

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Purpose	2
Levels of Faculty Involvement	3
Comments from Teachers	4
Parental and Community Involvement	5
Suggested Letter to Parents	6
Honesty	7
<i>Learning About Honesty</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Honesty	8
Honesty in Other Languages	9
Discussion Questions	10
<i>Understanding Honesty</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	11
Proverbs and Maxims	17
<i>Embracing Honesty</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	18
Put Honesty into Action	19
Community Service Ideas	19
Cooperation	21
<i>Learning About Cooperation</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Cooperation	22
Cooperation in Other Languages	23
Discussion Questions	24
<i>Understanding Cooperation</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	25
Proverbs and Maxims	33
<i>Embracing Cooperation</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	34
Put Cooperation into Action	35
Community Service Ideas	35

Humility	37
<i>Learning About Humility</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Humility	38
Humility in Other Languages	39
Discussion Questions	40
<i>Understanding Humility</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	41
Proverbs and Maxims	51
<i>Embracing Humility</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	52
Put Humility into Action	54
Community Service Ideas	54
 Peace	 55
<i>Learning About Peace</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Peace	56
Peace in Other Languages	57
Discussion Questions	58
<i>Understanding Peace</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	59
Proverbs and Maxims	65
<i>Embracing Peace</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	66
Put Peace into Action	67
Community Service Ideas	67
 Patience	 69
<i>Learning About Patience</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Patience	70
Patience in Other Languages	71
Discussion Questions	72
<i>Understanding Patience</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	73
Proverbs and Maxims	81
<i>Embracing Patience</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	82
Put Patience into Action	83
Community Service Ideas	84

Courage	85
<i>Learning About Courage</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Courage	86
Courage in Other Languages	87
Discussion Questions	88
<i>Understanding Courage</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	89
Proverbs and Maxims	95
<i>Embracing Courage</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	96
Put Courage into Action	97
Community Service Ideas	97
Creativity	99
<i>Learning About Creativity</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Creativity	100
Creativity in Other Languages	101
Discussion Questions	102
<i>Understanding Creativity</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	103
Proverbs and Maxims	109
<i>Embracing Creativity</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	110
Put Creativity into Action	111
Community Service Ideas	111
Environmental Awareness	113
<i>Learning About Environmental Awareness</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Environmental Awareness	114
Environmental Awareness in Other Languages	115
Discussion Questions	116
<i>Understanding Environmental Awareness</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	117
Proverbs and Maxims	125
<i>Embracing Environmental Awareness</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	126
Put Environmental Awareness into Action	127
Community Service Ideas	127

Freedom	129
<i>Learning About Freedom</i>	
Suggested Activity Calendar for Embracing Freedom	130
Freedom in Other Languages	131
Discussion Questions	132
<i>Understanding Freedom</i>	
Stories and Thoughts from Spiritual Traditions	133
Proverbs and Maxims	137
<i>Embracing Freedom</i>	
Heroes and Heroines	138
Put Freedom into Action	139
Community Service Ideas	139
Appendix	
Thematic Booklist	140
Bibliography	145

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five hundred years ago, Socrates defined education as helping students gain both knowledge and virtue, to become both smart and good. In recent decades, schools sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously have lost their focus on this historic mission. Now, however, educators are being called back to help children gain the virtues, the embedded habits, which constitute good character. Often those calling for character education are parents. Increasingly, they are politicians articulating the will of worried citizens. A few scholars have recognised the current lack in our schools and have become champions for character education. While these voices have been articulate in pointing out the problems of a value-neutral school or a school that rejects responsibility for character formation, these voices are limited. They lack the knowledge of and experience with the instructional issues surrounding this topic. They do not speak to the real world of schools. The authors of this book possess that knowledge and experience.

John Heidel and Marion Lyman-Mersereau have written a book that takes character education to a new level, a level that enables teachers and administrators to go beyond the abstract into that real world of their classrooms and their schools. *Character Education* is based on the authors' action research project at the Punahou School in Hawaii.

