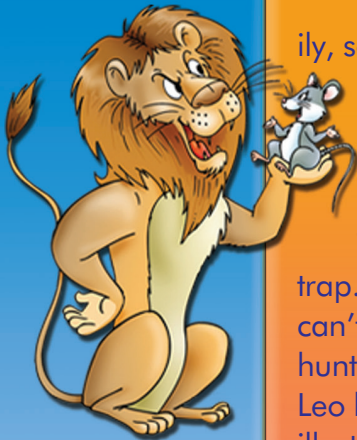


CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

Story Description



Bitsie the mouse has a difficult time finding food for her family, so she decides to move by Leo the lion's den. Bitsie gets caught while getting too curious. When Leo discovers her, Bitsie nearly becomes the lion's dinner. She offers to help Leo someday if he will let her live, an idea he finds so funny that he sets her free.

The tables are turned when Leo gets caught in a hunter's trap. Bitsie keeps her word and comes to the rescue. Although Leo can't believe tiny Bitsie can help him, she tries her best. Just as the hunters are about to capture Leo, Bitsie makes one last bite, and Leo bursts forth from his trap. This retelling of Aesop's classic fable illustrates that great things often come in small packages.

Major Objective

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

- Appreciation: valuing or regarding highly; an expression of gratitude
- Honesty: being free from fraud, deception, cheating, or lying
- Diligence: constant effort and work to complete a project; perseverance

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and then write these three character traits on the interactive whiteboard: courage, honesty, and diligence. Define and discuss these character traits.

Discuss the characters:

Bitsie the mouse	Leo the lion
Forest animals	The Hunters

Activity Objectives

To use the following activities to help reinforce the character traits of courage, honesty, and diligence. To guide students to consider the importance of assertiveness, appreciation, responsibility, unselfishness, and kindness.

Honesty and Loyalty

Ask students why people lie. (*They lie to avoid getting in trouble, to impress others, to get someone else in trouble who they may be jealous of, or to avoid having someone think negatively about them*). Allow students to list ways they can be honest: telling the truth, doing your homework, doing your own school work (not looking at someone else's paper), doing what you said you would do like cleaning your room, admitting your mistakes, keeping a friend's secret, returning any extra money that a cashier gives you by mistake, and if you find something, turning it in, even if it is money.

When you lie, it is hard to keep your lies straight and you will lie even more, so you will probably get caught. Telling the truth makes you feel good inside while lying makes you feel bad. Telling the truth will make people trust you, while lying will make them distrust you. Think about how the other person will feel if you lie to them. How do you feel when someone lies to you? Can you trust them? Explain that we should always treat people like we want them to treat us and that includes telling the truth.

Discuss why it is important to keep your word even when you may be ridiculed or when you may be punished. Let students give examples of a time when they kept their word when it was hard to do so. Let them also identify a person who kept his word. It could be someone they know.

Activity with Black Licorice

Explain to children that telling a lie affects you in ways that are difficult to get rid of. For example, when you lie, you feel dirty and afraid of getting caught. It can be very difficult to feel good about yourself later. Explain that you are going to demonstrate what this is like. Chew some black licorice and then show students your teeth and inside your mouth. Explain that it is going to take a lot of water and a lot of time to get rid of the black stains, and lying is the same way—it takes a lot to get rid of the results of a lie. Some of these results are loss of friends, loss of trust, and discipline by parents or those in authority. Let students try some black licorice, too, and let them look in a mirror, so they can see the results on themselves.

Activity with Fake Fruit

Bring in some fake fruit. Ask students if they would like to eat some fruit. Don't show them the fruit yet. Explain that you like to eat fruit because it is so sweet and juicy. Tell them that you have some grapes, apples, and bananas. Let each student tell which fruit they would like. Then pass out the fake fruit. After listening to some complaints as students express their disappointment, ask them to describe how they felt when they saw that the fruit was not real. This is the way we feel when people break promises to us. They promise something, but we don't get what they promised. We feel disappointed and let down.

Science—The Law of Gravity

Discuss the fact that keeping a promise can sometimes be very hard to do. That is why it is important to think about it before promising to do something. If you think it will be too difficult, don't make the promise. Drop several objects on the floor. Then ask students what will happen if you drop a book. Yes, it will fall, too. Everything you drop will fall unless it is a helium balloon which is filled with a special gas. We call this the Law of Gravity. Gravity makes objects fall to the ground. This always happens. We don't have to wonder if sometimes it won't; it always does. You, too, need to be like gravity. If you make a promise, you should always keep it. Other people should always know that they can count on you to do what you said you will do. When you keep a promise, it builds trust for you in other people. If you keep your promises, even small ones, then people know they can count on you for the big things in life. Have students give examples of something people can count on them for.

