



CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

Story Description



Harry the Hare never stops bragging that no one can beat him in a race. The animals go to Mr. Wise Owl to find out how to stop Harry Hare from boasting. They vote to have a race, but everyone declines to race Harry Hare but Teddy Tortoise, the slowest of them all. It's utterly foolish to the forest animals to expect Teddy Tortoise to win.

Harry Hare bolts from the starting line like a flash of lightning. Since Harry Hare is so far ahead, he decides to eat and rest awhile. Teddy Tortoise keeps plodding along. The shouts of the forest animals wake up Harry Hare—and the race is decided by a fraction of a second. Through Teddy Tortoise's perseverance, he wins the race and puts the bragging hare to shame. This retelling of Aesop's classic fable shows that preparation and perseverance lead to success.

Major Objective

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

- Perseverance: Continuing to do something until the obstacles are overcome and the task is complete
- Humility: marked by being submissive and teachable, not arrogant or proud.
- Self-Discipline: controlling one's conduct for improvement

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *The Tortoise and the Hare*, and then write these three character traits on the interactive whiteboard: perseverance, humility, and self-discipline. Define and discuss these character traits.

Discuss the characters:

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| Harry Hare | Teddy Tortoise |
| Mr. Wise Owl | Sammy Skunk |
| Daisy Deer | Bucky Beaver |
| Bobby Bear | Chippy Chipmunk |
| Ronnie Raccoon | Freddy Fox |
| Benny Buck | All the forest animals |

Activity Objectives

To use the following activities to help reinforce the character traits of perseverance, humility, and self-discipline. To guide students to consider the importance of appreciation, assertiveness, courage, diligence, proper work ethic, respect for parents, responsibility, and sportsmanship.

Perseverance

Explain to students that perseverance means sticking with what you are doing until the job is complete. Talk about how hard it sometimes is to finish a task, but if you stick with it and persevere, the job will get done. Usually this means working at something just a little at a time until it is finished. When you stick with a hard job, you show that you are responsible. Discuss why some people quit. Let students give examples of times when they stuck with something and got the job done. Discuss the fact that sometimes you must do things that you don't want to do or don't like doing, but it is necessary in order to get something else. For example, sometimes you have to do homework or take tests in order to get a good grade on your report card or learn something important. Even adults have to go to college in order to get good jobs. Some people don't like cleaning their house, but if you want a clean house, you must clean it. Other people don't like to cook, but if you want to eat, you need to cook.

Persevere and Make Butter

To demonstrate that it takes hard work and perseverance to get good things, the class will make butter which takes about 10 to 20 minutes. Put some whipping cream in a jar or plastic container and have the children take turns shaking it until it separates into butter and buttermilk. Pour off the buttermilk. You can rinse the butter in ice water about three times if you want it to last longer, but if it will be eaten immediately, no rinsing is necessary. A little sea salt can be added for flavoring. Let the children try the butter on a cracker or piece of bread. Most children really like it. Yum! You can also discuss how people used to make butter with a butter churn which was hard work. Bring in a butter churn or use the internet to show a real one being used.

Stick with It

Discuss with students that some people want to give up and quit doing something when they make a mistake. Remind them that everyone makes mistakes and that we can learn from mistakes. Here are a few mistakes that turned into something good.

Dr. Spencer Silver worked to make a glue that would really stick well. However, the glue he made didn't stick well at all. In fact, he could peel it right off. It still had some stickiness, but it wasn't a very good glue. He asked the people at his work if they could think of a way to use it, but no one could. That is, until one day, his co-worker, Art Fry, was at church singing in the choir. Art used little pieces of paper in the song book to help him know which songs to sing, but often times they fell out. Then Art remembered Dr. Silver's glue that didn't stick well. He thought it would help his slips of paper stay on the pages without being glued to them. And that is how sticky notes (Post-its) were invented! Give each student a sticky note and have them write a quote on it about perseverance such as: I will stick with it!

Here are some more accidental inventions: the Slinky, Play Doh, Silly Putty, Corn Flakes, dynamite, the microwave, Velcro, penicillin, potato chips, X-rays, plastic, superglue, chocolate chip cookies, ice cream cones, and matches. Each of these has a unique story about how it came to be. Students can look on the internet for these stories and then read them to the class.

Turn a Mistake into Something Good

Next, to reinforce the importance of not quitting and turning a mistake into something good, give each student a piece of paper with a funny line drawn on it. The line can be curved, jagged, an L shape, etc. Students should take the line and incorporate it into a picture that they draw. It will take some creativity, but it will be a good lesson for them to learn. Have them share their pictures with the class and point out the mistake and what they turned it into.

Overcoming Obstacles

Explain to students that America is one of the few countries in the world where people can go from rags to riches. To do so, people have to be willing to overcome obstacles and refuse to make excuses for not doing something. Here are some people who were determined to work hard and didn't let obstacles stop them.

