I WILL:
- keep my word
- be careful what I promise
- correct my mistakes
- pull my share of the load
- not have a bad attitude

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Dependability is a two-way street. We depend on people and things and there are people and things that depend on us. Being dependable means we recognize and overcome obstacles that get in the way of delivering on a promise—even if the obstacle is a result of someone else not being dependable to us. On its most basic level, it means doing what we say we will do. At a deeper level, it also means saying and doing the right things. It is looking beyond ourselves to the community as a whole and realizing that our individual failures have an affect on others and sometimes can ripple beyond what we can immediately see. This month, practice dependability by overcoming fears and obstacles to follow through on those promises and people to which we are committed.

Go to the Root
De- is the Latin prefix meaning “down” or “from.” Combining this with the word pendere (“to hang”) creates a word picture of the term dependable—something reliable enough “to hang from.”

Seriedad Vs. Contradicción
Cumplir mi palabra incluso si signifique sacrificio inesperado
“Diamonds are only chunks of coal that stuck to their jobs.”
~Minnie Richard Smith

“The greatest ability is dependability.”
~Bob Jones

“Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”
~Theodore Roosevelt

“Depend on no man, on no friend but him who can depend on himself. He only who acts conscientiously toward himself, will act so toward others.”
~Johann Kaspar Lavater

“Where would you be without friends? The people to pick you up when you need lifting? We come from homes far from perfect, so you end up almost parent and sibling to your friends - your own chosen family. There's nothing like a really loyal, dependable, good friend. Nothing.”
~Jennifer Aniston

"I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.”
~Stephen Leacock

“Build for your team a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another and of strength to be derived by unity.”
~Vince Lombardi

The Champion
The average runner sprints until the breath in him is gone:
But the champion has the iron will that makes him carry on.
For rest, the average runner begs when limp his muscles grow
But the champion runs on leaden legs, his spirit makes him go.
The average man's complacent when he does his best to score,
But the champion does his best and then he does a little more.
~Author Unknown

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.”
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“Dependability, integrity, the characteristic of never knowingly doing anything wrong, that you would never cheat anyone, that you would give everybody a fair deal. Character is a sort of an all-inclusive thing. If a man has character, everyone has confidence in him.”
~Omar N. Bradley

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

“I never trust an executive who tends to pass the buck. Nor would I want to deal with him as a customer or a supplier.”
~James Cash Penney

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”
~Unofficial Postman’s Motto

Significant digits and mathematical precision indicate how dependable a numerical answer can be. If you include more digits in your answer than what is significant for the data in the problem, then your answer is not dependable. If you round-off in an intermediate answer to a less significant digit than contained in your final answer, your answer is not dependable.

For more detail on this topic visit: http://chemistry.about.com/od/mathsciencefundamentals/a/sigfigures.htm

Curriculum Connection ~ Mathematics
John and Horace Dodge, Heroes of Dependability

John and Horace Dodge were brothers, born in Niles, Michigan to Daniel Rugg Dodge who owned a foundry and a machine shop. Growing up, the boys were inseparable. Even as adults, they stuck together working as machinists in various machine and engine shops. After Horace had patented his invention of an improved ball bearing, the brothers formed a partnership to produce a bicycle that used the new ball bearing. The venture was quite successful and led to their own machine shop in Detroit. Soon after, they were making automobile parts for both Ford and Oldsmobile. In 1914, they started to manufacture their own auto. They used their name, “Dodge Brothers” followed by “Reliable, Dependable, Sound” to market their products. Customers were impressed with the high quality of their cars. A marketing campaign coined the word “dependability” for their advertising. The new word began appearing in dictionaries in the early 1930’s. In all of their manufacturing endeavors, the Dodge brothers modeled that working hard and building a reputation for dependability was a path to success in the manufacturing industry.

For more information visit: http://ucapusa.com/heritage_dodge.htm
http://wpchryslermuseum.org/sec500_pdf/The%20Dodge%20Brothers.pdf

Team-Building Activity

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

Net-working

Have all of the students stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder then take 2 giant steps backwards. Give one student a ball of yarn. Have them unwind a portion, hold the end then toss the ball of yarn across the circle to someone else. Upon catching the yarn ball, the next person unwinds a portion and holds onto to the yarn then tosses the yarn ball to someone else. At this point there are now 3 people connected by the yarn. Continue in this way until all students are holding onto the yarn ball. As each person tosses the yarn ball you can have them share something about themselves such as favorite book, sport, movie, food, etc. After they are all connected ask what happens when somebody pulls back or drops their string - everyone is affected. In a community we all depend on one another. When one of us fails, we all feel it so it is important to help build everyone up to make the community stronger.
Car and Driver

