

Humility

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

APRIL 2011

Vs. Arrogance

I WILL:

- praise my parents, teachers, teammates and coaches
- not think more highly of myself than I ought
- take responsibility for all my actions
- try again after each defeat
- give credit to those who have made me successful

FEATURES

- Quotes 2
- Hero 3
- Curriculum Connection 3
- Team-Building Activity 3
- Robin's Reading List 8
- Crosky's Corner 9
- Character in the Classroom Continuously 10

Acknowledging that achievement results from the investment of others in my life.

At first blush, Humility, like Meekness, may seem a synonym for weakness. Careful study of the quality will reveal just the opposite as it did when we studied Meekness. There is great strength in being humble. Humility asks that we honestly assess not only our weaknesses but our strengths as well.

Humility further asks that we seek help for our weaknesses and recognize that others are instrumental in both our strengths and help for our weaknesses. Sounds like a strong leadership strategy to me. Humility is confidence that is rooted in fact and in proper perspective.

Humility lets us celebrate the successes of others without feeling threatened. We do not require others to have less in order to feel like we have more.

This month, practice Humility by looking for the ways we are interdependent on each other.



Humildad vs. Orgullo
Reconocer que mis logros se deben a lo que otros han invertido en mi vida



Go to the Root

The Latin root, humilis, means, "lowly, small, or common," and is based on a different word, "humus," which means "dirt." Perhaps humility is meant to keep us grounded.

(for more visit www.etymonline.com)



IN THIS ISSUE

Lean on Me	4
Sign Language	4
Competition vs. Cooperation	5
The Affirmation Tree	5
Kenjo No Bitoku	6
Please and Thank You	6
The Challenger Disaster	7
The Challenge: Learn from the Disaster	7

“ People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.” -David H. Comins

Character Quotables

“One must be as humble as the dust before he can discover truth.”
~Mahatma Gandhi

“To be humble to superiors is duty, to equals courtesy, to inferiors nobleness.” ~ Benjamin Franklin

“To become truly great, one has to stand with people, not above them.”
~Charles de Montesquieu

“Humility is like underwear, essential, but indecent if it shows” ~ Helen Nielsen

“The more you lose yourself in something bigger than yourself, the more energy you will have.” ~ Norman Vincent Peale

“If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.” ~ Isaac Newton

“True humility is intelligent self respect which keeps us from thinking too highly or too meanly of ourselves. It makes us modest by reminding us how far we have come short of what we can be.”
~Ralph W. Sockman

“Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself at all.” ~William Temple

“Swallow your pride occasionally, it's non-fattening!” ~Author Unknown

“What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself.” ~Abraham Lincoln

“A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle.” ~Benjamin Franklin

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.” ~Rick Warren

“Don't talk about yourself; it will be done when you leave.” ~Wilson Mizner

“True merit, like a river, the deeper it is, the less noise it makes.” ~Edward Frederick Halifax

“It is far more impressive when others discover your good qualities without your help.” ~Author Unknown

“Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.” ~Barry Switzer

“When science discovers the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to find they are not it.” ~Bernard Bailly

“When someone sings his own praises, he always gets the tune too high.” ~Mary H. Waldrip

“None are so empty as those who are full of themselves.” ~Benjamin Whichcote

“People that put themselves above others will fall longer and harder.” ~Gina Lindley

“The man who thinks he can live without others is mistaken; the one who thinks others can't live without him is even more deluded.” ~Hasidic Saying

“Nobody stands taller than those willing to stand corrected.” ~William Safire

“Modesty is the gentle art of enhancing your charm by pretending not to be aware of it.” ~Oliver Herford

“It is well to remember that the entire population of the universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others.” ~Andrew J. Holmes

