

Dilworth Elementary Character Education

Responsibility (October)

Pre-teach: Introduce yourself to the students and tell them which trait you will be discussing today. Ask the following questions and call on different students for answers. Below each question are examples of responses. You may need to rephrase students' answers or guide them along.

(Ask) **What is responsibility?**

1. Being accountable for what you do, for your actions and behavior.
2. Doing the right thing at the right time, so others can trust and depend on you.

(Ask) **What are ways you can show responsibility?**

1. Complete your homework and chores on time without being reminded.
2. Follow through on your commitments, even when you don't feel like it.
3. Accept responsibility for your mistakes and learn from them. Don't make excuses or blame others.
4. Take care of your things and those of other people. Return items you borrow.
5. Find out what needs to be done and do it.
6. Make wise choices, such as choosing to eat healthy foods and wearing a helmet.
7. Always do your very best. Others are counting on you!

Book: Read and discuss a book that teaches a lesson about responsibility. *(See Book Suggestion list.)*

(Ask) **How would you demonstrate responsibility if...**

1. You broke the wheel off your brother's new skateboard?
2. Your friend asks you to play and you haven't finished your homework?
3. You're playing a really fun game at your friend's house and it's time to go home?
4. You promised your mom or dad you would clean your room but you just don't feel like it?
5. It is time to go to bed and you just remembered that your book report is due tomorrow?
6. You agreed to take care of your neighbor's dog while she is away, but now a friend has invited you to a sleep over?
7. Your mom is not feeling well and could really use some extra help around the house?
8. You forgot to bring your homework home from school, including the book you need to study for tomorrow's test?

(Ask) **What are some other situations where we can demonstrate responsibility?**

(Encourage students to come up with a few more situations to discuss together as a class.)

Activity: Complete an activity to go along with your lesson. *(Activity suggestions follow.)* You may choose to incorporate an activity into your lesson at any time. Oftentimes visuals and experiments are very effective at the beginning and will get your students excited about the lesson.

Closing comment: Remember only you have the ability to have responsibility. Be a person others can trust and count on to do the right thing!

"I am responsible for doing the work I need to do today even though it may be hard." ~Helen Keller

Responsibility Activities – one per grade level

Responsi-bill-lity (Suggested for grades 2-5) – All Dilworth 4th Grade Classes

Materials: A dollar bill

Look what I brought with me today. (*Hold up the dollar bill for the students to see.*) All of us know how to spend money. Do we all need money? What do we use money for? (*Briefly discuss needs and wants.*) When I hold this dollar bill in my hand it doesn't block my vision of the things around me. I can see my family, friends, people who might need help, and I can see work that needs to be done. The problem comes when I hold money so close to me (*hold dollar in front of your eyes*) and that's all I can see or care about. If I love money too much, that can lead to trouble. I might begin to make foolish and selfish purchases, thinking only of myself instead of making responsible choices and thinking about the needs of others. Having money is not a problem. But if I love money too much- and hold it too close-it becomes a problem. What are some good and responsible things we can do with money? (*Object Talks for Any Day, by Verna L. Kokmeyer*)

Responsibili-Tree (Suggested for grades K-3) – All Dilworth 1st Grade Classes

Materials: White, brown, and green construction paper. Tree trunk with branches and leaf stencils made from heavy cardboard.

Give each student one piece each of the white, brown, and green construction paper. Instruct them to use the brown paper to trace and cut out the tree trunk and then glue it on their white paper. Then use the green paper to cut and trace out leaves and then glue the leaves on the branches of the tree trunk. Students will then write responsible actions that they will perform on each of the leaves, such as take out the garbage, feed the dog, set the table...

Play the "What if...?" Game (Suggested for grades K - 3) – All Dilworth 2nd Grade Classes

Materials: A sample lunch, for example, a sandwich, a piece of fruit, carton of milk

Ask the students a series of "What if...?" questions.