George Washington

As a child George Washington chopped down a cherry tree with an axe. When his father unhappily questioned George about who had done such a thing, George replied, "I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my hatchet." As an adult he said, "I hope that I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the best of all titles—the character of an honest person."

Abraham Lincoln

When Abraham Lincoln was a boy he borrowed a book which he placed between the logs of his cabin wall. Unfortunately, it rained and the book was ruined, so Abe worked and paid the owner for the cost of the book. Another time after he arrived at home from the store, Abe realized that the clerk had given him too much change, so he walked back to the store (twelve miles round trip which probably took about four hours) and returned the money.

Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington, the president of Tuskegee Institute, a college for black students in the 1800's and into the twentieth century, proved his trustworthiness as a teen by selling fruit and vegetables to miners while giving a careful accounting of the money to his employer.

Sing a Song about Honesty

Teach students a song about honesty. Sing it to the tune of "Clementine" and "Found a Peanut." Here are the words:

Found a quarter, found a quarter, found a quarter just now.
Just now I found a quarter, found a quarter just now.

It wasn't mine. It wasn't mine. The quarter wasn't mine.
So I returned it to the owner, and I feel really fine!

Verse 2:

Tell the truth. Tell the truth. Tell the truth every time.
Every time tell the truth, and you will feel just fine.

Role Play

Have students act out a role play of a time when they lied or were tempted to lie. Let them work in groups of two or three to try out their role play, and then allow the groups to demonstrate their role plays for the class. Ask students how they would feel if someone lied to them.

Perseverance

Discuss the fact that Bitsie kept on chewing and didn't give up or quit. Some people quit, but if they had just kept going a little longer, they would have accomplished their goal. It is important to keep trying even when it is hard; that is how many great things are accomplished.

Appreciation

Bitsie and Leo thanked each other when they saved the other one's life. It is important to show appreciation and say, "Thank you," when someone does something for us. Allow students to offer reasons as to why this is important. (*If we don't thank people and show appreciation, they may not do something for us or give us something in the future. They may think that we don't really care about what they did or gave us and this may hurt their feelings*).

Small Things Can Make Big Things Happen

Ask: Has anyone ever told you that you were too little or too young to do something? If so, what was it? Were you able to do it anyway? *Answers will vary. Explain that sometimes we don't know if we can do something, but if we try, we find out that we **can** do it.*

To show students that small things can make a big difference, teach them about some small insects like the mosquito and its effects on people. For example, it has been estimated that half of all people who have ever lived have died from diseases spread by mosquitoes. These diseases include the West Nile virus, malaria, Dengue fever, encephalitis, and yellow fever. Other small insects that spread disease are lice—typhus, ticks—lime disease, fleas—the Plague, and tsetse flies—the sleeping sickness. Another small insect that doesn't cause disease, yet can cause much destruction is the termite. Termites live in a colony with 200,000 to 2 million members. They cause over five billion dollars' worth of damage every year to houses, businesses, and the furnishings, carpet, etc. inside. The Formosan termite which lives in very large colonies and eats a lot very quickly can eat a small house in one day. Never underestimate the

power of insects that work together!

Explain to students how small things like a smile or a compliment can have big effects. Discuss the good effects that some small things have. Here are some insects that have positive effects. The honey bee gives us honey and beeswax. Lacewings eat aphids, mealy bugs, white flies, spider mites, and other plant pests. Ladybugs eat aphids—up to 1,000 a day. Wasps eat army worms and kudzu bugs which destroy crops. Some roaches that live in tropical jungles are recyclers—they eat dead plant and animal matter. Finally, the silkworm spins a cocoon which is turned into the silk fabric. (Bring in something silk if possible. If not, bring in some honey or beeswax).

Science Experiment

This science experiment will demonstrate to students how small and steady effort can create a big change. Materials needed: a heavy weight (one or two pounds) suspended from the ceiling, (possibly hanging from a plant hanger), a cord that is 39 inches from the top support to the center of the weight, and a small hammer. Tap the weight once every two seconds with the small hammer. The many small taps will eventually cause a much larger swing of the pendulum. This process is similar to when a child pumps a swing. Advance practice is advised.

Quotes

Display and discuss the following five quotes:

*A Hawaiian proverb says, “Tiny is the flower, yet it scents the grasses around it.”

*Booker T. Washington said, “Success in life is founded upon attention to the small things rather than to the large things.”

*Margaret Mead, an American anthropologist said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

*Helen Keller said, “I long to accomplish some great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.”

Tying It All Together

Being honest and keeping your promise will cause people to trust you in the future. In addition, working hard and not giving up will help you be successful in life, and don't forget to show how thankful you are for what others do for you.