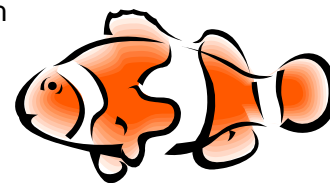
Curriculum Connection



Science

Eco Systems are a great example of how to explain dependence on one another. Be sure to include such topics as biodiversity, biomes, mutual dependence, and symbiotic relationships. Check out the relationship between the clown fish and the sea anemone for a great example of symbiosis. For a lesson plan on the Dependence of Organisms on Each Other visit:

www.georgiastandards.org/Frameworks/GSO%20Frameworks/7%20Science%20Energy%20Flow%20and%20Nutrient%20Cycling%20Dependence%20of%20Organisms%20on%20Each%20Other.pdf



George Washington, Hero of Humility

There are many stories that demonstrate how humble the Father of our Country was. Once, when Washington was riding with a group of soldiers, they jumped their horses over a farmer's stone fence and knocked off a few of the stones. It was Washington who went back to replace them.

Another time, Washington came upon some soldiers struggling to move a log while the Corporal in charge watched. Washington dismounted and helped the soldiers himself. He did not consider himself too important to assist others.

After the Revolutionary War

was over many people wanted Washington to become the monarch of the fledgling nation, a position he staunchly refused. He begrudgingly accepted the presidency. (Quite a contrast to our presidential campaigns of today.)

The humble example he set of voluntarily leaving a position of great power is a cornerstone of our democracy



and a legacy we still hold dear today.

Washington was a rich man who willingly left his estate to serve his country. He did not see his wealth or position as an entitlement. Instead, he chose the role of servant leader to conquer the British.

You can help your students learn more about George Washington by visiting this site for lesson plans

www.mountvernon.org/learn/teachers_students/index.cfm/pid/1081//cfid/12019329/cftoken/60397045

Team~Building Activity

Building a culture of good character requires building the class into a community. Here is this month's teambuilding activity:

Bunny Bounce You will need a large venue for this game.

Divide the class into groups of 6 - 8 students. Pair up the groups. If you have an uneven number of groups, you can have one set of three groups work together. Give each group a Beach Towel. The students should each hold an edge of the towel like firefighters holding a rescue net. Each set of groups will also need a small stuffed bunny. (light weight balls work also). Place the bunny on one of the towels. The task is to have the students work together to bounce the bunny into the towel of their partnered group. The receiving group can maneuver as a group to catch the bunny. They continue to toss it back and forth moving farther apart each time. When they have finished, ask them about how they had to work as a team in order to toss and catch the bunny. What happened when they didn't work together?

Note: This game is also good with water balloons if no one is allergic to latex.



Lean On Me

Divide into groups of 6 or 8 - it must be an even number. Ask each group to stand in a circle holding hands and count off in order, one, two, one, two. Instruct all the #1s to lean forward while the #2s lean back. To make sure that everyone is going the right direction have them just slightly lean that way. Once you have verified that they are correct then have them lean all the way into it. Make sure that they keep holding hands to keep from falling. Next, have them resume standing upright then lean the other direction. This exercise demonstrates that by establishing mutual dependence on trustworthy people, you can go much further in life than you could by yourself. For a Math curriculum connection, have them count off from 1 to N and then use even and odds to determine which direction to lean.



Sign Language

Check out the following website for the American Sign Language interpretation of the word Humble and Arrogance for visual ways to describe humility and arrogance:

www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi

Lean on Me ~ the song

The song "Lean On Me" is a song written and released by Bill Withers in 1972. It has been performed and recorded by many artists since then. Let the students listen to the song after doing the exercise. Encourage them to come up with hand motions or body language that can be performed to the tune and then all sing/perform it together. If you're brave, ask your students to perform the song for a younger classroom and then let your students teach the younger ones the leaning exercise.



