



# CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

## SOMMER-TIME STORIES

### THE LION AND THREE BULLS

#### Story Description

The black, white, and brown bulls are the best of friends. Whenever wild animals come to attack, the bulls are undefeatable because they band together and face their enemies. A clever fox divides them with lies and rumors so he and a lion can have a feast.

The three bulls begin hating each other and end up arguing, fighting, and going in separate directions. The fox's plan nearly works, but when the lion attacks, the bulls defend each other despite their disagreements. Reunited, the bulls discover that the fox lied to them. This retelling of Aesop's classic fable demonstrates the importance of refusing to listen to those who talk about friends.



#### Major Objective

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

- Friendship: being a companion by listening, recognizing, and valuing others
- Trust: having confidence in the honesty, friendship, and wisdom of another person
- Teamwork: working together toward a common goal or purpose

#### Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *The Lion and the Three Bulls*, and then write these three character traits on the interactive whiteboard: friendship, trust, and teamwork. Define and discuss these character traits.

Discuss the characters:

The Brown Bull	The Black Bull
The White Bull	The Lion
The Fox	

#### Activity Objectives

To use the following activities to reinforce the character traits of friendship, trust, and teamwork. To guide students to consider the importance of appreciation, caring, courage, cooperation, forgiveness, humility, and loyalty.

## How to Be a Friend

Discuss why friends are important to us. What makes a good friend? Discuss why it is important to be able to trust a friend and why you should be trustworthy (and the meaning of trustworthy). Let students give examples of people whom they can trust and tell why. Have them also identify times when they were trustworthy and times when they were not. (Only allow examples of self-untrustworthiness; no finger-pointing at classmates is allowed).

Have students suggest ways to be a good friend as you write the ways on the interactive whiteboard or on a poster. (The teacher may have to lead the students towards these examples or other examples). Here are some examples:

- Listen to others.
- Don't put anyone down.
- Don't hurt someone's feelings.
- Be understanding.
- Help one another.
- Give compliments and praise.
- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Be dependable and loyal.
- Disagree without hurting one another.
- Show that you care.
- Think about your friend's feelings.
- Don't listen to gossip.

## Make a Class Heart

Cut a large heart out of poster paper and divide it into squares so that each student has one square. Explain that words can make a person feel good or bad inside. Encourage students to think of a compliment for another student in the class, and then the teacher writes each compliment on the paper heart. For example, the teacher will say, "Who has something nice to say about Susie?" Students will take turns sharing. Encourage students to say something about a student's character rather than saying someone is pretty. The teacher then writes (with a marker) one of the compliments in a square on the heart. This continues until every student has a compliment on the heart. Later let students color their own square on the heart and display the heart on a bulletin board or wall. (If no students are offering a certain student a compliment, quickly jump in and say one of your own like "Johnny is a hard worker. OR Jenny has a good imagination.")

## Make a Friends Necklace

Bring in a string and some pretty beads that can be strung on it. Explain that the string is like of string of love that holds the necklace together. Show the necklace as if it is finished, but have some beads left over. Then say, "We don't want anyone left out; we should always make room for more friends." Then put the rest of the beads on the string. Ask: "Now isn't this a beautiful necklace with all these beads (or friends)?"

## Science: Always Room for One More Friend

Next show students this experiment to demonstrate that there is always room for one more friend. Set a clear glass inside a pan. Fill the glass to the rim with water, but not overflowing. Drop pennies one at a time into the glass, holding them by the edge. You should be able to put close to 20 pennies into the glass without it overflowing. Remind students that nobody should be left out during play time. There's always room for more friends. (It is a good idea to practice this experiment in advance).

## Loyal Animals and People

Write these animals on the board: wolves, albatrosses, voles, turtle doves, gibbons, bald eagles, swans, French angelfish. If possible show a picture of these animals from the internet. Ask students what these animals have in common. (All of these animals have a partner for life). They are loyal to each other for life. We should be loyal to each other, too. What does it mean to be loyal? A loyal person sticks by someone even when things get difficult. For example, if a friend is sick, a loyal friend will stay and keep the friend company instead of going off with other friends to play or do something fun. Have students tell about a time when they were loyal or a friend was loyal to them.

Next discuss some famous best friends from real life: Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, Ben and Jerry (ice cream makers), Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, C. S. Lewis (author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*) and J. R. R. Tolkien (author of *Lord of the Rings*). Then talk about these fictional best friends: Frog and Toad, Batman and Robin, Fred and Barney, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, Bert and Ernie, and Woody and Buzz. Children should be familiar with most of these fictional characters, but you may need to describe the real people. Can they think of others? Ask children what these best friends have in common. What makes someone a best friend? Use students' answers to make a list of qualities that best friends have.

## Friends Stick Together

Bring in two new bathroom plungers. Push them together and then allow two students to attempt to pull them apart like a tug o' war. It is impossible to do so, unless one plunger is turned at a right angle to break the suction. Remind students that this is how it should be with friends. We should not let other people break up a friendship. If someone tells you a bad thing about your friend, you should go to the friend and ask the friend if it is true or what the circumstances are about it. A true friend is a treasure that should not be lightly discarded.

## Teamwork Makes More Power

Bring in a bathroom scale and let each student squeeze it to see how much pressure they can put on it. Then let two students squeeze it at the same time. When two students squeeze at the same time, they will be able to put on more pounds of pressure. This shows us that there is strength in numbers. In other words, if you and your friends stick together, you will have more influence and power. Together you will be able to stand against others who might attempt to come against you.

## **Is Your Tongue like a Calf's Tongue?**

Buy a calf's tongue at the grocery store or butcher shop. They are not expensive. Allow students to examine and pick up the calf's tongue. Ask them to describe it. (They will probably say that it is big, heavy, and ugly.) Explain that if you used the calf's tongue to hit someone, it would hurt. When a person's tongue is used for rumors or lies, it also hurts people. Hopefully, seeing the big, ugly calf's tongue will help students remember that their tongue can say ugly things and hurt others, too.

## **Rumors Are Like Dominoes**

Explain to students that rumors can spread like wildfire. Some people like to hear bad things about others and also like to tell bad things about other people. Whether something is true or not, we call these things rumors. It is wrong to tell rumors because they may or may not be true and they also hurt people. Set up some dominoes so that each will fall against the next one. Then push the first one so that it causes a chain reaction. Explain that rumors are like these dominoes; they can travel fast and one rumor can create another rumor and that rumor another and so on.

## **Tying It All Together**

Remember, if you want to have friends, you need to be a good friend. This means that you are loyal to your friends; you stick by them through good times and bad times. And you never say anything unkind about them or spread rumors about them. If you work with your friends, you can accomplish many things you could not do alone. That's teamwork!