



June 2009

Character Council Educator Quality of the Month Justice

Justice: Taking Personal Responsibility to uphold what is pure, right and true

I will:

- respect the authority of the law
- speak out for what is pure, right and true
- never prejudice others
- always remain open to reason
- keep my own conscience clean

In 1996, the astronauts aboard the space shuttle Columbia had to scrap plans for a space walk. The cause? A loose screw became lodged in the gears of the hatch. An expensive mission failed all because of one tiny piece of hardware. In the same way, our small choices can cause large failures in our lives. The lack of a sense of justice in the small things, like failing to keep a promise, can cause major headaches later. This month take notice of the small stuff.

- ☺ **The Small Stuff** – Begin by telling the above story about the space shuttle. Divide the class into small groups. Each group is to write a short story or create a short scene that depicts how a seemingly small mistake can have large consequences. You may want to give each group a story starter if time is short. Have each group share their story or play with the class.
- ☺ **Thirteen Virtues** - Ben Franklin arrived in Philadelphia without a penny to his name but retired 25 years later a very wealthy man. He credits his many successes with his list of 13 Virtues. While still young, he began to develop his character by choosing character qualities he felt were important for success in life. He wrote a list of virtues and then developed a plan for obtaining each one of them. He had written each of these virtues on a separate page in a small book that he kept with him most of the time. It is said that he reflected daily on these virtues to keep his life focused on the right direction. His virtues were:

1. **Temperance:** Eat not dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. **Silence:** Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself, avoid trifling conversation.
3. **Order:** Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. **Resolution:** Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. **Frugality:** Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; waste nothing.
6. **Industry:** Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. **Sincerity:** Use no harmful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. **Justice:** wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. **Moderation:** Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. **Cleanliness:** Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes or habitation.
11. **Tranquility:** Be not disturbed at trifles, nor at accidents.
12. **Chastity:** Be chaste in matters with the opposite sex.
13. **Humility:** Imitate Jesus and Socrates.



Now have the students review the list of 49 character qualities and choose a subset (choose a number that is age-appropriate) to be their personal list of virtues. You can have them write each of them on a separate page and staple it together to form their own booklet. Encourage them to reflect daily and record times when they have exercised that quality and times that they missed an opportunity to practice it. Younger students may just want to make checkmarks in positive and negative columns.

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Jill Tomey, Director of Education, jtomey@charactercincinnati.org

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513.467.0170 mrussell@charactercincinnati.org

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