For a recording of the Glee Cast singing "Lean on Me", visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oDpkI3v1Hk

For a video of the song being performed in the movie, "Lean On Me" visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VmRNr9QbxQ&playnext=1&list=PL71E4E0C453F75E1D

For a recording with the lyrics to use as a sing-a-long visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP0TGyWT0Cg

Competition vs. Cooperation



Pair up students in the class and have them sit across from each other. Ask them to clasp right hands while keeping their elbow on the desk. This is the typical arm wrestling stance however, do not name it as such. Tell them that for each time you can force your opponents hand to the table you will get a point. The points from each person in the pair will be added together to form their team score. The team with the highest score wins. Now, the trick to this is to not treat it like it is arm wrestling where you try to keep your opponent from scoring. The competition mentality usually takes over and the points are low. At some point, a student pair will realize that they can score more points as a team if they cooperate instead of compete against each other. The team that simply lets their hands go back and forth with no resistance will be the winners. When this is over discuss how we as a society are very ME centered and that leads to competition. Humility recognizes that we do not have to win over others in order to come out on top.

Affirmation Tree

Part of humility is recognizing our positive qualities and the positive qualities of others. You can use a potted tree branch, a small indoor evergreen or simply an outline of tree branches on a poster or the bulletin board. Each student is given leaves to write positive things about themselves and others in the classroom. You may want to give each student several names to write about so that all students are equally represented. Have the students turn the leaves into you before they are added to the tree so that they can be reviewed for appropriateness. Be sure to let the writer of the leaf make any changes you deem necessary. After the students read the nice things that have been written about each of them, ask them about the happy feeling they have now. Everyone in the room should have that happy feeling. Talk about happiness as unlimited. (Compare the words finite and infinite.) We can each be happy and there is still plenty of happiness to go around. We do not need to take happiness away from others in order to have enough for ourselves.



For more lessons like this one visit www.sathyaiahv.org.uk/Workbook%20Lesson%20Plans/Book%201.2007/071.04.pdf

謙讓、美德

Kenjo No Bitoku

(With true strength comes humility)

The characters mean the virtue of humility. Humility is an essential characteristic of the samurai and of the karate student. For the samurai is strong yet weak, confident yet never overconfident, and always carries a proper perspective of himself in relation to the world around him. The karate student strives for this same perspective.

For more on this topic visit www.seidoindia.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6:with-true-strength-comes-humility&catid=3:about-karatedo&Itemid=5

Please and Thank You

These words are words of gratitude and appreciation that we express to others. Using the word 'please', in a respectful tone, tells the listener that we don't expect the action but are requesting it. Expressing gratitude with the words 'thank you' recognizes another's contribution. When used properly, both phrases have humble foundations. Encourage your students to use these words, by modeling them yourself, praising them when they use them and patiently waiting to hear them when they are missing.

Por favor y Gracias.

S'il vous plaît et merci

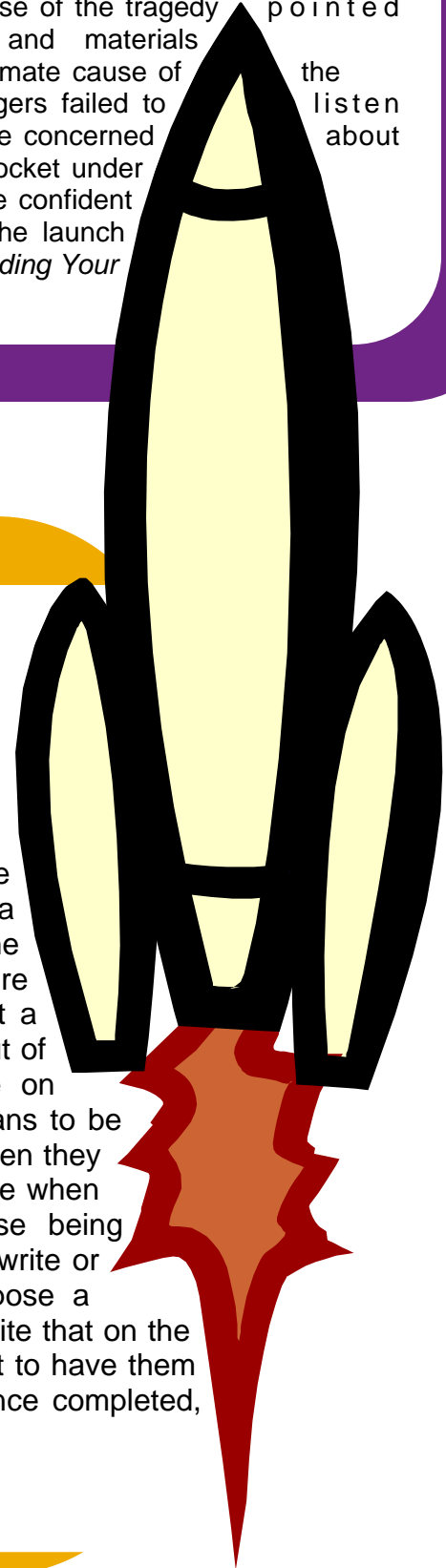
www.ehow.com/video_4403487_sign-common-phrases-sign-language.html

