficult to get out. In addition, lies are like a sticky spider web that traps a person into lying more and more. The only way to get out is to come clean with the whole truth. Use the internet to show an insect caught in a spider web. After watching the insect in the spider web, ask these questions:

- Is the insect happy?
- Do you think the insect wishes it had never flown into the web?
- Will it ever get out?
- Who could get it out?
- If you lie, who can help you get out of it?
- Have you ever lied?
- Did you end up wishing that you had not lied?
- If you do get trapped in a lie, who should you go to for help?

Instantly Turn Water into Ice

To demonstrate unexpected outcomes, do the following trick. Put a fairly thick piece of sponge inside of a coffee mug so that the sponge fits snugly and will not come out when held upside down. Then put a piece of ice on the sponge. Do not let students see the sponge or the ice. Pour a small amount of water into the cup (just enough to be soaked up by the sponge). Ask students what will happen when you turn the cup upside down. (They will say that the water will pour out). Turn the cup upside down and the ice will fall out. They will think that you turned the water into ice. Talk about how what they thought would happen did not happen. That is the way it is with lying. People think lying will get them out of trouble, but instead it gets them into more trouble.

Tangled Web

Discuss how some people think that lying is the easy way out of a problem. Emphasize the fact that lying will create more problems. People get trapped into lying to get out of the first lie and then the second lie and so on. Ask students to share about a time when lying got them into trouble. Bring in a tangled up mess of string or thread or a necklace that is knotted. Allow students to attempt to untangle the string, thread, or necklace. (It would probably be best if multiple tangled up messes are brought in, so each student or each couple of students can try to untangle theirs at the same time.) Explain to students that lying will get you in a tangled up mess, too. When you do a lot of lying, you can't keep the lies all straight, and you will get tangled up in your own lies.

Yummy Smoothies

Make milkshakes or smoothies for the class. As you make them, say, "Oh, look! Here's a dead fly. Let's put that in, too." (Buy a fake one or collect some kind of bug in advance). When the students express their disgust say, "Why would one little fly make a difference? It's so small. I don't think you will notice." Of course, don't put it in, but instead explain that the fly represents one little lie. You might think it won't make any difference, but even one little lie can spoil your reputation and cause problems.

Build a Reputation Tower

Review with students what a reputation is. It is the way you are viewed by other people. It is the opinions held by others about someone and usually has to do with their character. It is also important to create a good reputation and to be known as someone who tells the truth, not as someone who lies. If you become known as a liar, no one will believe you when you tell the truth. Students will build a tower out of wooden blocks. As the tower is being built, explain that just as the tower is built a little at a time, so is one's reputation built a little at a time. As you stack each block, name various actions that help build a reputation. Here are some examples: Sally helped her elderly neighbor by sweeping her sidewalk. Sally always did her homework. One day Sally was tempted to steal some candy, but she didn't do it. Sally always took turns when playing with her friends. Sally didn't get angry when other kids pushed her to the back of the line. Sally worked well with her classmates on their history project. Sally didn't talk about other students with her friends. Sally told the truth even when it was hard until one day when she told her mom a lie. Next explain that it only takes one lie to destroy a person's reputation that has been built slowly over time. As you say the previous sentence, put on a block that will topple the tower. Explain that this is true in life, too. One bad decision or action can ruin a good reputation that has taken a long time to build.

What's Your Label?

Get some clothespins and write various words associated with the character traits on them such as loyal, unloyal, truthful, lies, kindness, mean, grumpy, happy, diligent, lazy, proud, humble, thankful, unthankful, helpful, unhelpful, satisfied, dissatisfied, responsible, irresponsible, stubborn, giving, selfish, trusting, gullible, perseveres, gives up. Then put them in a bag and have each student draw one from the bag and clip it onto his shirt. Explain that these are labels that people get as to what they are like as a person or what they do. Ask students if they like their labels or not. Is it fair for them to have such a label? How would a person get a label or reputation? Yes, their actions and speech determine what people think of them and thus, their reputation is determined by their actions and what they say. This is why it is important to be careful what you do and say because you are establishing your reputation.

Role Play

Have two students act out a role play; one is the parent who asks the child, "Did you drop my camera and break it?" The child says, "No, I don't know what happened to your camera." The parent replies with, "Are you sure you don't know what happened?" The child again denies it. The parent says, "Well, I saw what happened. Do you want to tell me the truth now?" The child then admits to dropping the camera. The parent says, "I am very sorry that you did not tell the truth. I know that accidents sometimes happen, but not telling the truth was a choice you made. After I speak to your dad, we'll decide what your consequence will be."

For the second role play a student tells another student a secret and says not to tell anyone. That student says he won't tell, but then tells someone else. Discuss how this is not being honest. If we say we will not tell, then we mustn't tell. What will happen when everyone finds out the secret? (The first student will know that his friend told others). How will the first student feel? (He will probably feel betrayed and hurt and maybe angry).

Quotes

Read and discuss the following quotations. If students do not know who the authors of these quotes are, then tell them or have them research who they are, (depending on their ages).

"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."—Henry Ford

"The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear."—Socrates

"It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it."—Benjamin Franklin

"Character is much easier kept than recovered."—Thomas Paine

“If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself.”—Dwight L. Moody

Saying “I’m Sorry”

Discuss that it is important to learn to say you are sorry for doing something wrong or hurting someone’s feelings. We should apologize even if we did not mean to hurt someone. That will make them feel better.

Tying It All Together

Lying is never the way to fix a problem. Lying gets you in bigger trouble and creates more problems. Telling the truth will help build a good reputation which will help you in the future. However, if you do make a mistake, be brave enough to admit your mistake and apologize for it. Then learn from your mistake and don’t lie again!