



PROMOTING CHARACTER THROUGH GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

The games and activities included in the book have been prepared for use by teachers in the implementation of a character education initiative whether in the school environment or youth-based program. These activities are not written for a specific age group of students; rather with modification they could be used with all ages of children and young adults. They even can be used when working with adults.

Mix-Pair-Discuss

Each person gets a different Question Card. They get out of their seats and mix around the room. They pair up with a partner. One partner reads his or her Question Card and the other answers. Then they switch roles. When done they trade cards and find a new partner. The process is repeated for a predetermined amount of time. The rule is students cannot pair up with the same partner twice.

Building a Better Me

Learning Objective: To develop and maintain a positive attitude. Everyone has problems and adversity can win if we let it. The trick is to think optimistically.

Instructions:

- Choose one person to come forward.
- Ask the participant to hold out his or her arm straight to the side and resist as the leader tries to push down on it. The challenge is for the participant to not let the leader push the arm down.
- Now tell the participant to look at the rest of the group and say 10 times in a row, "I am a bad person." Have the others give a response as to what they think of the individual. I.e. Uncaring words.
- When this is over, ask the participant to again hold his or her arm out to the side and to resist as the leader pushes down on it. You will find that the arm easily pushes down to his or her side.
- Ask the group what happened?
- Now have the person say, "I am a good person" 10 times. The rest of the group says positive things.
- At the end of the 10 times ask the person to once again extend his or her arm and resist while the leader pushes down on it.

Processing

As a group, complete these questions:

1. I am thankful for my alarm that goes off early each morning because ...
2. I am thank for the pile of homework I have each night because ...
3. I am thankful for aching and tired muscles at the end of the day because ...

4. I am thankful for the responsibilities I have at home because ...
5. I am thankful for the opportunities I have each day to ...
6. I am thankful that I can ...
7. I am thankful that I know when facing a difficult decision I am able to ...

Discussion

- What did you do in this activity to overcome everyday obstacles or failure?
- How does this approach help overcome what can be perceived as obstacles or failures?
- Does this mean you are supposed to close your eyes to problems and obstacles in your life? Explain.
- How does one go about making good decisions?
- Michael Levine says, “A pessimist is someone who complains about the noise when opportunity knocks.” What’s the difference between a pessimist and an optimist? Which one – a pessimist or an optimist – succeeds more often? Why?

Back Draw

Learning Objective: This activity is designed for the participants to experience how a message may change as it goes from person to person. The emphasis in the processing is this isn’t just informal communication, but also communication of any kind including verbal sharing, announcements, project assignments and monitoring, etc.

Materials: 4 pieces of paper for each small group and a marker. A sheet with the following drawings:

Face
Sun and moon
Star
Two Triangles
House

Instructions

- Have groups of 6-8 sit in a line facing one direction—front to back (so they can “draw” on the person’s back in front of them).
- Give the person at the front of the line a piece of blank paper and a marker
- A simple drawing is shown only to the person at the back of each line.
- Instruct the participants that the person in the back will look at the drawing and will use their finger to “draw” what they saw on the next person’s back. Each person passes it on by drawing what he or she felt on their back with their finger on the back in front of them.
- When it gets to the front person, he/she draws it on the paper.
- Do a second drawing the same way, followed by the third and then finally the house as the final drawing
- Compare the drawings with the original

Process and Reflection

What? (What did you do?) Received an image and passed it on the way you perceived it

So What? (How did it feel, what did you observe, etc.?)

- So what happened? How did your group do with keeping the message correct all the way through? What happened when the message was easy? When it got more complicated?
- What was your confidence level that you perceived the message correctly and passed it on correctly?
- Where was the most responsibility in this activity?

Now What? (How does this apply to your everyday life?)

- How is this activity related to communication?
- What are the kinds of things you need to communicate?
- Often we are in a position to pass on information that we were given from someone else. How did it feel to have to pass on something you weren't sure was accurate? What was your commitment to doing your best to do it correctly?
- Ask them to relate this activity to the choice of whether or not to share something you hear. (i.e. gossip) How did the message change? Discuss the importance of respect and responsibility in communication and the danger of gossip.
- Knowing that messages change through multiple people and that the more complicated the message the more likely it will not be shared correctly, what are some strategies that you could use when you need to communicate something?