The Challenger Disaster

“When the space shuttle Challenger blew up seventy-three seconds into its flight, the world was shocked. Most of us have seen the videotape of that terrible moment many times. Most of us also know that the investigations into the cause of the tragedy pointed out some serious shortfalls in human judgment and materials management. The New York Times put it frankly: the ultimate cause of the space shuttle disaster was pride. A group of top managers failed to listen carefully to the warnings of those down the line who were concerned about the operational reliability of certain parts of the booster rocket under conditions of abnormal stress. The people in charge were confident that they knew best and that they should not change the launch schedules. They were wrong.” (Gordon MacDonald, *Rebuilding Your Broken World*.)

The Challenge: Learn from the Disaster

Do this exercise after reading or discussing the Challenger Story. Use a picture of a rocket – a simple line drawing such as one to the left or one from a young child’s coloring book. Make sure there is space to write on it. You can also cut a shape of a rocket (or the actual space shuttle) out of colored construction paper and let them write on that. Have the students think about what it means to be humble to them. They can write about a time when they felt they should have been more humble or a time when they were humble or witnessed someone else being humble. They could choose one of the I wills to write or make their own. You could, as a class, compose a pledge about being humble and let them each write that on the rocket, etc. For younger students, you may want to have them write or draw pictures of people they value. Once completed, these can be displayed in the classroom.



Robin's Reading List

Books on Humility: Grades Pre. – 4:

Teacher Resource: Character Building Activities for Kids by Darlene Mannix

Lesson I-7: Defining Humility p. 47 - 65

Evan Bunny: A Winning Story about Pride, Humility and Second Chances by Gabriel Bench

The story is about Evan, who is the grandson of Ester, the original Easter Bunny, and he really thinks he is hot stuff!! He is so cool that he begins to take his talents and his friends for granted!! He thinks he is so much better than everyone else!!! As the saying goes, "pride comes before a fall," and Evan is in for a huge fall. Will Evan know how to recover from the fall...will anyone even care? Find out when you read about Evan's encounters with pride, courage, humility, second chances, and friendship.

Iron Hans: A Grimms' Fairy Tale by Stephen Mitchell

Iron Hans has hair to his feet, is nine feet tall, and is brown as can be. Even though he is cursed and a terror to all, a young prince finds it in his heart to befriend him. However, the boy betrays Hans' trust, and must make it through the world alone, unknown, and penniless. This tale is about pride and humility, wealth and poverty, and the importance of doing good whether you're a king or a servant.

Humble Pie by Jennifer Donnelly

This is a wise and funny tale about Theo, who has earned the reputation in the village of being greedy and grabby. Grandmother knows what the problem is...he is spoiled rotten! So,

on one of Theo's naughtiest days ever, Grandmother decides to make Theo a pie...a humble pie made of peaches, pears, apples, cherries, plums, and its crust is as big as a bed sheet!!!! Theo bites off a whole lot more than he can chew. He soon gets a taste of what it means to be compassionate and humble!!!