1. What if the farmer who grew the grain to make the bread for this sandwich decided to play ball instead of harvesting the grain? (*Explain that we wouldn't have any bread to eat, than take the bread off of the sandwich.*)
2. What if the farmer who raised the animals for the meat decided he was just too tired to take the animals to market? (*Take the meat away*)
3. What if the dairy farmer decided it was too cold and rainy to go out and milk the cows in the morning? (*Take away the cheese and milk*)
4. What if the workers who harvest fruits and vegetables were too busy watching TV to work in the fields? (*Take away any fruit and vegetables*)
5. What if the store manager and employees at Harris Teeter didn't feel like working for a few weeks and played with friends instead? (*Take away everything else and explain that the store wouldn't be open and we could not get the things we need.*)
6. See what can happen when people do not show responsibility? We count on others to be responsible and do their job correctly and on time. The jobs that you have are just as important. (*Ask the students to give examples of their jobs.*) When you do what is expected of you to the best of your ability, then you are being responsible and others can count on YOU! (www.charactercenter.com)

Role Play (Suggested for grades 3 - 5)

Materials: None

Divide the students into small groups and ask them to develop a skit about responsibility. Have each group present to the class. Be sure and discuss each skit after the students have finished and point out the responsible behavior.

Mr. “No Excuse” Moose (Suggested for grades K – 2)

Materials: Stuffed moose or a picture of one (A stuffed moose is available in the character education library.)

To help students understand the importance of both accepting responsibility and following through, introduce them to your friend Mr. “No Excuse” Moose. Mr. Moose shows responsibility by doing what is expected of him. He does not blame others or make excuses. People can count on Mr. Moose to get the job done. Role play with the students different ways Mr. Moose would respond to a situation. For example, “It’s time for Mr. Moose to take out the trash. Does he say, ‘I’m too tired or ask someone else?’ NO, Mr. Moose does not make excuses...he gets the job done!”

Responsibility Is My Bag! (Suggested for grades K - 2) – All Dilworth K Classes

Materials: Paper bag

Give everyone a lunch-sized paper bag. Tell the students how they can show responsibility by helping to keep their family car neat and tidy. Explain that they will decorate their bag. When they are finished, you will put a small hole near the top so the bag can be placed over a switch or knob in the car and used as a trash catcher. Tell the students it will be their responsibility to empty the bag when it's full and put it back in its place. (*Big Activity Book for Building Little Characters, R.Bertolini*)

Sweet Responsibility (Suggested for grades 2 - 5) – All Dilworth 3rd & 5th Grade Classes

Materials: Small apples and wrapped candy, enough so that you have one for each student

Show the students what you have. Ask them individually which of the two items they would like and let them take the one of their choice. First speak to those that chose the candy, saying something like, "You have chosen the food that will give you quick energy. It is very sweet and delicious to eat. However, it doesn't last very long and it is mostly empty calories. A few minutes after you eat it, you'll be hungry for more." To those who chose the apple say, "The apple will also give you energy and it is sweet to the taste. However, the apple is nutritious and will supply you with extra vitamins. You will feel more satisfied and benefit from the energy it gives for a longer period of time. The decision to take the apple was a very wise one." Now, ask the children how you can compare the apple and candy to our responsibilities and the choices we face every day. Many of the choices we make can bring us immediate pleasure but have no long-lasting value (like the candy) or a wise and responsible choice will bring us a longer-lasting type of happiness and satisfaction (like the apple).

Examples

1. You are working on your homework when a friend calls and invites you to come over and watch a movie. Which choice will probably give immediate pleasure and which choice would give you long-term satisfaction? Which is the responsible choice?
2. You have been saving your money to buy a new skateboard, but as you walk by the arcade you think about spending the money to play a few arcade games.
3. You have the opportunity to finish your science project ahead of schedule or play basketball with your friends.

(10-Minute Life Lessons for Kids, J Miller)

A Symphony of Character *(Suggested for all grades)*

Materials: Musical instrument that you can play.

Bring in your instrument and draw a line of music on the board with notes. Play the music as written. Next, erase several of the notes and replay the music. Notice how different the music sounds. Explain the importance of each note in the composition. They all have a purpose to make the music work. It can be beautiful and complete only when each note is doing its part. Each of us is like a note in a musical composition. When we do our part and take responsibility for our actions, then we can make beautiful “music” in our lives and for those around us.

Lessons copied from *The Parent/Community Connection in the Classroom: Connecting your classroom to parents, community, and character education*

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