

# Wisdom

## Vs. Foolishness

**I WILL:**

- Listen to my parents and teachers
- Learn from correction
- Choose my friends carefully
- Remember there are consequences to all my actions
- Ask, "What is the right thing to do?"

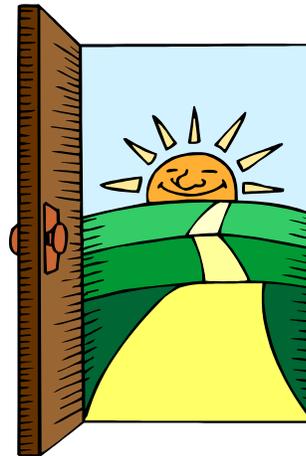
**FEATURES**

No Matter How You Say It	2
Quotes	3
Curriculum Connection	3
Hero	4
Team-Building Activity	4
Family Activity	7
Crosky's Corner	8
Character in the Classroom Continuously	9

### Making practical applications of what is learned

Wouldn't it be great if we all had a personal GPS to guide us in making wise decisions? In deciding which path to take, we often consult with others to tell us what to do. In most cases, they will tell us what to do based on the truths that they live by. This may not be the truths that we live by. A true mentor will help us to understand our own truths and therefore our own path, the one that is right for us. Ultimately, we are the only ones who know what our individual truths are so it is important to listen to that inner voice. That's when the wise path becomes obvious. So then, it seems, we do have an internal GPS if we are just quiet enough to listen to it.

This month, let your inner truths keep you headed in the right direction.


**IN THIS ISSUE**

Number Battle	5
Green Thumb Wisdom	5
Stop, Think, Go Do	6
Let's Make A Deal	6
Trade Ya	6

# No Matter How You Say It

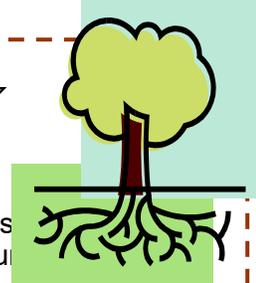
## Sabiduría vs. Necedad

Ver situaciones desde una perspectiva que trasciende las circunstancias actuales, y responder a ellas



## ↻ ↻ Go to the Root ↻ ↻

Wisdom is derived from the Anglo-Saxon root word *wis* meaning “wise, understanding truth” and the suffix *-dom*, meaning judgment. Can you see how Wisdom is applying truths to your decision-making?



## Sign Language

Check out the following website for the American Sign Language interpretation of the word Wise and Foolish

Wise <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=2409>

Foolish <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=839>

Can you see how wisdom is connected to your mind and foolish is just hanging out there?

From Miriam Webster ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com))

### Synonyms

discernment, insight, perception, perceptiveness, perceptivity, sagaciousness, sagacity, sagemess, sapience

### Antonyms

imprudence, indiscretion

### Related Words

acuity, acumen, astuteness, clear-sightedness, keenness, penetration, percipience, perspicacity, sensitivity, understanding; appreciation, apprehension, comprehension, grasp; brain (s), braininess, brightness, brilliance, caniness, cleverness, gray matter, intellect, intelligence, judgment, mentality, power, reason, sense, smartness, wit; discrimination, foresight, foresightedness, judiciousness, prudence, sanity; logic, rationality

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

## Character Quotables

“A man begins cutting his wisdom teeth the first time he bites off more than he can chew.”

~Herb Caen

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”

~Confucius

“The simple things are also the most extraordinary things, and only the wise can see them.”

~Paulo Coelho

“From the errors of others, a wise man corrects his own.”

~Publilius Syrus

“Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.”

~Thomas Jefferson

“It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.”

~Henry David Thoreau

“The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.”

~Isaac Asimov

“Memory is the mother of all wisdom.”

~Aeschylus

“Learn from the mistakes of others. You can never live long enough to make them all yourself.”

~Groucho Marx

“No man was ever wise by chance.”

~Lucius Annaeus Seneca

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.”