Fool Moon Rising by Kristi and T. Lively Fluharty

A rhyming and funny tale about the moon stealing the sun's glory. The moon, who is blinded by its pride, fails to see the real source of his light, the sun. He boasts of his ability to shine and take different shapes throughout the months. Then one day, overwhelmed by a piercing ray of sunshine, he repents of his pride and changes his ways. From that point on, he is happy to reflect the sun's light! In this story, children learn about the importance of humility, and the dangers of pride!

And the Winner Is by LI Cool J

And the Winner Is ...is about a young basketball player who learns the importance of winning and losing gracefully. By exploring themes of humility, good sportsmanship, and belief in oneself, LI Cool J's story reveals the invaluable lessons that apply both on and off the court.

Grades 3 – 5

King of the Golden River by John Ruskin

Hans lives with his two greedy brothers, who exploit the land and people of Treasure Valley for their own gain. He gains favor of the magical King of the Golden River through his kindness and courage.



Grades 9 – 12:

The Power of Humility: Choosing Peace over Conflict in Relationships by Charles Whitfield

This is a remarkable book that presents tools for changing your life in practical, simple steps...a new approach to solving conflicts that cause us stress. Most of us don't understand one of the most critical yet overlooked skills to be successful relationships: humility and how to best express it. Having humility is about being authentic, open and understanding.

Humility: The Quiet Virtue by Everett L. Worthington

Humility is a virtue that can be difficult to describe. Worthington begins the book with a reader self-assessment exercise, inviting people to assess themselves and recognize humility in those around them. People can be inspired to be humble, and they can aspire to humility.

Love is the Best Medicine: What Two Dogs Taught One Vet about Hope, Humility and Everyday Miracles by Nick Trout

Helen is a mangy, abandoned dog found in a restaurant parking lot, one rainy night, by a sweet couple who falls in love with her. The vet discovers a tumor and she's given a devastating prognosis. Cleo is suffering from chronic leg fractures which devastate her owner. Dr. Trout, a British vet working in Boston, presides over what should be routine surgeries, until something unthinkable happens. This is a one of a kind story you'll never forget!

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Croskey's Corner

When I was young, the movie version of Camelot was popular. I loved vision and the idealism of King Arthur. I was overwhelmed by Queen Guinevere's passion and devotion to both Arthur and Sir Lancelot. And I had to admire the righteousness and courage of Lance. All that and a love triangle right out of *The Young and the Restless*. One of my favorite parts is the scene where filmgoers first meet Lancelot. He is full of enthusiasm for the concept of the Round Table and sure of his abilities to guarantee the success of Arthur's dream. He tells Arthur - or, rather, sings to Arthur - that he has "never lost in battle" and that "he is pure as the air, with virtue to spare, the Godliest man I know. C'est moi!" He adds that one of his greatest virtues is humility! If you remember, this Godliest man goes on to steal the wife/Queen of his best friend, helps ruin the Round Table experiment, and ends up leading an army against Arthur's knights. Not so pure. Not so virtuous.

I have dredged up this 40+ year old movie because I believe that the scenario from the Arthurian legend is a typical one: despite our best intentions, sometimes we end up violating our principles and disappointing our friends. Sometimes we betray someone we love and end up alone. Sometimes, we let a lofty ideal obscure what is going on right in front of us and we succumb to jealousy and hate, which sabotages our ideals. In short, Pride keeps us from learning what we need to learn from those we consider as "lesser."

Pride, according to *Character First!*, is the absence of Humility. The April Character Quality of the Month is defined as "Acknowledging that achievement results from the investment of others in my life." Two of the "I will" statements are, "I will not think more highly of myself than I ought to;" and "I will give credit to those who have made me successful." Not the path of someone who thinks they have virtue to spare and are the Godliest of all!

Expecting that we will never succumb to Pride is about like saying, "Don't be human." Indeed, striving for humility may be, as it was for Lance, a trap which is guaranteed to spring on us at our moments of arrogance, entitlement, and feeling superior. Is Humility, then, unattainable?

