



CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

THE LITTLE RED HEN



Story Description

Little Red Hen had a busy summer planting seeds, watering the soil, digging up the weeds, and harvesting the grain. Whenever she asked the dog, cat, and duck to help, they always had excuses. A crisis occurred—a wicked fox captured the goose. When Little Red Hen went to her three friends, they again made excuses, so she went to the next farm, and Brown Dog helped her rescue the goose.

Finally, harvest was over and Little Red Hen baked delicious bread which she shared with Brown Dog and the goose. When the scent of the bread reached her three friends, they asked if they could have some. Little Red Hen refused to share her bread with her lazy friends because they refused to share the work. This retelling of the classic tale demonstrates that you should not expect favors if you refuse to work.

Major Objective

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

- Courage: the determination to do something in spite of being fearful
- Diligence: constant effort and work to complete a project; perseverance
- Fairness: free from bias or impartiality; not showing favoritism or treating anyone unequally

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *The Little Red Hen*, and then write these three character traits on the interactive whiteboard: courage, diligence, and fairness. Define and discuss these character traits.

Discuss the characters:

Little Red Hen	The cat, dog, and duck
The goose	Brown Dog

Activity Objectives

To use the following activities to reinforce the character traits of courage, diligence, and fairness. To guide students to consider the importance of appreciation, cheerfulness, compassion, cooperation, friendship, loyalty, perseverance, proper work ethic, respect for labor, responsibility, and unselfishness.

Would You Like a Dirty Mug?

Discuss why it is important to work hard. What happens if someone never works? Let students give examples of a time when they earned something. Let them also identify a time when they missed out on something good because they were lazy. Is it fair for people to get something without working? Would you like it if you worked hard and earned a dollar, but your sibling was given a dollar for doing nothing? Would that be fair? Of course, it wouldn't be fair. How would you feel? Everyone should remember that hard work gets you the things you want while laziness gets you nothing. Also, talk about how when you work, you should always do your best and never do a job halfway.

Bring in a mug that is nasty on the inside. (Put some nasty stuff in it—possibly mustard, coffee grounds, dirt, etc.) Explain that you would like to give someone a drink of cocoa and ask for a volunteer. Start to pour the cocoa powder into the mug, but stop and say, “Do you mind if the mug is only cleaned halfway?” Show them how clean the outside is, but then show the inside of the mug. Of course, they won't want the cocoa from a mug like that. Whoever cleaned the mug only cleaned half of it—the outside. This illustrates the importance of doing a job completely.

Make Job Coupons

First students will discuss what responsibility is and give examples of what it is and what it is not. To have students demonstrate responsibility, they will create coupons for special tasks they will do at home to help their families. Tell them to think of tasks that they don't regularly do (such as making their bed). They should also only make coupons for something they will be able to do. For example, they should not make a coupon for ironing the family's clothes or working on the family car's engine. Then students give the coupons to members of their family. Later after the jobs have been done, allow students to share about how their family reacted to these helpful gifts and how the reactions made them feel.

How to Be Responsible

Discuss with students what they can do to be responsible. (You may need to give them hints to lead them to these tips). Here are some things to list in case they don't think of them:

1. Think before you speak.
2. Think before you act.
3. Admit your mistakes.
4. If you can, fix your mistakes.
5. Be a good example.
6. Do your duty and your job and do it right.
7. Always do your best.
8. Work before you play.

9. Be accountable.
10. Be dependable.
11. Do your homework and chores.
12. Take care of your possessions.
13. Be organized.
14. Have a good attitude.
15. Make wise choices.
16. Don't litter. Do recycle.

What Kind of Body Are You?

Discuss with students that sometimes we just do things because they need to be done. For example, if you see trash on the playground, you should pick it up even if you didn't put it there because it is your playground and school. They should also help out at home even when their parents don't ask for help. Read the following story to students and then have them discuss it.

Once upon a time there were four people. Their names were Everybody, Somebody, Nobody, and Anybody. When there was important work to be done, Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. When Nobody did it, Everybody got mad because it was Anybody's job. Everybody thought that Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized it wouldn't get done, so Nobody did it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done in the first place.