Conclusion

Drawing Message Learned



Face drawing – keep it simple

Star – Lines of communication are straight

Two triangles – Two-way communication is best

House Drawing – What we say can be complicated and must be made as clear as possible

Tossing Balloon

Learning Objective: The purpose of this activity is to build consciousness and commitment to the truth while emphasizing the energy it takes to keep a lie going and the vulnerability of lies.

CAUTION--PRIOR TO DOING THIS ACTIVITY---For **safety** reasons it is important to know if you have participants with latex allergies. If so, you need to switch activities.

Materials: One medium to large sized balloon for each participant

Instructions:

- Give participants a balloon and instruct them to blow up and tie off the balloon.
- Ask all participants to take their balloon and stand in a circle or scattered within the circle in the middle of the room.
- Tell them their balloon represents a lie.

- Tell them that when you say “go” they are going to toss their balloons in the air toward the center of the room and try to keep theirs in the air. If their balloon touches the ground, their lie has been discovered and they are “out”.
- You may end the activity here and go to the processing questions or have those that were left still keeping their balloons in the air add 2-3 more balloons each to their effort to keep them all going and not touch the floor.

Processing

What? (What did you do?) Tried to keep the “lie” going

So What? (How did it feel, what did you observe, etc.?)

- What was it like trying to keep your “lie” going?
- What strategies did you use to keep your lie going? Did any of you have someone get in the way of you keeping your “lie” aloft? How did that feel? Did it result in your “lie” hitting the floor or did you try to keep away from them? Did anyone purposefully try to get your “lie” to hit the floor?
- Did any of you simply let your balloon fall to get out of the activity? Why?

Now What? (How does the activity apply to your everyday life?)

- Write three things you have learned about trustworthiness from this activity?
- Describe how this activity relates to your life at home, school, work, with your friends.
- Ask them how when an untruth is discovered it will influence the perception of others about your worthiness of trust.
- Ask them if they believe there are different “levels” of lies—are some worse than others? Why or why not? Ask them if they did something dishonest that was unlikely to be discovered for years how that would feel? What if it was never discovered? What if it was discovered but years later? How would that influence the perception of others? How would it influence the perception of yourself?
- Ask them if an omission or misdirection is considered dishonest. Emphasize that a lie of omission—“well I didn’t really say that was what had happened”—is still a lie. Example: I told my parents we’re going to the library to study—I just didn’t tell them we all met there and then went to a friend’s house to party. Or “I told my supervisor I had the project completed because I knew I would have it done by morning.”

Playing Card Hierarchy

Learning Objective - Raise consciousness of respect.

Materials:

- Deck of playing cards
- 4 sheets of paper (8½” x 11”) - Make 4 “signs” from the sheets of paper to represent the four hierarchy groups. Label each sign as follows:
 - A, K, Q, J
 - 10, 9, 8
 - 7, 6, 5
 - 4, 3, 2

- Place the signs around the room. Remove cards from the deck equal to the number of participants with roughly the same number of cards for each of the four groups.

Instructions:

- Don't tell the group the intent of the activity; just ask them to participate.
- Pass out the cards face down (one to each participant) and tell them not to turn them over. Be sure not to allocate a low card to anyone who is perceived by others or themselves as being a low card in real life.
- Say: "Don't look at your card. Even when I signal the end of the activity, don't look at your card until I say so. When I say 'Go,' place your card on your forehead so others can see it. The higher your card is, the more "popular" you are. Everyone must treat and react to others based on their cards. For example, if someone is a King, show that you want to hang out with him or her. That person must in turn respond to you based on your card.
- "When I say 'Go,' mingle and ask people if they want to have lunch or do something with you this weekend. Respond verbally and non-verbally based on the person's card only. When you find people you want to be with and who want to be with you, stay with them."
- When everyone's reorganized, say, "Now look at your card. Was it what you thought it was?"

