

Following Directions and Playing by the Rules (Grades K-5)



Objective:

Playing by the rules is an important part of fairness. Students will learn that in order to play by the rules, we need to listen carefully and follow directions. We can only play fair when we understand the rules.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- explore how rules or directions could be interpreted in diverse ways.
- reflect on how unclear rules or directions can lead to unfair situations.
- discuss ways you can ask questions when you are unsure.
- discuss why playing by the rules is an important part of fairness.

Materials:

- A piece of paper (the same size) for each person

- Blindfolds if desired

Directions:

1. Tell students that you are going to play the Snowflake Game. The students who follow the game's directions win.
2. Ask the students to either close their eyes or put on blindfolds.
3. Tell them you will be giving instructions and they are not allowed to ask any questions.
4. Give each student a piece of paper.
5. Give the following directions, but do not answer any of their questions.
 - Fold the paper in half.
 - Tear off the bottom right-hand corner.
 - Fold the paper in half again.
 - Tear off the upper right-hand corner.
 - Fold the paper in half again.
 - Tear off the lower right-hand corner.
6. Have participants open their eyes and unfold their papers.

Discussion:

- As they hold up their papers, ask the students what they see (the differences in each other's papers even though they all had the same directions).
- We all had the same directions, but our snowflakes look different. Why do they look different?
- No one did it wrong, but there weren't clear directions on how to do it. To be fair, we need to follow the rules and directions. So, it's important we give clear directions and make sure everyone understands the rules for a fair game.
- Ask students:
 - How could the directions be changed to make the snowflake game fairer?
 - What questions could they have asked to better understand the rules of the game?

- Can they think of a time when they needed to ask questions to make sure they understood the rules?
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Move Beyond Stereotypes (Grades 6-12)



Overview:

This lesson explores the stories of real people to help students learn how to move beyond stereotypes. They'll learn how accepting others' authentic and unique selves demonstrates respect and fairness.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- how sharing our individual stories with the world helps break down unfair stereotypes.
- explore Human Library stories.
- reflect on their experiences with the Human Library

story.

Materials:

- Videos from Aumen Film Co. (2017) *The Human Library Trailer*.
Youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7vJgyRJ-zo>

Opening Discussion:

- “Stereotypes lose their power when the world is found to be more complex than the stereotype would suggest. When we learn that individuals do not fit the group stereotype, then it begins to fall apart.” – Ed Koch
 - Ask students what this quote means to them?
- Share some stereotypes (teens, elderly, rich, poor). Then, ask about a stereotype students have (or used to have) about a group or individual.

Instruction and Activity:

- Teach students about Human Library projects. It is a collection of real-life human stories you can “check out.” These stories aim to break stereotypes. In addition, they help people embrace fairness and togetherness through our differences.
 - Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7vJgyRJ-zo>
- Ask students to explore the Human Library to learn more about others. Most importantly, suggest choosing individuals whom they may normally stereotype.
 - <https://humanlibrary.org/meet-our-human-books/>

Discussion:

- Why did you select that particular human library book?
- What did you learn about someone else today?
 - Why did learning about someone’s story impact any stereotypes you have or had?
 - How does getting to know someone else’s story make

- you a more connected citizen?
- Describe how hearing someone else's journey impacts your own story.

Reflection:

- What did you learn about yourself today?
 - How did what you learn today help you move beyond stereotypes?
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Fairness and Appearances (Grades 6-12)

This lesson explores injustice based on appearances. The lesson explores a group of children who could not live with the lack of fairness shown to one couple.

Fairness (Grades K-5)

This lesson explores how an unfair situation can lead to frustration or anger and how to resolve it. It also allows students to demonstrate their understanding of fairness by recreating the rules to make a game fair for all participants.

Perspectives (Grades K-5)

Fairness is hearing all sides to a story, even when it's hard to see there is another side. This lesson is designed for students to stretch their ability to see the view of others in stories that feel like there is a good and a bad side. Students will be encouraged to think about how a story that they thought they knew looks different when you see the perspective of others.

Embracing Diversity (Grades 6-12)

Learning about other traditions and holidays is important to promote acceptance not just tolerance of other viewpoints, religions, belief systems, and perspectives. This lesson will discuss having integrity with a focus on fairness to promote a classroom that embraces diversity.

Six Pillar Coloring Pages

Download these PDFs and get started coloring!

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

When the Six Pillars Conflict



At CHARACTER COUNTS!, we often refer to the Six Pillars of Character as universal values. In other words, they are values that transcend race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and even time. Put another way, nearly everyone can agree that more trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship would be good and even necessary for our individual, community, and societal growth.

Though the Six Pillars are universal, they are not absolutes. Like anything else in society, what the Pillars look like, sound like, and feel like can change due to context or circumstance. What is considered perfectly respectful behavior at a football game would not be considered respectful in a

boardroom, for example. How we define what each pillar looks like and sounds like in unique circumstances is particularly important when Pillars appear to be in conflict. One definition of citizenship may include following the rules, respecting the law, and so on. And yet, Rosa Parks is often highlighted as an example of fairness, for her protest on the bus in which she technically broke the law – an unjust, unfair, and racist law, but a law nonetheless. Does that mean she's a bad citizen? Or, a student may argue that she was showing caring by letting her friend copy homework so her friend wouldn't get in trouble, while a teacher might argue that the student was being irresponsible and untrustworthy by letting her friend cheat.

The tendency in these moments is to ask, "which Pillar is more important?" but that's the wrong question. The right question is, "in this time, given these circumstances, what does it mean to put the Six Pillars into action?" When one asks this question, Rosa Park's action is not only a demonstration of fighting for fairness, but citizenship, as she tries to make her community a better place for everyone, regardless of race.

Of course, some may view the constant need to negotiate what the Six Pillars look like in different circumstances as soft or unprincipled, but maybe it's the opposite. The intentional, deliberate conversation about what the Six Pillars look like for us, in this situation, is exactly the kind of conversation, sometimes hard conversation, we must have if we're going to work together successfully. Yes, the Pillars are universal, but what we want them to look like for our students, school, community, family, and society is ultimately up to us.

Learn more about character education.

Six Pillar Animal Coloring Pages

Download these PDFs and get started coloring!

Trustworthiness – Camel

Respect – Lion

Responsibility – Elephant

Fairness – Giraffe

Caring – Kangaroo

Citizenship – Bear

Quotation database

Database of character education quotations.