~Saint Augustine

“The young man knows the rules, but the old man knows the exceptions.”

~Oliver Wendell Holmes

“Turn your wounds into wisdom.”

~Oprah Winfrey

“Wisdom is knowing what to do next; virtue is doing it.”

~David Starr Jordan

“Wise men make more opportunities than they find.”

~Francis Bacon

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

~Aristotle

“Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens”

~Jimi Hendrix

“When you know better you do better.”

~Maya Angelou

“Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life.”

~Sandra Carey

### Curriculum Connection



### Science



Making wise decisions requires acquiring information on which to base choices. Use the Wise Ol' Owl to teach the gathering of information.

#### Did you know...

- that the positions of an owl's ears (one high, one low) let's it hear everything in three dimensions - up/down, left/right and near/far?
- that the eyes of an owl gather enough light to function well when no one else can see?
- that owls hunt alone since they can fly silently and the noise of another bird could spoil their flight?
- owls don't chew their food but swallow it whole so they must make wise choices on what to put in their mouths?

# Katherine Magnoli, Model of Wisdom

Katherine Magnoli remembers the exact moment she decided to write a book. Magnoli, who is confined to a wheelchair, was sitting by the pool at her condominium in the summer of 2009, when she noticed a little girl staring at her.

“I started to think about little kids’ curiosity. Sometime when they see me they get scared, sometimes they want to ask questions but are afraid,” Magnoli said.

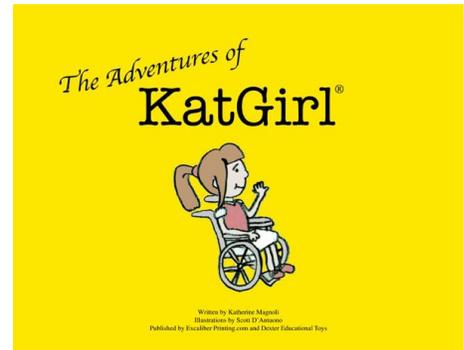
What began as a passing moment turned into a book that has sold over 1,000 copies to people, including President Bill Clinton.

Magnoli made a practical application of truth in deciding to write a book that helps kids understand the truths about people with disabilities. She wanted to do it in a way that entertains the children and not make it so serious and heavy.

Katherine Magnoli sees uncertainty fade away when reading her book to elementary school students. “Kids who may have hesitated in the past to approach me in my wheelchair, run right up and talk with me after reading the book.”

Faces Magazine, says “Katherine Magnoli brings

wisdom, patience, and a super hero in a wheelchair to first children’s book, ‘The Adventures of KatGirl’.”



[www.facesofspinabifida.com](http://www.facesofspinabifida.com)

## Team~Building Activity

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

### I Forget!

Arrange students in groups of 2 or 3 for this story-telling exercise. Make up a negative story title that is age appropriate for the group. One person in each group starts by making up the first part of the story. After a few sentences, or when they become “stuck”, they turn to the next person in their group and say “I forget the rest - your turn.” The next person picks up the story line and continues the story until they want to pass it off like the first person did. Allow time for all groups to complete their story. Now give them a positive story title and ask them to do the same thing. When they have finished both stories, ask them if they enjoyed creating the stories. Ask them which one was easier to create, the positive or the negative.



**The Night I Crashed the Car.**

**How I Broke My Toe.**

**My Favorite Vacation.**

**It’s a Party.**

## Green Thumb Wisdom

For this activity, you will need to have a single potted plant to use for the demonstration. On index cards write the following instructions or something similar, one instruction per card. You will need to have one index card per student.

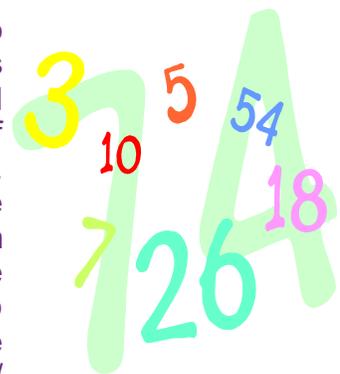
- Keep me in a closet.
- Place me where I will get adequate sunlight.
- Place me directly under a powerful grow light 24 hours a day.
- Water me faithfully.
- Water me whenever you remember.
- Water me once then never again.
- Water me with fertilizer according to package directions.
- Water me with soda pop.
- Put me in the refrigerator.
- Put me in the bathroom.
- Put me right above the stove.



