

FAIR

FAIR - Just; unbiased; honest

In the world of strong character and caring, a fair person is one who can get along with others because he/she is interested in everyone receiving a "fair" deal. To be fair, children must care about the welfare of another person and overcome their own tendency to be egocentric. If fairness benefits only oneself, the definition most children use, then others may end up suffering.

How can we help teach fairness? 1) Model fairness - remember fairness does not necessarily mean equality. It means cooperating to meet the needs of both parties, realizing that different individuals have conflicting needs and wants. 2) Model selflessness to help your child understand the importance of thinking of others rather than thinking only of him/her self. 3) Build problem-solving skills in your child. Children who learn to face problems as they occur and try to find solutions generally come to accept the world as a fair place, which makes them more likely to collaborate with others.

- a) Define the problem
- b) List as many feasible solutions as possible
- c) Explore the potential consequences of each solution
- d) Choose the best solution
- e) Keep an open mind

BOOK WE READ IN CLASS:

Me First - Helen Lester

QUESTIONS:

How does Pinkerton feel when he realizes what "care for a sandwich" really means?

Some questions to talk about:

In what ways do we involve questions of fairness in our class? (How are classroom helpers chosen? What happens when two children have a disagreement in class?)

Have you ever been treated unfairly? How did you handle it?

Are you ever unfair?

Additional Readings:

Cinderella

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters - African tale

"Aim for fairness." Dorothy L.

"Fight injustice and ignorance no matter who their victims are, they are a part of the human family." Dr. Mathilde Krim

GRATEFUL/GENEROUS

GRATEFUL - Full of thanks; feeling of gratitude

GENEROUS - Unselfish; willing to share with others; forgiving; not mean

These two words go hand in hand and are especially appropriate for discussion as we anticipate our own celebrations of Thanksgiving in the month of November. These words represent an attitude of expression; a giving of oneself because of genuine want to do something, rather than obligation. Being truly generous or grateful means recognizing the dignity of all human beings; to be a friend to those in need, courteous and respectful. Our country has demonstrated generosity by assisting families affected by the New York tragedy in September. Numerous collections of money and items have been taken around the country to benefit those who have suffered. North Barrington Students collected money through Student Council to be donated. Being generous can be very rewarding.

Grateful and generous ideals, like many of the virtues we have studied, are formed by experience and example. We as parents, educators and community leaders set the stage for modeling behaviors for the growing children we impact. We can help our children become more grateful and more generous by setting standards that support and encourage their behaviors in character-building ways. How can we acknowledge our (and our children's) gifts and talents and encourage their use in generous and productive ways?

BOOK WE READ IN CLASS:

How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World - Marjorie Priceman

QUESTION:

How is this book a good example of being generous and grateful?

Some questions to talk about:

How can our generosity help others?

Can you think of a time when someone was generous to you?

How can we focus on being grateful for what we have in the face of so many choices?

Additional Readings:

Giving Thanks by Chief Jake Swamp

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

The Gift of the Magi by D. Henry

The Legend of the Dipper - Children's Book of Virtues

The Lion and the Mouse - Aesop

The Star Jewels - Children's Book of Heros

"Gratitude is an attitude."

"Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds." George Eliot

EQUALITY

EQUALITY - Equal

Of the same quantity, value, rank, etc.
Person or thing that is equal
Be, or do something, equal to

Equality on a human scale is difficult to define much less put into practice. As our country's history can attest to, equality has been a driving force and a persistent issue since our country's inception. Equality in terms of black vs. white, early settlers vs. immigrants, women's right to vote, equal pay for equal work, schools, housing, hiring and firing in the work place, employee benefits, etc. - the list goes on and on. The visual of equal is the balancing of a scale where an immediate change or discrepancy can be detected. Not so on a human scale. Subtle nuances are the method of operation.

How can we be open to equality as a way of looking at the world? How can we maintain and encourage equal treatment of races, religions and people? How does a negative situation (the World Trade Center Bombing) affect the way we view cultures and people who are from the country of origin where the offenders were from?

BOOK WE READ IN CLASS:

So Far From the Sea - Eve Bunting

QUESTIONS:

How would you feel if you were Laura and her family in this story? Imagine how her father must have felt as a boy relocated away from his home.

Some questions to talk about:

What other events in history have wrongly placed innocent people in a situation of enslavement, or imprisonment?

How do you feel in your family when brothers and sisters are treated differently?

How do you feel in class when classmates are treated differently (ie you are not chosen for a project you want to work on?)

