

## ACCOUNTABLE

ACCOUNTABLE – to be able to carry out a duty or task and accept responsibility for the consequences/results. To be responsible.

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?

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Bentley & Egg by William Joyce is the book selected to illustrate the word ACCOUNTABLE.

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

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 Bentley demonstrate accountability in the book Bentley & Egg?

### 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."

## BRAVE

BRAVE – Having courage. The ability to face a dangerous, painful or difficult situation with courage.

Being brave does not mean that you are not afraid, but it means that you are able to stand up and find the courage to face something scary or unpleasant. It might mean standing up for a friend in need or in danger, or standing up for what you believe in. Being brave also means knowing when to say no to a situation that may be harmful or uncomfortable – having the courage to be your own person and not be persuaded by “the group” or “popular opinion”.

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The Story of Sitting Bull by Peter Murray is the book selection to illustrate the word Brave.

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Talk about someone in your life who exhibits bravery and why.

Name some additional historical figures who were brave and why.

List some occupations that require bravery.

How did the book about Sitting Bull illustrate bravery?

### LIST OF RECOMMENDED OR SUGGESTED READINGS:

Historical tale of Molly Pitcher

The story of how the Star Spangled Banner came to be written

Biographies of historical people such as Christopher Columbus, the Wright Brothers, astronauts, explorers, Fire fighters, Helen Keller.

The Little Hero of Holland – Children’s Book of Virtues

Jack and the Beanstalk

The Valiant Tailor – Grimm

Talk about how bravery served the characters in these stories. Why are these stories continuing to be told, and what makes them memorable for the study of courage or bravery?

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.” Anais Nin (20 Teachable Virtues by Barbara Unell & Jerry Wyckoff)

## INDUSTRIOUS

INDUSTRIOUS – hardworking; diligent; ability to stick to the task at hand; concentration and hard work.

Being industrious may be thought of as concentrated effort and expended energy applied to a task for the sake of accomplishing something. Being industrious can be a focus on work or play; the process used to reach a particular end or goal. When we think of someone who is industrious we may think of a person who works hard, is a creative problem solver, has a strong interest, and works until a solution is found. All of these qualities are the trademarks of an industrious person. Industrious people can experience the joy of a job well done.

We can all be examples to our children by teaching them how to do things worth doing. Tasks such as chores, homework, and caring for pets can be done well or poorly. They can be done well with cheer, or poorly with a grudge. It is a matter of choice – our choice. Talking about attitude and the feeling of satisfaction can provide the mental adjustment necessary for industrious behavior to blossom.

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The book John Henry by Julius Lester was selected to illustrate the word INDUSTRIOUS.

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### TOPICS/QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What is your favorite job at home? Why is this job important to you or your family?  
What happens when you do a quick or sloppy job instead of a careful one?  
What new task or skill would you like to learn? Who can help you?  
Discuss behaviors you observe in nature. Nature's creatures (insects, animals, etc.) have hundreds of examples of industrious activity. Nature is preprogrammed to be industrious due to survival and instinct.

### SUGGESTED READINGS THAT RELATED TO INDUSTRIOUS:

The Three Little Pigs  
The Ant and the Grasshopper – Aesop  
Hercules and the Wagoner – The Children's Book of Virtues  
Willis by James Marshall

### QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"Whistle while you work."  
"Keep your nose to the grindstone."

## PERSEVERANCE (Persevering)

PERSEVERANCE (Persevering) – 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.

Marion 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."

How can we help ourselves and our children to persevere toward a goal, even when discouraged? How can we keep ourselves from giving up? By example – looking to others and modeling; By finding help – ask others for guidance; By telling yourself you can do it – Tell yourself encouraging words; By setting up rewards – acknowledge your successes, no matter how small.

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The historic account of Thomas Edison was the focus of discussion to highlight the virtue PERSEVERANCE by reading the book The Story of Thomas Alva Edison by Peter Murray

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### 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  
The Little Hero of Holland – Children's Book of Virtues

### 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 great people."

## 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 Volunteering 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.

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The book The Child's World of Helping by Jennie Davis was the focus for discussion of Useful Service and Volunteering.

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### 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 child identify their interests or talents so they can access a possible opportunity.

### SUGGESTED READINGS THAT RELATE TO THE VIRTUE USEFUL SERVICE OR VOLUNTEER:

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!"

### 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

## ZEALOUS

ZEALOUS - Full of zeal; eager, earnest. With great enthusiasm.

A zealous individual is one who continues to exhibit commitment, through word and action, to a particular ideal. This commitment may be in the face of great obstacles or opposition. We can look at zealous individuals: Albert Schweitzer, Amelia Earhart, Jane Adams (Hull House), Martin Luther King and see a common thread among them. While their pursuits or service were varied and resulted in very different outcomes, dedication to their cause was undeniable. Those who have marked history with, and advanced mankind through their personal pursuits have invested significant energy. Their drive and dedication to support a specific goal or ideal became a consuming passion to do good.

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Teacher selection of a biography representative of an individual who shows dedication and accomplishment.

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### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Think of a person you know who may be considered a dedicated or zealous individual. What other characteristics do they possess? How have their accomplishments effected, for example their sport, their career, their family, their community?

### BOOKS TO READ:

Select historical, biographical accounts of the persons mentioned above or other persons who have made significant positive contributions.

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Drive, fortitude and endurance prepared and mark greatness."