Process and Reflection

What? (What did you do?) Mingled and responded based on the cards.

So what? (How did it feel, what did you observe, etc.?)

- How many questions did it take before you knew which group you were in?
- What verbal responses did you get?
- What non-verbal responses did you get?
- Ask each of the four groups: "How does it feel to be in your group?" Say that it isn't always easy – even being in the "popular" group. The youths will tell you about this.
- How does this activity relate to respect?

Now what? (How does the activity apply to your everyday life?)

- How is this activity similar to what happens in a school or community?
- Why do such groups form? Where do these judgments come from?
- Is that a good thing? Why or why not?
- How do such judgments show disrespect and prevent people from getting to know others?
- Have you ever wrongfully judged someone? Has someone ever wrongfully judged you?
- If you don't like someone or don't want to spend time with him or her, is there a way to get that across respectfully?
- In what ways might you build respect between various cliques?

Gear Simulation Activity

Learning Objective: What works in building relationships

Materials:

- For groups of 15, 24 or 35

- For a group of 35 - Three scraps of paper with the number 3 written on it, five scraps with the number 5 on it, seven scraps with the number 7 on it, nine scraps with the number 9 on it, and eleven scraps with the number 11 on it. If you only have 24 in the class, do not do 11 scraps with the number 11.
- Gears Drawing handout

Instructions:

Show the Gears Drawing handout and tell them: “Just as well-functioning gears keep machinery going, goodwill and friendships keep our schools, communities, and country going. To examine how this works and to think about how we can design organizations we lead to function smoothly, each of you will become a tooth on a gear.”

- Distribute the scraps of paper and ask participants to form groups according to the number on their paper.
- Ask all the 3’s to form a tight circle by holding hands facing outward with their arms parallel to the floor. Tell them their arms are the teeth on the gear.
- Tell the 5’s to form a circle in the same way next to the 3’s in such a way that the two circles will interlock and touch at only one single point when they rotate. In that way, when one gear moves, it will turn the other.
- Have the 7’s form their circle and interlock with the 5s. Have the 9’s circle and interlock with the 7’s, and have the 11’s circle and interlock with the 9’s.
- Once they’re all lined up interlocking at one point with one or more circles, have the 3’s start moving very slowly. This should start a chain reaction where all the gears will begin moving.
- Once they’re successfully moving at a slow pace, have the 3’s speed up.
- Then say: “Everyone stop! Reverse and go in the opposite direction.”
- Let them try this 3-4 times.

Process and Reflection

What? (What did you do?) Created a series of interlocking gears.

So What? (How did it feel, what did you observe, etc.?)

- What worked well?
- What could have been improved?
- What did you see happening – especially when you sped up or changed direction?
- Who was the leader in this activity? (They may say you or the 3’s. Probe more. Ask if there was a leader in each gear. Did that leadership shift during the course of the activity?)

Now What? (How does the activity apply to your everyday life?)

- How does this activity apply to leading an organization?
- What happens if one gear, or one tooth on a gear, isn’t paying attention or isn’t doing its share to help the whole?
- What happens when people don’t take responsibility for their role in the overall effort? (Discuss how groups sometimes compensate for such individuals so much that the person eventually doesn’t need to be responsible. Is this a good thing? What are the alternatives?)
- What are strategies you can do to help your classroom, school or organization work together more smoothly?

Pepper Experiment

Learning Objective: What we say and do makes a difference

Materials: Bowls half full of water, small bags of pepper, sugar, and pieces of soap. Dish soap and a q-tip can be used in place of the soap

Instructions:

- For preparation, put a small bowl half full of water on each table, a bag of pepper, a bag of sugar, and a piece of soap.
- Ask participants to sprinkle the pepper liberally on the water. The pepper represents all the people with whom you interact – family, friends, teachers, coworkers, etc. How we get along with these people depends on what we do and say when we are with them. Talk about the power of words and actions and how they can be respectful or hurtful, rude, or unkind.
- The soap represents the hurtful, rude words. Ask participants to hold the soap in the middle of the pepper. The soap will repel the pepper and make it move to the sides of the bowl. Relate this illustration to what happens in life with people to whom we are hurtful or unkind.
- Next have participants pour the sugar in the center of the water. The pepper will move towards the sugar. Again, relate this to real life and how others react when we are kind.

