

CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP - following rules for joint stewardship of a country's ideals, taking responsibility, caring for the environment, conserving resources, and respecting your country and defending her in crisis.

As a country, we inherit a joint past and, together, help shape a future. Each of us shares a joint heritage - it binds us together, it challenges us, it inspires us. Everything is implied "for the good of the country - for all". The country looks to this history for inspiration. Each individual is important - the whole fabric (the country) is made of each individual thread (each person). Without the diversity and dedication of the country's population, our depth and complexity as a nation would be diminished.

.....
A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution by Betsy & Giulio Maestro was the book selected to illustrate Citizenship.

.....
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- How does the Wall of Names monument in Washington, D.C. represent citizenship?
- Can being a good citizen also require being brave or cooperative or persevering? Why?
- Does citizenship mean for the good of all?
- What does being a good citizen mean to you?

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- 50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth by The EarthWorks Group
- The Drinking Gourd by F.N. Monjo
- Shh! We're Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"No man is above the law and no man is below it; nor do we ask any man's permission when we ask him to obey it." Theodore Roosevelt

MANNERLY

MANNERLY - to use good manners; to be polite, courteous, respectful, thoughtful & considerate in relating to others.

Many of us who relate to children on a daily basis by parenting and teaching, know the challenges we face when attempting to instill manners. Along with the challenge, we also see the importance of instilling this virtue at an early age. We feel proud when our young children appropriately thank a parent for a playdate or introduce a playmate without being prompted. For many of us these prideful moments often occur less than we would like. Elaine St. James in her book, Simplify Your Life with Kids emphasizes that good manners are the backbone of a civilized society. They make our encounters with people more pleasant and our daily struggles more tolerable. Here are some basic manners you might want to consider for discussion (at school or home):

GENERAL - Saying "please" and "thank you"; apologizing for a wrong; saying "excuse me" when appropriate; showing courtesy, for example, by opening a door for someone or giving up a seat to someone in need; writing thank yous for gifts. **INTRODUCTIONS** - Make proper introductions; greet an adult with proper eye contact and a proper response; teach your child to introduce himself. **VISITS** - Show responsibility when accepting an invitation by attending the event; thank the host when leaving; you may decline with a simple, "No, thank you.". **CONVERSATION** - Don't interrupt; politely respond - instead of "Huh?", use "Pardon me?"; don't use inappropriate language; don't say "Shut up.". Teaching manners to children is seldom easy, although common courtesies can be taught by simple example.

.....

Three selections illustrated Mannerly for this month:
How Jack Rabbit Got His Very Long Ears by Heather Irbinskas
This is Our House by Michael Rosen
It's Mine by Leo Lionni

.....

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Are all people deserving of our mannerly response? Why or why not?
Should we show our best manners only when adults are watching?
Think of ways you can be mannerly at home and at school.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Perfect Pigs by Marc Brown
Bears Always Share by B. Hazen
Video entitled "It's Just Good Manners"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Show courtesy to all people, not because they are gentlemen, but because YOU are a gentleman." Dag Hammarskjold

OPTIMISTIC

OPTIMISTIC - A person who is disposed to looking at a situation favorably or positively; one who looks at the bright side of things; a positive or "sunny" outlook.

We all know how good we feel and how great a day can be when optimism is on our side and our outlook is positive. Few would disagree that optimism is good for us. It is also more fun; what goes on in our head from minute to minute is more pleasant. Optimism is a tool we can all use to achieve our goals with less labor and stress, and enjoy life a little bit more. We also have an outstanding opportunity to pass this "wisdom" along and raise children who are optimistic. We can give our children "tools" of cheer, hope, opportunity and confidence which they can use when the "woe is me" attitude wants to take over. Optimism can give our children the ability to bounce back from setbacks they most certainly will encounter.

.....

How to Lose All Your Friends by Nancy Carlson is the book selected to illustrate the word **OPTIMISTIC**.

.....

SUGGESTED READINGS THAT RELATE TO OPTIMISTIC:

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman

The Carrot Seed by Krauss

Coal Mine Peaches by Michelle Dionetti

The Lady Who Saw the Good Side of Everything by Tapio

Pollyanna - Many versions (books and video)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

How can being optimistic help in a negative situation?

How can being optimistic give us new options or solutions when confronted with a problem?

What actions can we take at home or at school to show that we are practicing optimism?

Are the instructions listed in the book How to Lose All Your Friends accurate of behavior you would consider inappropriate?

Is it ever harmful to act optimistically? When? Why?

Is there such a thing as false optimism?

QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"Keep your sunny side up."

"It's good advice to look at the glass not as half-empty but as half-full."

"If I expect the best, just for today, what wondrous things might happen?"

COOPERATION

COOPERATION - working together for a common purpose; to work with others for mutual benefit.

From 20 Teachable Virtues: When a child behaves with honesty, respect and empathy then he will naturally cooperate with others because he respects them, can put himself in their shoes, and will treat them fairly. Cooperative children do not necessarily do everything a person tells them to do. In fact, looking out for other's welfare, as well as one's own, makes cooperation work. By cooperating, everyone gets a chance to feel special and worthy.

What are some benefits to cooperative efforts?

How can you encourage someone to be cooperative?

What are some things you do to cooperate at home? And at school?

.....
Chubbo's Pool by Betsy Lewin is the book selected to illustrate the word COOPERATION.

.....
LIST OF RECOMMENDED OR SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF COOPERATION:

Stone Soup adapted by Mary Rowitz

Smoky Night

The Turnip

In a Tight Squeeze (Winnie the Pooh) by A.A. Milne

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

How has the character in Chubbo's Pool learned about cooperation? Has cooperating made the character a better friend?