What If...

Do this "What if..." activity. Ask students: What would happen if the grocery store workers decided they were too tired to work? What if your mom was too busy to cook or take you out to eat? What if the farmers didn't want to go out in the cold and rainy weather? What if teachers said they were not going to teach? What if no one had electricity because the workers went on strike? What if the doctors and nurses stayed at home? What else can you think of?

Job Charades

Discuss the many jobs in our society that are needed to make our lives like they are. Students will list as many different jobs as they can as you list them on the interactive whiteboard. Next have students act out a job while the other students guess which job it is (Job Charades).

Brainstorm Unfair Situations

Little Red Hen said that it would be wrong for the three friends to eat the bread since they had not helped her. Was it selfish or unfair of her to not give them any bread? Have students brainstorm situations they see as unfair and then come up with some solutions together. Make sure that students look at both sides of each situation

to make sure that solutions are fair to both sides. If time permits, help the class write their own quote about justice and fairness to post in the classroom.

Adopt a Grandma or Grandpa

Have students “adopt” elderly people at nursing homes or retirement centers. Before going, students practice reading with one another. Then they read the practiced selection to their nursing home friend. Students show their responsibility through practice and in reading to their friends. If they are unable to do this, have students make an ABC responsibility list. For each letter of the alphabet, students will write down one or more words that relate to responsibility. They can use a dictionary or thesaurus to help. Here is an example: A—accountable, accept blame, appreciate, accomplish, attitude; B—begin, busy, best; C—citizenship, choices, chores; D—dependable, diligent, duty, decisions; E—equipped, examine, energetic, excel; F—faithful, finish, face the facts; G—goals, groundwork; H—help, healthy; I—improve, independent; J—jobs; K—kind, knowledgeable, keep on; L—listen, lead, labor; M—manage, mission, manners; N—neat, no excuses; O—obey, organized, others; P—plan, prepare, punctual, persist, prompt, patient; Q—quick to start; R—reliable, ready, remember, right, routine; S—safety, self-care, self-control, success, satisfaction; T—think, thorough, trustworthy, try; U—undertake; useful; V—victor, value, volunteer; W—willing, work; X—eXtra (go the extra mile); Y—yes, I will do it! Z—zeal. This can be made into a mural or bulletin board. If desired, divide the letters up and each student can do one or two letters and make one class list. For older students, work in groups and make four or five class lists.

What Should I Do?

Ask students to explain ways to be responsible in the following situations.

1. Your mom is sick and cannot take care of your little brother or sister.
2. It is time to go to bed, but you want to read a book.
3. You are having a lot of fun at a friend’s house and your mom calls to say it is time to come home.
4. You take your sister’s favorite book to school and now it is missing.
5. You promised a friend to feed her kitten, but now your cousin wants you to sleep over at her or his house.
6. You lost your two dollars for lunch, but you found five dollars in the hallway.

Role Play

Have two students act out a role play of two siblings. One works hard and makes his bed and cleans his room, but the other sibling doesn’t. Then have a third child pretend to be the parent and come into each child’s room. To the child with a clean room the parent says, “Since you have worked hard at keeping your room clean, you may have a friend over to go to the park with us today.” To the other child she says, “Since you haven’t kept your room clean, you will have to clean it today while your

brother (or sister) plays with his friend at the park. I hope that in the future you will clean your room so you can have a friend over, too.”

For the second role play, have a student pretend to do homework or work on a project. Some friends will come over and try to convince her to play with them. Have the students decide what she will do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Explain to students that the former first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, dedicated her life to improving the quality of people’s lives around the world. Here is what she said: “It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself.” Ask students to explain what this quote means to them and how they can relate it to their lives.

Tying It All Together

If you are responsible at home and school now, you will help yourself in the future. By making responsibility a habit now, you will not have problems being responsible as an adult. Learn to work hard and do your best; you will always be glad that you did.