



Be Responsible

Say and do the right thing at the right time. Be accountable!

- Be reliable and dependable; when you agree to do something, do it.
- Take care of your own business. Don't make others do what you are supposed to do.
- Take responsibility for your actions; don't make excuses or blame others.
- Use your head; think before you act; imagine the consequences.

HOW TO DECIDE

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Some decisions you make aren't terribly important. For example, you might decide to have chocolate ice cream instead of vanilla. But other decisions may involve a choice between right and wrong, and sometimes it's not easy to know what to do. Whenever you aren't sure what's the right thing to do, stop and think! Ask yourself these questions:

- What does my conscience—that "little voice" inside my head—say about it?
- Could it hurt anyone—including me?
- Is it fair?
- Would it violate the Golden Rule? (How would I feel if somebody did it to me?)
- Have I ever been told that it's wrong?
- Deep down how do I feel about it?
- How will I feel about myself later if I do it?

- What would adults I respect say about it?

If you still can't decide, talk it over with someone you trust and respect.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Have you ever heard of the Golden Rule? Who can recite it and say what it means?

What's wrong with "finders keepers, losers weepers"?

Have you ever really wanted to do something, but deep down you felt it wasn't right? How did you decide what to do?

How often do you think about whether something is right or wrong before you decide to do it?

Why do people sometimes do the right thing even when it's not as easy or as much fun as something else?

When you're faced with a choice between right and wrong, what influences your decision?

What would happen if nobody cared about doing the right thing?

How do you know when something you might do is right or wrong?

ACTIVITIES

Divide the class into small groups. Give each group one of the following situations to role play. In each role play half the group wants to do the wrong thing and the other half wants to do the right thing. Each half tries to give strong reasons for their side. Discuss the results in class.

Situations:

— You pass an empty old house. In front of it there's a "No Trespassing" sign. But the front door is open. You really want to go in and see what's there. No one is around. What do you do?

— A group of kids who you think are really cool are picking on another kid. They want you to join them, and they say you're a nerd if you don't. You don't want to be left out, but you think picking on the other kid is unfair. What do you do?

— You're walking home from school, and you're really hungry because you forgot to bring your lunch that day. You pass by a fruit stand, and the fruit looks so good you can almost taste it. "They'll never miss just one apple," you think to yourself. And no one is looking. What do you do?

— Your best friend asks you to help him cheat on a test. He's never done it before and he promises he'll never do it again. What do you do?

Encourage the children to make up their own situations, and continue the role plays.

WRITING

Write about a time when someone tried to get you to do something wrong. What did you say or do? How did you know whether it was right or wrong?

Write about someone you admire for doing the right thing in a difficult situation. Describe what you admire about this person.

Write at least five things you can say to yourself when you're tempted to do something wrong. Post them near your bed so you can read them from time to time.

Write a short story about someone who did the right thing when friends wanted him or her to do the opposite.

Write about a time when someone helped you do the right thing. Or: write a letter to that person thanking him or her for helping you.

Write a letter to someone in the news who did something that you don't think was right. Say why you don't think it was right, and why you think the person is setting a bad example for kids your age. Mail the letter.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

To enlist the involvement of parents, make copies of the "For Parents" block (see below) and send them home with the children. Tell the children to discuss the video with their parents, and to perform the following activities.

1. Take home your list of ways to decide what's the right thing to do (see the top block in this column). Discuss it with your parents or other adult family members. Ask them if they have anything to add.

2. Watch a television program with your family. Afterward, have a family discussion about the way characters in the program behaved. Can you find examples of characters either doing the right thing or not doing the right thing? What should any of the characters have done differently? Why?
3. For a week keep a daily record of choices you make that involve deciding between right and wrong. How do you feel about the choices you made? How could you do better?
4. Ask family members to tell you about a time when either they did the right thing and are really glad they did, or didn't do the right thing and are sorry about it. What would have resulted if they had made the opposite choice?

Note to the teacher or group leader: It might be a good idea to think of some way for the children to share the outcomes of these activities with each other. Perhaps they could give written or oral reports or discuss their experiences in small groups.

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LITERATURE IDEAS

Responsibility

- Abolafia, Yossi.. **Harry in Trouble.**
- Brown, Marc.**Arthur's Pet Business**
- Dahlstedt. **The Terrible Wave**
- Day, A. **Frank and Ernest.**
- Gardiner, John. **Stone Fox**
- Green, Norma. **The Hole in the Dike**
- Hoban, Lillian. **Awful Thursday**
- Wells, Rosemary. **Fritz and the Mess Fairy**