Place the plant where everyone can see it. Go to each student (or they can come to you) and let them choose a card, without seeing the instructions. Have them read the card (or read it for younger students). Ask them if it is a wise thing to do for the plant and what they think will happen to the plant if they do what the card says. In some cases the plant will flourish and in others it will die. When everyone has had a turn, ask how they determined if something was wise or not. Ask if some of the treatments were hard to tell if they would be good for the plant or not. End by comparing the treatment of the plant to making wise choices for our body. Compare choices about nutritious food and getting enough sleep to the care of the plant and how our bodies react to the care decisions we make. Ask if our bodies react as quickly as a plant does.

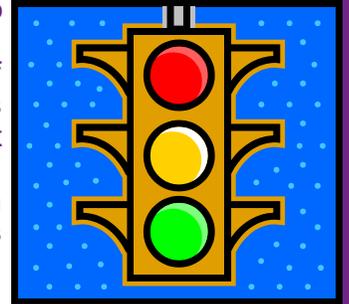
## Number Battle

Pair up all of the students. Each should have something to write on and something with which to write. Have the students sit back to back. Each will write down a number between 0 and 10. The player with the higher number gets that amount of treats or points minus the amount written by the opponent. Example, if they chose 7 and 5 the student who had chosen the higher number gets 2 treats/points ( $7 - 5 = 2$ ). What will happen when the players get to play one, five or twenty rounds? Will the children find the cooperative strategy that will enable them to earn as many treats/points as possible? (Hint: if players take turns writing 0 and 10, each one will be able to get 10 treats/points every other round).



## Stop - Think - Go Do

The stoplight is a simplified approach to decision-making that gives kids a chance to think wisely before they act. You can teach the Stop-Think-Go Do Model by comparing it to a stop light. When they need to make a decision the first step is to stop. Next, consider your options, their chance of success and their consequences in the Think stage. The Green Light is executing the wisest choice. What happens if you make a decision and it turns out to be the wrong one? Then start at the beginning by stopping and looking at the choices again. How does the experience of the first decision affect this decision? How do other similar past experiences affect this decision?



## Let's Make a Deal

“...behind the door where Carol Merrill is standing...”

You may remember the game show of the same name hosted by Monty Hall. The students may remember the 2009 version hosted by Wayne Brady. If they are not familiar with the show, explain the rules. You will have prepared several bags of prizes using lunch bags, grocery bags or whatever containers you choose. The containers do not have to be identical. The prizes do not have to be large or pricey - candy, erasers, pennies or gag gifts. Randomly chose a student who will choose a bag. You can either let them open the bag before you offer them a trade or not. If you let them look, they can trade for an unknown. If you don't let them look, they get to trade for a known. Continue choosing students and trading until all of the bags have been given away. When the game is over, ask them what they based their decisions on. Did they listen to what the other students suggested? Did the latter traders base decisions on what earlier traders got? Did they just go with their gut? How wise can these decisions be if you do not know all of the facts? Once you received something, but found out later that you could have had something better, were you dissatisfied? Part of being wise is being happy with what you have.



## Trade Ya!

Start with an ordinary deck of playing cards. Larger classes may want to use 2 decks. Give several cards (3 -10 depending on the age of the students) to each student and then encourage them trade cards back and forth in an attempt to get the best hand possible. Let them know that the value of each card will be revealed at the end of the game. Once the trading has stopped you can reveal the value of the cards. Choose values that do not necessarily correspond to what would be expected. (For a math connection, you can give them age-appropriate formulas to apply to the numbered cards such as multiply odd numbered cards by 2 and add 1 to even numbered cards.) When they have calculated their points, see who has the most and least points. Explain that they had to make decisions on what cards to keep and what cards to trade without having all of the facts about the value of the cards. If they had been given the opportunity to ask questions, what would they have asked in order to make wise decisions?