Process and Reflection

What? – Used pepper, soap and sugar to represent interactions that occur when dealing with others.

So What?

- What is said that can be rude, demeaning, hurtful or uncaring?
- What is the significance of the pepper? Soap? Sugar?
- “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Is this true?
- Why do some flakes of pepper remain on the outer edge of the bowl? What does that represent?

Now What?

- What happens in life with people to whom we are hurtful or unkind?
- What conclusions can you draw from this activity?

Explanation:

The pepper floats on the surface of the water due to the high surface tension that hydrogen bonds have in water molecules. The bar of soap breaks those hydrogen bonds very easily and as a result the pepper "moves away" due to the fact it is still on the surface of the water molecules. Hydrogen bonds break very easily as well as reform easily, which is why the soap can only be added to the water for a few seconds for this to work because the hydrogen bonds will re-bond together.

Paper Heart

Learning Objective: What we say can have an impact on others.

Materials: Sheet of red construction paper cut into the shape of a heart.

Instructions:

- Hold up a large red construction paper heart.

- Ask participants to share words they have heard said which are hurtful and unkind. As each word or phrase is shared, fold down a piece of the heart until it is folded into a small shape. This is how we feel when we have been hurt.
- Then ask participants to share words that might be said that are kind and encouraging. As each is shared, unfold a piece of the heart until it is back in shape. Reiterate that we can say encouraging things that make others feel better.
- Ask them what they still see on the heart – the wrinkles or scars are left. Even if we say we are sorry, we can still leave lasting scars with hurtful words.
- Then ask the participants to think of a teacher in their own education that was kind and nurturing. Think of how it felt to be in that person's room. Then think of a teacher they were pretty sure didn't care about them. How did it feel to be in that teacher's room?
- Share the quote, "They may not remember what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel." – Carl Buehler

Processing

- How do you feel when someone says hurtful or unkind things to you?
- What are the most uncaring words that you have ever heard?
- What are the most caring words you have heard someone say?
- Do you remember what others say? Why or why not?

Say It and Do It

Learning Objective: Understand importance of modeling

Instructions

Have the entire group stand up and face you. Explain that you're going to point your arms in one direction and they're to copy you by pointing their arms in the same direction, calling out the direction they're pointing.

- You can only do four directions. You can point your arms up, down, left, or right. Demonstrate this and have the participants copy you, calling out each direction. Be sure they understand that the directions they move and call out are how *they* see them, not how you see them. That means while you're pointing your arms left, they'll be pointing right.
- Move your arms to one of the four positions and wait for them to move and call out the direction. Repeat this several times.
- Stop and explain that you're now changing the assignment. This time you want them to move their arms the same direction as you but to call out the opposite direction. For example, as you move your arms down, they must move their arms down but call out "Up."
- For the third round, they're to call out the direction your arms move, but they're to move their arms in the opposite direction. For example as you put your arms up, they should say "Up" but move their arms down.
- Finally, start from the beginning again, but this time if they make a mistake, they have to sit down. See how many remain after each round. The additional pressure of having a consequence for making a mistake closely relates to the pressure of how our character affects our choices.

Process and Reflection

What? (What did you do?) Mimicked and called out leader's movements, which became progressively harder.

- How hard was it to move your arms and call out the same direction I was pointing?
- How hard was it to say the correct direction and move your arms in the opposite direction?
- How hard was it to say the opposite direction and move your arms in the correct direction?
- Why was this hard to do?

So What? (How did it feel, what did you observe, etc.?)

- How did the change make you feel when we added the rule about being out if you made a mistake? Did you feel any added pressure?
- How hard is it for you to say one thing but think another?
- How hard is to act one way when you feel another?
- What does this have to do with one's character?
- How does this apply to making decisions?

Now What? (How does the activity apply to your everyday life?)