Part of the problem is, in my "humble" opinion, the word Humility. It is a first cousin of the word "Humiliation." That is a set-up for embarrassment, for falling off the wagon. If we have pride, we will likely be thrown from our horse and reduced to eating dirt (Ironically, the Latin root, humilis, means, "lowly, small, or common," and is based on a different word, "humus," which means "dirt.") After the fall, humiliation - ridicule, foolishness, and degradation - will be our lot. The *Character First!* term therefore seems likely to lock us in to choosing shame to start with.

I prefer "Humble" to "Humility." Humble conveys the same concept as Humility, of letting go of my prejudices and pride and being open to learning from those people and situations to which I might feel superior. But humble allows us the respected status of student, learning from others. Humility relegates us to some low caste which we may never be able to rise from.

Have you ever known someone who seemed, well..., not your equal? His standards seemed lower than yours. She seemed to settle for less than you ever would. He did sleazy things. In your opinion, you would never stoop so low. You were ready to write her off. Then Providence stepped in. (It may have been Newport. I was never very clear on the geography of those New England towns.) You got entangled with this person. You began to care about him. Maybe she became a friend, or even a soul mate. Different as night and day. Opposites. Natural enemies. Yet somehow you got thrown together and you ended up loving this person and learning from him or her. Darn it! You ended up having to eat your judgments. You had to take back your condemnations. You liked him. Heck maybe you even loved her. This person taught you more about life than you wanted to know, but what you learned was true and right and it stood the test of time. As did your relationship. How were you left feeling after going through all that? I'd call it Humble.

The other day, I watched a student walk out of class, say a little jingle (something like, "I'm good! I'm good! I'm really, really good.") and do a little dance. It reminded me of one of our cherished NFL players celebrating a touchdown catch in the end zone. I did not know what went before this, the context. I knew this kid; she definitely needed and deserved to celebrate any academic accomplishment. But the self-congratulatory song-and-dance bothered me a bit. No harm done. But I hope (wish) she patted her teacher on the back and said thanks for helping me learn; and another pat on the back to her mom who supported her studies. Those might have gotten lost in the self-congratulations. Our culture seems obsessed with the celebration itself as an end. There is Nothing wrong with feeling a sense of accomplishment after working hard. But let's be sure to Humbly thank the tackle who blocked for us; the teacher who persisted so that we could overcome our test anxiety; the friend whom we misjudged until he taught us worlds and we had to eat crow.

Maybe the hard part of being Humble is that it is so passive. So much of our modern world, and the world of school, asks us to be assertive and aggressive. Being Humble asks us to hang back. It forces us to say to someone we thought of as less: "I am afraid of who you were when you got into trouble. That part of you acted in way that scares me. But, I have Faith that you are made up of some parts I understand and some parts I don't. So, I'll wait here, watch you, listen to you, and let the part of you that scares me gradually explain himself." Or Humble says this: "Sometimes you seem open to letting me try to help you. Sometimes, you seem to want to help me. Sometimes you seem to not want me around. I get scared when I think it's time to Be There and, instead, I should back off. So, I will wait for time to pass and let you ask for my help when you are ready. I will Humbly tell time by your clock, not mine." Or, Humble tells us: "Why can't you make up your mind? Why can't you fix what is wrong? Oh! I guess you do not see the Way Out yet. It is not that you are running away. It is that you know the only way through is through. I get it now. You are stuck. I just have to wait til you DO see your way out. I hope I am Patient enough and Courageous enough to know where to find you when you do find your way out."

An institution that I love has a motto that translates: "Make progress without being obnoxious about it." That's Humble-ness. It says also that I have my story. I may look messed up to some but I am not as messed up as I might look, nor am I as problem-free as I appear. I have much to be Humble about But thanks to some luck, some good timing, and a lot of help, I have made some progress. Thanks. To all of my so-called "lessers." As Lancelot should have sung, "C'est moi! C'est moi! I'm forced to admit. Tis I, I Humbly reply. That man in whom N marvels can bloom without you! C'est moi! Tis I!"

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Character...It Starts With Me!

Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.