Can you set some goals or activities at home to show that you are a cooperating family member? What would they be?

Recognize and praise cooperation at home, then celebrate your cooperative success as a family.

QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"None of us is as smart as all of us."

"Ethics will be restored when most individuals come to the realization that they play for a common team." Lester C. Thurow

ACCOUNTABLE

ACCOUNTABLE - to be able to carry out a duty or task and accept responsibility for the consequences/results. To be responsible; able to be relied or depended upon.

As William Bennett stated in The Book of Virtues concerning responsibility.. "To respond is to answer. Correspondingly, to be responsible is to be answerable, to be accountable. Accountable persons are people who have taken charge of themselves and their actions, people who own up to their actions and behavior. A certain level of maturity is assumed when accountable actions occur.

There are many tasks we can be accountable for at home, at school, with our families, and in an organization. Think of some of the tasks you may be responsible for in these various areas. Can you be relied upon to complete the tasks for which you are responsible? Being accountable means you can.

What is the opposite of accountable? What happens when we are not accountable?

.....

Chestnut Cove by Tim Egan is the book selected to illustrate the word ACCOUNTABLE.

.....

LIST OF RECOMMENDED OR SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF ACCOUNTABLE:

Bentley and Egg by William Joyce
Brother Eagle, Sister Sky by Susan Jeffers
The Lorax by Dr. Seuss
Your Own Best Secret Place by Byrd Baylor
Strega Nona - Old Folk Tale

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

How do these books demonstrate the word accountable?
How are the characters accountable?
How did Chestnut Cove illustrate how people can be accountable to each other in a community?

QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"Be reliable. Be faithful. Finish what you start."
"To be accountable is to use all my energies to fulfill the expectation of those who are counting on me."
"To be accountable is to realize the importance of the task assigned to us."
"I respond to a situation with my ability. You can count on me."

PERSEVERANCE (PERSEVERING)

PERSEVERANCE - Sticking to a purpose or an aim; never giving up what one has set out to do; to persist.

To persevere one must embrace some fundamental beliefs. One must believe in a cause or purpose and seek to see it to the end. Perseverance implies dedication, tenacity and a degree of success. As parents and educators we can teach our children to persevere by laying out a task and encouraging them to work it through to completion; by giving them the tools to be patient and endure when faced with discouraging results. We can help our children by living a life that models perseverance. Oftentimes the unspoken example of us working through a problem, showing dedicated persistence, speaks loudest.

Marian Wright Edelman in her book, The Measure of Our Success reviews 25 lessons for life, one being entitled "Never Give Up". She quotes Nobel Peace Laureate Alva Myrdal "...we gain nothing by walking around the difficulties and merely indulging in wishful thinking. There is always something one can do. It is not worthy of human beings to give up... The greatness of being human... lies in not giving up, in not accepting one's own limitations."

.....

"The Little Hero of Holland" as retold in The Children's Book of Virtues edited by William Bennett beautifully illustrates perseverance.

.....

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Think of some tasks, sports or occupations that require you to stick to the task to succeed (ie, homework, mountain climbing, fishing, researcher, scientific study, etc.).
What words can you tell yourself when you feel discouraged?
Who are your heroes and how do you think they persevered? Do you think they ever wanted to give up? Why didn't they?

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Walter the Baker by Eric Carle

The Little Engine That Could

The Tortoise and the Hare - Aesop

QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"To gain success you need to be dedicated, have a sense of balance in your life and be willing to take a risk." Bonnie Blair, Olympic Medalist

"Life was never meant to be easy, it was meant to make people great."

USEFUL SERVICE (VOLUNTEER)

USEFUL SERVICE - of use; giving service, helpful.

VOLUNTEER - Giving of oneself for a cause or purpose. Volunteers give of their time and themselves, without pay for their effort, because they are dedicated to the organization or the activity.

Like so many of the positive character-building pillars or virtues, both Useful Service and Volunteerism are learned and can be observed. Our children can watch as we give our time to a cause or organization and are able to witness the enthusiasm we bring to that task. Volunteering or serving is one way to expand our children's world beyond their needs. It provides us with opportunities to put others first. Opportunities to volunteer or serve are as varied as each of our personal interests. These opportunities may include helping a sick friend, walking an elderly neighbor's dog, bringing homework to a sick classmate, helping an organization we are interested in, etc. These acts of assistance are neither chores or paid jobs, but simple gifts from the heart. Giving from the heart can provide a sense of satisfaction as children learn the importance of contributing to a worthy cause. Volunteering leads to responsible community contributions that help us all.

.....

Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney was the book used to illustrate Useful Service.

.....

LIST OF RECOMMENDED OR SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF USEFUL SERVICE:

The Child's World of Helping by Jennie Davis

Kids Who Make a Difference by Joyce M. Roche & Marie Rodriguez

Biographies of John Muir or Aldo Leopold

Ranger Rick Magazine (April 1998) article entitled "You Can be a Can-Do Kid!"

Those Can-Do Pigs by David McPhail

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What are some ways you can volunteer your time or talents?

What are some good local causes you might like to know more about?

Help your students identify their interests or talents so they can access a possible opportunity.

How did Miss Rumphius dedicate herself to a useful endeavor?

QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"Life begets life, energy creates energy. It is by spending oneself that we become rich." Sarah Bernhardt

"Volunteering can be habit-forming. And the habits you form can last a lifetime."
advertisement