- Can we act differently from what we believe? Explain.
- How do our values dictate our behavior?
- How does having conflicting thoughts or messages affect our ability to make good decisions?

\$1 or 100 pennies

Learning Objective: To demonstrate what is meant the value of respect.

Materials: A one dollar bill and 100 pennies

Instructions

Show a dollar bill and 100 pennies. Divide chart paper in half, using the heading of "Same" on one side and "Different" on the other. Ask the class to brainstorm ways in which the dollar bill and 100 pennies are different and ways they are the same. Even though they are different in many ways, what is true of the dollar bill and the pennies? They are equal in value. Make the comparison to people. Even though we are different in many ways, we are all of equal value or worth.

Processing

- Are there more differences or similarities in the people we meet?
- What does this activity say as to how we should treat others we associate with or come in contact with on a daily basis?
- Why is it hard to treat everyone as if they have the same worth?
- Why is it important that we do?

Filling the Jar

Learning Objective: To be reminded of the need to prioritize responsibilities before fun.

Materials: A clean empty jar; a container with enough gold balls or ping pong balls to fill the jar to the top; a container with enough uncooked rice to fill the jar once the balls are inside.

Instructions:

Before you begin this activity, fill a jar to the top with plastic golf balls or ping-pong balls. Pour rice over the balls, filling in all the gaps to the top. Empty the jar and separate the rice and balls into two containers.

Begin by stating that the jar represents the amount of time you have available in a day. The balls represent responsibilities or duties and the rice represents the fun things they want to do.

If one chooses to do the things he/she wants to do, all the rice is dumped in the jar. Then one realizes the day is mostly over and tries to add the balls or responsibilities. It isn't long before the day is full and responsibilities have not been done. Then dump everything back out and suggest an alternative scenario.

Choose to take care of responsibilities first, and then do the things one wants to do. As the balls are put in first and then the rice is added, everything fits.

Now What?

To make things concrete for younger students, have them suggest what responsibilities some of the balls represent. (e.g. doing homework, walking the dog, practicing the piano) and what some of the rice could represent (e.g. playing a video game, talking on the phone, going to the movies).'

Oh What a Tangled Web We Weave

Learning Objective: Learn the importance of telling the truth

Materials: Ball of yarn

Instructions:

- Arrange ahead of time to have a student help you with this demonstration. Secretly ask the child to give false answers to each question that you ask. This will begin after he/she has taken a seat in a chair front of the class.
- Ask your seated child a simple question such as, "Why didn't you get your homework done for today?" As she answers with a lie, such as the dog ate my homework, wrap a long string of yarn around her once.
- Then ask a follow-up question based on her reply, such as "How did the dog get your homework?" As she makes up another answer, wrap the yarn around her again.
- Continue to ask follow-up questions until she is entangled in a web of yarn. After the class has observed the situation, explain that you asked this person to make up answers to all your questions (to lie).

Process and Reflection

So What?

- Ask them if they can see what telling lies can do to someone. Emphasize how one lie usually leads to another and how quickly we can become trapped and embarrassed by lie
- Ask them what will be experienced by the person who always tells the truth (*not having to what your last lie was or how to cover it up, peace of mind, and feeling good about oneself.*)

Now What?

- Ask the students to tell about a time when they were caught in a lie and had to tell another lie in order to cover it up.
- Ask why it is important for us to always tell the truth (*trust, respect, because it's the right thing to do.*)

The Honest Mouth

Materials: Black licorice

Instructions

Ask the students if anyone knows what happens when you eat black licorice? (*Put a piece in your mouth. You may want to put extra black food coloring on your piece before visiting the classroom; this will enhance the effect.*) A mouth that has eaten black licorice turns black. (*After chewing, open your mouth to show the result.*)

Yuck! Not only does your tongue look horrible, but soon your teeth and even your lips get black. It takes a long time before your mouth returns to its normal color. Dishonesty has a lasting effect on you, just like the black licorice. Like licorice that leaves our mouths black for a long time, we can see the results of telling lies long after we've told them. Others will lose their trust in us, privileges will be taken away, and friendships will be lost. Telling lies will leave a black ugly mark on you--just like the black licorice. Remember: It's always best to be honest and true, don't let the stain of dishonesty leave its mark on you.