This activity needs an open space in which to play. The students should be paired up. One person in each pair is blindfolded. (Toilet paper wound around the head makes a good disposable blindfold.) This person is “the car”. The person who can see is “the driver”. Drivers should stand behind their car and grip the tops of their shoulders so that they can steer them. Cars should put their hands straight out in front of them as the bumper. The object of the game is to move around the area (define limits) and not run into anyone or anything. Declare a slow speed limit so that driving is not reckless or too fast. Allow them to drive for 3 – 5 minutes depending on the size of the area and the rowdy factor. Call an All Stop and have the car and driver reverse roles. (Note: regardless of the type of blindfold you use, you can not reuse the blindfold as this can transmit eye infections.) Start the group again and allow them the same amount of time as before. When the time is up, ask the students which role they liked better, car or driver? How did it feel to be dependent on someone else? How did it feel to have others dependent on you?

Who do you depend on?

Give each student a picture of a simple outline of a person. On the inside, they should identify those people that depend on them. On the outside, write the people that they depend on. Both lists could include: bus driver, teacher, cafeteria worker, doctor, parents, coaches, referees, club leaders, teammates, classmates, etc.

For each of those whom they depend on, list what could happen if that person weren’t dependable. What would happen if the bus didn’t come every morning? Then turn it around and have them list what would happen if they themselves were not dependable, what would happen to those who depend on them? What if they didn’t do the work for a group project for school?
**Halloween Character**

Tips for Practicing Good Character at Halloween:

1. Always say “Thank You” for the treats.
2. If you are offered to choose your own from a bowl, be polite and only choose one item.
3. Respect neighbors’ property by not destroying anything, including pumpkins.
4. Don’t run in front of other trick-or-treaters.
5. Exercise caution around vehicles so as not to “scare” a driver.
6. Only go to homes that have their light on to welcome you. Do not bother neighbors that wish to be left alone.
7. Use only “Trick-or-Treat” when knocking on doors rather than slang phrases that might be offensive.
8. Donate costumes from previous years to an agency that can provide it to a child who has none.
9. Donate part of your candy to children who don’t get out on Halloween.
10. Only trick-or-treat during the designated hours and only go to each house once.

Check these out for more tips on how to have great Halloween Character!

“Halloween Manners: Dress Like a Witch, but Behave Like a Lady”
http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-image-professor/200910/halloween-manners-dress-witch-behave-lady

“Showing Respect on Halloween”
http://www.squidoo.com/top-ten-ways-to-be-respectful

“Sharing Our Surplus Stash: A Trick-Or-Treat Twist”
http://charactercounts.org/lesson-plans/character-education-lesson.php?id=130
SLEEPING THROUGH THE STORM

Read the story below to the class. Use it as a discussion starter about being prepared. What does it mean to be prepared for class? How does not being prepared affect the rest of the students? How can you prepare for the morning so that you can get to school on time? How does one person being late affect the class as a whole? How do you prepare for a sports practise? How does not being prepared affect the team? How do you prepare for keeping your promise to do a chore at home? How does not doing your chore affect the family.

A young man applied for a job as a farmhand. When the farmer asked for his qualifications, he said, "I can sleep when the wind blows." This puzzled the farmer. But he liked the young man, and hired him. A few days later, the farmer and his wife were awakened in the night by a violent storm. They quickly began to check things out to see if all was secure. They found that the shutters of the farmhouse had been securely fastened. A good supply of logs had been set next to the fireplace. The young man slept soundly. The farmer and his wife then inspected their property. They found that the farm tools had been placed in the storage shed, safe from the elements. The tractor had been moved into the garage. The barn was properly locked. Even the animals were calm. All was well. The farmer then understood the meaning of the young man's words, "I can sleep when the wind blows." Because the farmhand did his work loyally and faithfully when the skies were clear, he was prepared for the storm when it broke. So when the wind blew, he was not afraid. He could sleep in peace.
GOIN’ ON A BEAR HUNT...

The “Goin’ on a Bear Hunt” song is a favorite of campers and scouts. If you are not familiar with the song, try to “borrow” some older students who are scouts to lead the song. There are many versions of the song. One is compiled below that lists different ways of overcoming obstacles. The song is chanted as a repeat song so you or a group of scouts say each line, and the class repeats it while doing the motions. Scouts may know other versions so be sure to print this one so it includes the obstacles. After you have finished the song, review the obstacles. For each one, several solutions are thought of and then rejected until the right one comes to mind. Relate this to overcoming obstacles that prevent you from keeping a promise.

