

# The Six Pillars of Character and the Holidays



As we gather around those who are most important to us this holiday season, we should keep in mind the Six Pillars of Character. Each Pillar can offer a new way to spread holiday cheer and joy to friends, family, coworkers, neighbors and even strangers.

**Trustworthiness** It can take a lot for us to put our trust in someone and for someone to trust us, and the holiday season is a great time to work on building trust. The most simple and straightforward way to build trust is to keep your word. If you say you'll do something, do it. If you make a promise, keep it. During the holidays, we often count on one another to get the gifts, make the food, send the cards out or put up the decorations. By keeping track of and completing your holiday responsibilities you become dependable and build trust. Trust can even be built by inviting new people to your holiday

gatherings, cooking a dish for a family in need or shoveling snow for a neighbor.

**Respect** Sometimes respect can get lost in the shuffle of the hectic holidays. When we are in crowded stores it can be easy to get frustrated with store employees or other shoppers. We need to remember that we are all doing our best, but sometimes stress can get the best of us. In these times, we should remember to always treat others how we would want to be treated. Being kind and forgiving to overworked retail employees, letting a busy family go ahead of us in line or using reusable shopping bags shows that we have respect for those around us and the environment. The holidays are all about being grateful, so show those around you that you respect them by following the golden rule.

**Responsibility** If you're the one hosting a holiday gathering, you have a lot of responsibility on your shoulders. Always keep your word and do what you said you were going to do, but don't be afraid to ask for help. If you need friends or family to bring a dish, help you clean up or watch your kids or pets, reach out to them. This can help you meet your responsibilities, but also help show you how responsible others in your life are.

**Fairness** It's always the thought that counts. The holidays are not about comparing gifts that you have given or received. The holidays should be focused on celebrating the relationships of those closest to us. It can be easy to get caught up in the material things and the gift-giving, but making sure that we treat those around us with fairness should be at the forefront of our minds.

**Caring** There are countless ways that we can show that we care this holiday season. We usually show that we care by giving gifts to our loved ones, but we can show that we care in other ways as well. By donating our unused clothing, donating blood, cooking for a family in need or simply sending holiday cards

we can show that we are thinking about all members of our community. For those that don't have close families or don't have the means to buy gifts, the holidays can be a difficult time. So, let's show them that we care and want them to have a merry holiday season.

**Citizenship** The holidays are a great time to show that we are dedicated citizens. One of the best and easiest ways we can do this is by supporting local businesses and local restaurants. We can show our support of our communities if we do our holiday shopping at local stores that are run by our neighbors. Going to events put on around the neighborhood is also important. Whether it's a craft fair, a holiday light show or an ice skating event, we can connect with members of our community while supporting those who make our communities so special.

Learn more about character education.