Process and Reflection

- What does our mouth look like after eating the black licorice?
- Finish the sentence, "It will take a long time before ..."
- What does this say about being dishonest?
- What do others think of us when a lie is discovered?
- How many times can one lie to you before you would consider them a liar?

The Tower of Flour

Materials:

Flour, dime, hard plastic cup, newspaper, butter knife, paper plate

Instructions:

Begin by spreading newspaper on a table. Place the dime in the center of the bottom of the plastic cup. Scoop flour into the glass. Pile it to the brim and press down firmly to make it compact. Place the paper plate on top of the glass and turn them over together on the newspaper. Tap the glass gently, and carefully lift it off. The flour will remain standing in the shape of the glass with the dime on top.

Process and Reflection

- Explain that the dime represents the trait *honesty*.
- Next, take the knife and carefully slice off the edge of the "flour tower" being careful not to cut too deeply. This represents what happened when we tell lies. Our reputation is weakened. Others will not trust or respect us, and eventually the tower of trust falls.
- Notice how each time more flour is removed the dime's position becomes more precarious.
- Continue until the dime drops in.

The Cover Up

Materials: Bucket or large cooking pot (about 8 inches across), one quarter, and enough pennies for each student to have one.

Instructions:

Fill the bucket with 6 – 8 inches of water and put the quarter at the bottom in the center. Begin by saying that telling a lie may seem like a simple way out of a problem. However, usually when we tell a lie we end up telling even more lies in order to cover up the first lie. (*Give an example, either made up or from your own personal experience.*) Explain to the students that their challenge is to cover up the quarter by using a penny. Have students come up one at a time and try to drop their penny (**from at least 2 inches above the water**) into the bucket and try to cover up the quarter.

Process and Reflection

- How well did the penny cover the quarter?
- How many actually landed on the quarter?
- How does this activity compare to trying to cover up a lie that we told?
- Does someone have to tell more lies to cover up the first lie?
- What happens when you are caught lying?
- How easy is it for others to trust you again?
- Why is telling the truth easier than lying even if the truth may get you in trouble?

Strengths and Talents

Baking a Cake- Talents are like ingredients for baking a cake. The cake itself is a strength and the ingredients are talents. If you walked into a room full of all of the ingredients necessary to make a cake and randomly picked ingredients, chances are your cake is not going to be very good. Maybe a 1 in 1000 chance that you will hit a near perfect cake your first time. Your talents are the ingredients in your pantry. Look at your ingredients (talents) and do what you can from there to make the best cake (strengths) you can make.

Instructions:

Begin by asking participants to write their strengths. Give 1 minute to do this.

After they have completed writing their 5 strengths in the left hand column, ask them to use their opposite hand to write the same strengths on each line in the right hand column.

Give them 1 minute again to do this quickly.

Process and Reflection

How many of you finished the first list?

How many of you finished the second list?

Is one column easier to read than the other?

What is the point of this exercise? Why did we do this?

Make the point here that writing is a talent that we have practiced for years and using one hand. We are better at writing with the dominant hand because of practice.

Science says that we will never be as good at writing with our non-dominant hand. We can attempt to make this weakness a strength, but the best it would ever be was mediocre.

Gotcha

Learning Outcomes: Ice breaker, fun, get to know each other

Equipment: Open space

Form two circles – one inner, one outer of approximately the same size

Instructions:

- Participants stand in a circle, arms out to the side. Left hand palm up, right index finger pointing down and touching on neighbor's outstretched palm.
- I am going to say a number of words "When I say the word "CHARACTER" do two things.... grab the finger in your left hand, and prevent your right finger from being grabbed... Let's practice I'll count 1 – 2 – 3 and then I will say the CHARACTER. Okay, let's practice.
- 1- 2- Th.... (make it sound like you are saying three) then say "Think about this." Three! -- CHARACTER (how many moved on three?) The trick is dramatizing the "Go" word to build up of suspense, and most will jump the gun, adding to the fun.
- "Okay this time I won't count to three, instead I will say different words but you have to listen – don't go until I say CHARACTER. Okay, ready? -- CHARACTER!"
- Let's do it again: Ready? Ethics Honesty Respect CHARACTER!"
- "Okay you have to listen carefully. Ready? Responsibility Citizenship Respect Caring CHARACTER!"
- "One last time but this time wait until you hear the word Kindness. Ready: Honesty Fairness Caring Character Kindness".

