



June 2008

# Character Council Educator Quality of the Month Alertness

## I will:

### Alertness:

**Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses**

- Keep my eyes and ears open
- Recognize and heed warning signals
- Choose to do right before I'm tempted
- Tell others of danger
- Stay away from unsafe places

If you have ever visited any of our national forests you may have seen the look-out towers where observers watch for forest fires. Just as early detection helps fire fighters battle a fire, being alert to our surroundings helps us take advantage of opportunities and avoid situations that could be harmful. When we are careless or not alert we can be surprised by problems that could have been easily avoided if they had been recognized earlier. This month, be on the look out and alert to the world around you.

- ☺ **Little by Little** You will need a clear glass jar filled with water. You will also need food coloring and bleach. (I suggest that you practice this first to determine how much bleach you will need so that you can bring in the smallest amount needed.) Create a story about two friends that is age appropriate for your classroom. One of the friends starts out getting into trouble doing small things. Each time you give an example of getting into trouble, add a drop of coloring to the water. As the story progresses the trouble gets worse. The other friend tries to warn him/her about the trouble. Because of the troubles the two friends do not remain friends. At some point in the story, have the first friend recognize just how much trouble they are in and they have a change of heart. To correct their previous bad actions, have them go back and apologize or fix the situations in some way. Each time they take responsibility for their actions, add a drop of bleach to the water. At the end of the story, the water may still be murky. Explain that sometimes it takes a while to repair the damage done. Use this story to explain that bad people do not start out being terrible. They start with small things and work their way up (or down!) to terrible. It is important to be alert to the small things and to stay away from situations that can cause trouble.



- ☺ **Test Your Reflexes** (A game for older students) Start this activity by talking about how driving while under the influence affects your alertness. Explain that driving at 60 MPH you will travel 88 feet in 1 second. (As a math connection you can let them figure this out for themselves!) Waiting 1 additional second to stop increases your risk of hitting something in this range. Reaction time is crucial. To test their reaction times, go to <http://www.happyhub.com/network/reflex/> to play this reflex game. There are many such games on the internet. Relate reaction times to the importance of being alert.
- ☺ **Test Your Alertness** (A game for younger students). Have the students close their eyes while you change something in the classroom. Have them open their eyes and guess what has changed. Repeat this several times, making the change less noticeable each time. Relate this exercise to the need for being alert to clues of something that will get them into trouble.



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