Additional readings:

The Picture Book of Martin Luther King

Farewell to Manzanar - Jeanne Houston

Jackie Robinson - Children's Book of Heros

Declaration of Independence

Bill of Rights

U.S. Constitution

"All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents." John F. Kennedy

JUSTICE

JUSTICE - Being just (right or fair; correct; exact)
Reward or penalty as deserved
The upholding of what is just
A judge

Defining justice can be accomplished by looking to the legal system. Often justice is carried out by a judge (with the aid of a jury, at times) in a courtroom; a person of guilt or innocence looks to the judicial system for truth and fairness to carry his/her trial to conclusion. How can such a system sort out well publicized cases (for example the World Trade Center Bombing)? What kind of extraordinary human resources are called upon during such a trial? Does justice mean fairness or simply imply fairness? Can justice mean revenge for past wrongs? Justice should be uplifting by doing the right thing. Revenge is divisive and demeaning. Are there some things that are beyond justice (ie DUI's, terrorist attacks)?

BOOK READ IN CLASS:

Meet my Grandmother - Lisa Tucker McElroy
Just Rewards - Steve Sanfield

Some questions to talk about:

Issues such as retribution for slavery and American Indian injustices - what retributive payment is carried out and by whom? Should persons, states or governments be held accountable for past wrongs in these cases and be responsible for any rectification?

Additional Readings:

Harriet Tubman - The Underground Railroad
Trail of Tears
The Indian Cinderella - Children's Book of Virtues
The King & His Hawk - Children's Book of Virtues

"I say that justice is truth in action." Benjamin Disraeli

TOLERANCE

TOLERANCE - To tolerate

A tolerating (put up with; endure; permit), as of another's ways

Moral knowledge is rooted in the spiritual traditions of other faiths, countries, religions, and traditions. James Q. Wilson, in *THE MORAL SENSE*, argues that the notion of morality is universal. Universal ideals are shared by a majority of people and help guide us when we are confused; they help us discover where we have been wrong; they give us goals to aim for; and they offer hope that change is possible. Most important, they comfort us in the knowledge that, no matter how unpredictable and chaotic our world seems, there is a source of universal principles available to us all.

Among those principles are:

- 1) All people are valuable. No one is better than anyone else.
- 2) No one is perfect. We all make mistakes.
- 3) In some ways, we are just like everyone else on Earth. We all share the same feelings.
- 4) In some ways, we are different from everyone else on Earth. Each of us has a unique personality and appearance.
- 5) All people - no matter who they are, where they come from, what they believe, how they act, or what they look like - deserve respect and compassion.
- 6) Each of us is responsible for our own actions.
- 7) To be happy and secure, we need other people in our lives.
- 8) We should treat other people the way we want others to treat us.

As difficult as they are to live by, most of these ideals can be stated quite simply. We find them in proverbs, in the traditions of our cultures, and in the world's religious faiths. We remind ourselves of them by telling stories, repeating poems, singing songs, saying prayers, recounting legends, and reading literature. When we articulate these truths in the simple phrases that we have learned from our families, we offer our children a language for the inner voice of conscience, an unchanging source of wisdom that they can rely on when the temptations of intolerance arise.

BOOK WE READ IN CLASS:

Ouch! - Natalie Babbitt

Some questions to talk about:

How can we practice tolerance in our typical day?

How can we expect to be tolerant of those who are so different from us, or if their beliefs are so different from what we believe?

Additional readings:

Why Frog and Snake Never Play Together - *Children's Book of Virtues*

WISE

WISE - Having or showing knowledge and good judgement.

For us as adults, having wisdom or being wise may cross many experiential, educational and generational lines. We look to the learned or the experienced or the "older wiser" heads among us to formulate our own base of wisdom. Our children, often separated from the thought process of obtaining wisdom, collect it in a variety of ways. They too learn from experience and school and from those influential persons in their lives. Their wisdom is acquired through their child's eye filter. They look to us to make sense of the confusion and provide guidance and balance when questions arise. Their wisdom filter is, in part, our responsibility to help develop and direct. Our conversations and example are important pieces to help our children grow into "wise" adults.

BOOK WE READ IN CLASS:

One Grain of Rice - Demi

QUESTIONS:

How did Rani's wisdom help the kingdom and the raja?

Some questions to talk about:

- Talk about the different types of wisdom (book learning, how to make appropriate choices, etc.)
- Talk about who is a young, wise person and why.
- Talk about who is an old, wise person and why.
- Talk about animals in stories that are characterized as being wise (ie, owls) and differentiate between wise and clever.

Additional readings:

The Old Ladies Who Liked Cats - Carol Greene

I Wish I Were a Butterfly - Ed Young

"Our world can - Our world must - move from the reason of force to the force of reason."

Fredrico Mayor

"Don't ever stop learning and improving your mind." Marian W. Edelman

"The price of wisdom is above rubies." Job 28:18