Process and Reflection

- Have students discuss how the activity was fun and what they thought was important about the activity.
- Safety: There are minimal safety concerns with this activity. One would be not to try and "rip" the other person's finger off and just to be careful as always.
- Tips and comments: For this activity there are some different variations that can be done to enhance the level of the activity and change it up a bit. One would be to have the students switch between which hands they grab with and which hands they pull with. The other would be to have them do it palms up with the finger pointing down on top of the palm. Each of these adds a little bit of a new element to the activity.

Link Up

- One person stands and talks about himself/herself.
- When someone in the group has something in common with something they've said, they get up and link arms with the person speaking person. Only one person at a time.
- They declare the thing that they had in common and then begin talking about themselves until someone else comes up with something in common with them.
- The activity continues until all group members are "Linked Up."

Pipe Cleaner Partner

- Group members pair up to introduce themselves to each other.
- Each person forms a pipe cleaner into a shape that represents what the other person has told them. Each person introduces partner and pipe cleaner to the group.

EXTENSION:

Each member of the group gets one pipe cleaner. They form a shape which represents what they've been up to lately. The shape can be literal or abstract. As they introduce themselves to the group, they share their symbol.

Saying Something Nice

Learning Objective: This activity supports social and emotional development, as well as providing positive guidance.

Materials:

- A ball of thick white yarn
- A group of ten children or more

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY:

Ask the kids if they think people can spin webs like spiders. This question usually stirs up the curiosity, and next comes the rules of the game.

ACTIVITY:

- Introduce the activity with the above question and suggest that we should try to spin a web as a group
- Join group in a big circle (sitting down) and show them the white yarn.
- Explain that you will begin spinning the web by holding the end of the yarn ball tightly in your lap and then picking a friend to toss the remaining ball to.
- "I pick John to help spin our web".
- When John catches it, share something you like about him (i.e., "I like how John shares with his friends").
- Remind John to hold the yarn string tight in this lap, as he picks the next friend to toss the ball of yarn to.
- The activity proceeds until the ball is complete, and the number of times a child is picked doesn't matter, unless of course the circle has gone through everyone (with teacher assistance, "I think Sally would like to join our web").
- It's fun to see how huge your life size web has become. Sometimes it's fun to see if the group can stand up together without getting tangled in it too!

Using Movies or Current Event Clips to Teach Character

Movies or DVD clips can be a great teaching tool for teachers. Instead of being space filler, a movie can reach students in a way a class lecture can't. With so many movies available to the public, you will find a film to fit any subject or curriculum. If followed by an interactive group discussion, students will gain valuable insight in seeing character traits in action and learn how effective decisions are made.

1. Choose a movie or DVD clip that is appropriate and fits the curriculum.
2. Choose a clip that connects to a specific character trait.
3. Discuss the movie or DVD clip with the class. Review the basic ideas of the movie and point out the ideas that apply to the class.
4. Clips from films or current events are used to help teachers and students discuss character issues in a meaningful way and reflect on how actions affect the outcomes. It is a valuable for helping students learn how to make better decisions in their own lives.

MIX-PAIR-DISCUSS CARDS (From Activity #1)

Character

Who is your hero? What traits or qualities does he or she have that you admire most?

Character

How would you define the word "character"?

Character

What character trait do you value most? Why?

Character

What does the following quote mean: "Stand for what's right, even when you stand alone?"

Character

Character is who you are and what you do when no one else is looking. Do you agree with this quote? Why or why not?

Character

What are the advantages of living a life of good character?