Bill Porter was born in 1932 with cerebral palsy, but he didn't let that stop him. When he was unable to get a job because of his cerebral palsy, he refused to go on disability. He finally convinced the Watkins Company to let him be a door-to-door salesman for them. Even though walking was very painful, Porter walked eight to ten miles a day for forty years in Portland, Oregon selling various products. Amazingly, he eventually became the number one seller for Watkins. In 1995, a local newspaper wrote an article about his determination and optimism which led to an article in the Reader's Digest, a spot on the TV show, 20/20, and a movie called Door to Door in 2002. Bill Porter has inspired many with his ability to overcome many obstacles, his determination not to quit, and his dogged work ethic.

Louis Pasteur was a French chemist and microbiologist who was born in 1822. When three of his five children died from typhus, he determined to do something to stop deadly diseases. He developed a vaccine for rabies and anthrax and is even more famous for developing the process of pasteurization which is used to treat milk so that it doesn't give people a deadly sickness. He was persistent in his work and fearless, too. Pasteur first used the rabies vaccine on a 9-year old boy who was badly mauled by a rabid dog. Since Pasteur was not a licensed physician he could have been put in prison if the boy had not survived, but he did survive due to Pasteur's vaccine and bravery in using it.

Have students research about other notable people who persevered despite obstacles: Lewis and Clark, Marie Curie, Christopher Columbus, Kilmer McCully, Elijah McCoy, Granville Woods, and Florence Nightingale.

Can You Walk on a Balance Beam or Balance a Book on your Head?

Have students try to walk on a fake balance beam (a long piece of duct tape on the floor). See how far they can go. Next have students try to walk with a book on their heads and again see how far they can go. Talk about how practice will help them be able to walk further and even do it with their eyes closed. Explain that most people cannot do something really well the first time they attempt it. It takes lots of practice,

sometimes even years of practice to be an expert at something. Practice means that you stick with it and persevere. Also, talk about how it takes lots of practice to become good readers and that means practicing at school and at home, but they are gradually becoming great readers.

Role Play

Have two students act out a role play of a doing a hard job such as raking leaves, digging a hole, washing dishes, etc. One of the students will suggest quitting, but the other one will encourage the first to keep going until the job is finished. When done, they will talk about how good they feel to have stuck with it and finished the job.

Next have two students role play a parent finding the child watching TV or playing a video game instead of washing a load of towels. The parent should explain that now no one will be able to take their shower until after the towels are done, and they will be late for a birthday party the child wanted to attend.

Saving Money Means Sticking with It

Begin a discussion by allowing each student to say one thing that each would like to buy. Explain that if they save their money (from allowances, doing odd jobs, or from birthdays, etc.) they will probably be able to buy that one thing. Point out that they will need to resist buying other things, even small things, or they will not have enough saved to get what they really want.

Make Dream Stars

Give each student a large paper star. Have students write a dream or goal that they hope to achieve on their star and then decorate it with markers and glitter. Tell the students that it takes perseverance to fulfill their dreams. Ask students to explain what they will need to do to attain their dreams or goals.

People Who Persevered and their Quotes

Discuss the fact that if people didn't persevere and work with diligence, we would not have a lot of the inventions we enjoy today. For example, Charles F. Kettering was an American inventor, engineer, and businessman who invented 186 things (in the first half of the twentieth century) including the electric start engine so people no longer had to crank cars, Freon for air conditioning in buildings and cars, an incubator for infants, and many other things we still use today. He said, "Keep on going, and the chances are that you will stumble on something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I never heard of anyone ever stumbling on something sitting down." Although Kettering suffered from very poor eyesight which made learning difficult when he was in school, he did not let this obstacle keep him from excelling and inventing so many useful things. Here are a few more quotes about persevering. Research the authors if you don't know what they did.

Every strike brings me closer to the next home run. (Babe Ruth)

It's hard to beat a person who never gives up. (Babe Ruth)

It always seems impossible until it's done. (Nelson Mandela)

Your persistence is your measure of faith in yourself. (Anonymous)

I may not be there yet, but I'm closer than I was yesterday. (anonymous)

Nobody trips over mountains. It is the small pebble that causes you to stumble. Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find you have crossed the mountain. (Anonymous)

Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance. (Samuel Johnson)

The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination. (Tommy Lasorda)

People may fail many times, but they become failures only when they begin to blame someone else.—(Anonymous)

We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.—Jesse Owens

Show me a person who doesn't make mistakes, and I'll show you a person who doesn't do anything.—Leonard Rubino

Tying it all together

If you want to be successful, you must persevere in spite of obstacles and hardships. If you make a mistake, learn from it and move on. It takes a lot of self-discipline and time to practice and become really good at something. Don't forget to make a plan for reaching your goals and dreams and then follow through with the steps to make it happen! You can do it!