We’re goin’ on a bear hunt.  
Gonna catch a big one.  
I’m not scared.  
I see a lake  
Can’t go under it  
Can’t go around it  
Can’t go over it  
Gotta go through it.  
Let’s swim (Do swimming motions)  
(Repeat Chorus)  
I see a big mountain  
Can’t go under it  
Can’t go around it  
Can’t go through it  
Gotta go over it.  
Let’s climb. (Do running until you hit the top leaning backwards as you go up and leaning forwards as you go down)  
(Repeat Chorus)  
I see a big log.  
Can’t go over it  
Can’t go around it  
Can’t go through it  
Gotta go under it.  
Let’s crawl. (Crouch down like you are going under a bridge)  
(Repeat Chorus)  
I see a cave.  
Can’t go under it  
Can’t go around it  
Can’t go over it  
Gotta go in it.  
Let’s go (look side to side as you ‘enter’ the cave’)  
It’s dark  
It’s creepy.  
Stop, I feel something.  
It’s furry.  
It’s big.  
It has eyes.  
IT’S A BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
Robin’s Reading List

Grades Pre. – 3:

Love Your Heart by Tim McGraw, Tom Douglas and Abigail Marble
Katie has many talents, but she wonders which one will win her school’s talent show. After several funny mishaps, depending on her Dad and faithful dog Palio, Katie finally chooses one talent using Palio. While at the talent show, she drops out of the contest so she can help her friend, showing that kindness is the best talent of all. Katie’s proud dad reassures her that she did the right thing, and that while he loves many things about her, he loves her heart most of all.

Otis and the Tornado by Loren Long
Otis is an unusually sensitive tractor, who, with his calf buddy join a cow, some ducks, and a horse “for a grand game of follow-the-leader”. Otis is popular among the livestock, however he avoids the hulking rust-red bull. One stormy day, Otis senses danger “deep down in his pipes” and sees a tornado dipping from a slate-gray cloud. Leading the animals to safety, he remembers the bull, still locked in his corral, and chugs to the rescue.

Inger’s Promise by Jami Parkison
Inger’s white fur and mountain of antlers make him a standout in the reindeer herd, so he is chosen to pull the wedding sled, and to run in the Alta River Race. However, twice he disappointed fans who now believe maybe he isn’t trustworthy. He proves them wrong when three reindeer are at risk during a spring snowstorm...Inger sticks by his word, even though doing so could be a matter of life and death.

Grades 4 – 6:

Shine by Kate Maryon
Twelve-year-old Tiff loves her mom, Carla, who is glitzy and fun, always coming home with amazing stuff. The trouble is that Tiff’s mom doesn’t buy these things...she steals them. Tiff’s life is ruined when Carla gets caught. She is sent to a remote island to live with Carla’s family, a family her mom never talked about and that Tiff has never even met!! But the island of Sark isn’t as awful as Tiff thought it would be. She enjoys spending time with the islanders who are kind and honest. Three months later, when it’s time for her mom to join her, Tiff is feeling very worried.

The Klipfish Code by Mary Cassanova
Here is a riveting novel about risks taken, secrets kept, and questions about whom to trust. The year is 1942, and Norway is under Nazi occupation. Twelve-year-old Marit has decided to take action, even though grandfather gave her many warnings. Will her plan work to complete her part of a secret code? Would it make any difference to the Resistance? This book reveals what Norwegian people did to preserve their dignity and freedoms, and uncovers a startling statistic: the German secret police systematically rounded up one teacher in ten and sent them to concentration camps for their refusal to teach Nazi propaganda to Norwegian schoolchildren.
Robin’s Reading List

Willow King by Charles Platt
When thirteen-year-old Katie Durham learns that the owner of a thoroughbred farm is going to destroy a newborn colt, she rushes to his rescue. Willow King’s legs are badly twisted, but Katie fights for his life, begging for the chance to train and raise him, promising Mr. Ellis that she will take good care of him. Through Katie’s care and guidance, Willow King becomes a strong and talented racehorse. The horse’s courage and perseverance inspire Katie to come to terms with her own physical handicap.

Grades 7–12:

If the Witness Lied by Caroline B. Cooney
This young adult thriller takes place in 24 hours, and explores how people, as well as the media, can exploit a situation with devastating results, especially when innocent children are involved. Jack Fountain knows that what’s happened to his family sounds like the most horrible soap opera anyone could ever write, but it’s all true. It happened to his parents; to his sisters, smithy and Madison, and to his baby brother, Tris. The media wanted to know every detail, which just made things worse. It’s almost Tris’s third birthday, and everything is starting all over again. Aunt Cheryl, who is living with the Fountain children, has decided that they will heal only if they work through their pain—on camera. Jack and his sisters try to keep Tris’s face off-screen, but quickly they realize that there is more at stake than their privacy. The very identities they’ve created for themselves are called into question. What really happened on the day of their father’s accident?