The book reflects a complete plan for engaging a school community in the mission of character development. Central to their work and to the organisation of the book is a school-wide, monthly focus on a particular virtue, such as respect or courage. In this, they are addressing one of the core problems with school's efforts to respond to the call for character education. Educators have frequently replaced the language of moral values and virtue with the language of psychology. Cheating is referred to as 'inappropriate behaviour' rather than 'wrong.' The goal has been 'student development' and 'adjustment,' but development *into what* and adjustment *to what* has been left vague or unstated. This book and the program it offers educators, while on the one hand being new and fresh, returns us to an older, richer language system, one based on views of human excellence.

Over a two-year cycle, students are introduced to a deeper meaning of common words, such as loyalty, commitment and wisdom. It is here that the authors' gifts as educators become apparent. Students are not simply told the meaning of these virtue words. They are immersed in them. During the months that a particular word is being studied, each day there is a new activity which will give them greater experience and thus deeper understanding of the concept behind the word. Activities range from journal writing to a structured conversation with parents, from creating a poster about the virtue to listing ways students can practise the virtue in their everyday lives.

One of the most plaguing problems of education is the continuing search for 'the one right way': the one right way to teach reading, the one right way to evaluate student performance, the one right way to discipline students. As character education is again becoming a concern of educators, this same one-right-way mentality is becoming evident. The authors of *Character Education* take a very different approach, one that recognises that children have very different ways of learning and that the best way to master something is to acquire it in several different learning modes. Therefore, the book offers students and teachers a rich reservoir of stories, sayings, and biographical sketches, which together bring out the depth of these concepts and show how they exist in a human life.

Kevin Ryan
Director of the Centre for the Advancement of Ethics and
Character,
Boston University

Honesty



SUPPORTIVE VALUES

Integrity • Truth

DEFINITIONS

Telling the truth; straightforward conduct.

The definition for **honesty** goes beyond being truthful in speech, it also assumes a way of conducting oneself. Shakespeare's classic and timeless piece of advice in *Hamlet* from Polonius to his son probably best describes the partnership of honesty and behaviour toward others: "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Integrity is the firm adherence to a moral code. Integrity is the state of being complete or undivided. Synonyms for integrity are incorruptibility and completeness and the antonym which furthers our understanding of the word is duplicity.

Truth is sincerity in action, character, and speech. When we examine the word further we see it is often capitalised and refers to a spiritual reality. In some spiritual traditions, Truth is synonymous with God.

PURPOSE

In a school faculty survey, honesty came up third in number of votes after respect and responsibility as the most important value for students to learn. It is obvious that teachers are concerned about the prevalence of cheating on schoolwork and tests and the 'but everybody else does it' attitude which accompanies this behaviour. The win-at-all-costs, dog-eat-dog ethic appears to be entrenched among many students. The value of honesty clearly has been undermined by the importance placed on achievement and the rewards and recognition which accompany the accomplishment. We somehow need to express our indignation at dishonest conduct, and communicate how much we esteem honest actions. Honour codes in the classrooms and sportsmanship in athletics, demonstrated by calling fouls on oneself, would affirm expectations we have for appreciating and valuing honesty.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it difficult to maintain a friendship with someone who doesn't tell the truth?
- What is a 'white lie?' Why is it potentially harmful?
- Why is it wrong to cheat on your homework or on a test?
- Why do people cheat? Does it lead to other kinds of dishonesty?
- Would you be brave enough to express your disagreement with someone who is dishonest? Give an example.
- Why is it important to be honest with oneself?
- Do you agree with this statement: "The test of genuine honesty is how you act when no one is looking." How does this relate to cheating?
- Would you question your parents' effort to buy you a child's ticket at the movies? What would you say?
- What is the difference between stating the truth 'as you see it' and being tactful? Can you be honest and tactful at the same time? Give an example.
- Would you call a foul on yourself in whatever sport you play, both in practice and in games? Why is this important?
- Why is there so much dishonesty in our society (politics, business, and personal)?