Character

Describe a person lacking good character.

Character

What events and experiences have shaped your character? Give specific examples.

Integrity

To have integrity, you must be true to what you believe. What do you believe in? Use the following sentence to describe three things you believe in: "I believe in _____ because...."

Integrity

When we do something we know is wrong, we are acting without integrity. Describe one time you acted without integrity. What would have been the right thing to do?

Integrity

You are in the toy store and really want to buy a special gift for your brother. You don't have the money to buy it and you know it's not right to steal. But you know you can put it in your pocket and no one would know. Do you steal it?

Integrity

What does it mean to practice what you preach? Do you? Give one specific example.

Integrity

Are there ever situations where it is best to act against your own values? Explain.

Integrity

Integrity is living up to your own moral standards. You know someone who lies, cheats and steals but doesn't have a problem behaving that way. Does he or she have integrity? Why or why not?

Integrity

Integrity is acting consistently with your beliefs and values. How do you know your own beliefs and values?

Fairness

Is life fair? Describe why or why not.

Fairness

Three students in the class want to use the class computer at the same time to work on different projects. What would be a fair solution?

Responsibility

Complete the following sentence. "Responsibility is ..."

Responsibility

With rights come responsibilities. What does this mean?

Responsibility

On a scale of 1 to 10, how responsible would you say you are?

Responsibility

You join a soccer team. You practice every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Wednesday you don't feel like going to practice. Do you have a responsibility to go?

Responsibility

If you made a deal with someone and they did not hold up their end of the bargain, would you? Why or why not?

Responsibility

Can we ever really be responsible for what someone else does? Explain.

Responsibility

What is your greatest responsibility? Explain why it's so important?

Respect

What does it mean to treat someone with respect? What things do you do? What things do you say?

Respect

The best way to earn respect is to treat others with respect. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position.

Respect

If someone doesn't treat you with the respect you deserve, would you treat him or her with respect? Why or why not?

Respect

What would happen if no one respected anyone else?

Respect

Should you treat everyone with equal respect or should you give more respect to some? Explain.

Respect

What is self-respect? Do you have a lot or a little self-respect? How do you show your self-respect?

Respect

Do you expect people to treat you with respect? What do you expect of strangers you meet?

Respect

Much of the conflict and violence we see today is from the simple lack of respect. How can we teach people to be more respectful of one another?

Respect

Who do you respect most? What are the reasons you respect him or her most?

Kindness

Complete the following sentence. "Kindness is..."

Kindness

Some people are very compassionate toward others. Some people don't care (apathetic) about others. Some people are downright mean toward others. What makes people treat others the way they do?

Caring

John Donne, the English poet wrote, "No man is an island." What do you think he meant?

Kindness

The more you give, the more you receive. Do you think this is possible? If so, how?

Kindness

People show they care in different ways. Some do things for others. Some say nice things. Some give gifts. Some have positive thoughts. In your opinion, what are the best ways to show you care?

Kindness

If you were a parent and wanted to teach your daughter about the importance of seeing things through someone else's eyes, what would you do or say?

Honesty/Trust

Your grandma knits you a sweater for your birthday. You open your gift and think the sweater is ugly. Do you say you like it to spare her feelings or do you tell her the truth?

Honesty/Trust

You have a bike that you want to sell. You put an ad in the newspaper and a stranger comes to your house to look at it. She asks, "Is there anything wrong with the bike?" The frame has a small crack in it, but she didn't notice. Do you tell her about the crack even if it means she may not buy the bike? Why or why not?

Honesty/Trust

Is lying bad? Always? Sometimes? Explain.

Honesty/Trust

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your own trustworthiness? Explain your rating.

Honesty/Trust

Imagine there was a lying alarm. It was a bracelet that flashed and made buzzing sounds when someone told a lie. If such an alarm existed, would you vote to require everyone to wear one? Why or why not?

Honesty/Trust

What positive benefits come from telling the truth? For the truth teller? For others?

Honesty/Trust

Benjamin Franklin said, "Half the truth is often a great lie." What do you think he meant?