Oak Street Chronicles by Suzanne Cooper
This story is about three unlikely teenagers that become friends and help and support one another through difficulties. Maria struggles with an alcoholic parent and moves often, but the move to Oak Street is life changing for her. Millie is a girl who is just a bit different. She’s very independent, resourceful, and rich. Millie could have anything she wants, but she’s not interested; she wants to walk lightly through the world. The other girls at school think she is hopelessly weird, but when catastrophe strikes, they find that Millie’s “weirdness” is exactly what is needed. Millie’s spunkiness, inner strength, and ability to cope with hardships makes her a positive role model for all young readers.

Painting the Black by Carl Deuker
Ryan Ward was in his senior year in high school when he had just begun to feel the magic of baseball; the magic of throwing out a runner, catching a wicked slider, pushing the limits, and training hard. Ryan is faced with a heartbreaking dilemma when one of his teammates pushes the limits too far; he must choose between his integrity and his love for the game.
Several years ago, *Character First!* had a story on its website about Dependability. In A.D. 79, Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the city of Pompeii. Archeologists uncovered the remains of some 2,000 inhabitants fleeing or seeking shelter in attics. But one soldier remained at his post, his hand gripping the hilt of his sword. From the standpoint of military Dependability, this soldier was Dependably brave to the point of death. Not only did he refuse to leave his post, he was engulfed by lava and died in the effort. I believe the U.S. has many soldiers such as this today, some of them from the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area. They are Dependable soldiers who pull their share of the load - and then some. Our nation benefits from their Dependability. But, the first responders, sanitation workers, teachers, indeed, all workers who show up reliably every day benefit our country as well.

But the story also got me to thinking about those who must decide if or when to leave their "posts." One of the "I will..." statements is to "Be careful what I promise." I think this means that I should consider how far I am willing to go in carrying out a promise I make. Until others decide it's time to leave? Until I am the last one standing? Until death? It also means to me that I should be careful not to commit myself to projects I cannot complete, or which interfere with my previous commitments. The lesson may then be that we should not commit to "posts" which are not worthwhile, or not matched to our skills, or which stretch us to the point that we are not as Dependable about our other commitments. Conversely, a spouse who remains in an abusive relationship might certainly be described as Dependable. At what cost to self? And for what greater good? A teacher who has high standards (read: "expectations") may be reluctant to revise those expectations for students who are less able in that skill area. Dependability can degenerate into pigheadedness when it is not tempered with other Character Qualities such as Cautiousness (Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions), Discernment (Understanding the deeper reasons why things happen), and Flexibility (Willingness to change plans or ideas according to the direction of my authorities). NOTE: It is hard enough to adhere to these Character Qualities by themselves; it gets even stickier trying to follow several overlapping Qualities at once. But, maybe I am over-thinking this. Maybe we mostly know when we need to be Dependable, steadfast, enduring and "there" for others. It's doing it that is hardest.

Woody Allen is reported to have said, "95% of Life is Just Showing Up." For me, one has to be there in order to be Dependable. I am not sure my generation understands this. But people from the era that Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation" know how to be there when it counts. I am reminded of the former secretary at Loveland Intermediate School, Margaret Keifer. Margaret taught me a great deal about "showing up." When a baby shower is held, she is there. When someone gets married, she's there. When a friend dies, she goes to the visitation and the funeral. When someone has a bake sale, she shows up with brownies. She visits the graves of family members on Memorial Day, makes it to retirement parties, and stays to clean up afterwards. Sometimes, when I don't want to have to attend something like this, I think, "What would Margaret do?" Then I pull on my shoes and get moving. Oh, by the way, Margaret is 90.

Dependability suggests that we need to Be There when called on, But what if we fail the “Be There” test? Well, I remember from my childhood playing Putt-Putt and other types of miniature golf. Sometimes, my fellow players would allow me a “Do Over.” In other words, if I took a shot, and messed it up, I might be allowed to take the shot again. What a grace-filled gift! I hear people say, though, that there are no “Do Overs” in life. I guess that must follow from "You only go around once," “You only get one shot,” “Don't blow your only chance,” or “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” Well, I went to the dentist the other day. They had to take an impression of my upper jaw. It got messed up the first time. I said to the technician, “I guess I made a bad first impression.” Tee hee. Know what? They made another one. We got a “Do Over.” I suspect that there are more “Do Over” chances in life than we are led to believe. This is less from the “Go around once” school of living, and more from the “Do it til you get it right” approach. So, If you didn't succeed in Being Dependably There when your sacrifice was needed, it's usually not too late. Be There now. Go ahead.

We have a lot of lessons to learn from the Greatest Generation about Dependability. Showing up is one of them. Do overs may be another.
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.