## For the Family

We are studying the character quality of **Wisdom**: Making practical applications of what is learned.

To practice Wisdom I will:

- Listen to my parents and teachers
- Learn from correction
- Choose my friends carefully
- Remember there are consequences to all my actions
- Ask, “What is the right thing to do?”



### Family Activity:

#### Negotiations

To teach children how to make wise choices, give them the opportunity to negotiate a decision. For example, you are going to choose a movie to watch. Let the children know that they can each suggest a movie but for each suggestion, they each have veto power. Give each child one choice to suggest. As each suggestion is made, the other children are offered veto power. If it is vetoed by any of the other children, the movie is not chosen. When all of them have had one choice, start over with the first child again and give them all another choice. If they all agree at any point the game is over and the movie is chosen. Let them know how many chances they will get to come to an agreement. If you set the max at 2 and they've each made 2 suggestions without choosing the movie then the choice is “NO Movie”. Make sure they know that rule before the game begins. Ask them how they started thinking of their choices knowing that the option of No Movie was a possibility. Ask them if ending up the first round with no choice had an impact on what choices they made a second time around. Once the movie has been watched, ask how different the experience would have been if it was a movie that one person didn't want or only one person wanted.



Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- Review the “I wills” and see if there are specific actions you can add to this list.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.
- For more ideas visit [www.charactercincinnati.org/education.php](http://www.charactercincinnati.org/education.php)

# Croskey's Corner

Forty years ago, I had just completed my student teaching in social studies at Princeton Junior School. I came to social studies by a wayward trail. When I was 12, I was the editor of the Mound School *Gopher Gazette*, and was working on being a journalist. OK, actually, I wanted to be mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent, because, well, I knew I couldn't be Superman. Then, in high school I wanted to be a chemist. Part of it was wanting to blow stuff up. But another part was that it was fun mixing chemicals and looking for "What ifs?" and "What happened?" Next, I wanted to be a math teacher – until I took Calculus. Finally, I settled on Social Studies. Part of my motivation was to attempt to be as stimulating, as creative, and as funny as my Sophomore World History teacher was. But just as big a push, maybe bigger, came from wanting to be a better American Government teacher than the guy that "taught" me. The cross country coach. Long ago, he had copied the textbook onto notebook paper, and read the book to us word for word as his lecture. That class was a great place to finish my Physics homework.

Looking back, I realized that I was, well, looking back ...for motivation. The past was my muse. I wanted to be better than some of my teachers had been, and as good as others. My models, my points of reference, were from my past.

As I got into my educational career, I began to look more to the "side" than to the past. I compared myself to others with whom I was teaching. I stole ideas from them freely. I used them as my motivation. I wanted to be as good as the best of them, and – dare I say? - better than them. I will leave it to others to judge how short of that goal I fell. I do know that today, after every class I teach, I see that I could have improved it.

Subsequently, I shifted careers from teaching to school psychology. Yet I still followed the pattern of, early on, looking to the past for inspiration and later, looking to the side. Now that I am retired, and teaching part time, I feel like I have stopped looking to the past or to the side. Perhaps it is due to getting old, but now I tend to look ahead. My drive is to be:

- Better
- Smarter
- A better child advocate
- More empathic
- More creative
- More generous and helpful
- More.

There is a pull now from the unknown to be a better educator. I care, but I do not care as much as I could. In the past, *Character First!* defined Wisdom, the May Character Quality, as "Seeing and responding to life situations from a perspective that transcends my current circumstances." That definition, while wordy, has some nuances for me that are not as obvious in the current definition, "Making practical applications of what is learned." I am drawn to the "transcending perspectives." "Transcend" means to me to rise above the limits...of time, of the universe, of any barrier. I believe that is the "More" I hear calling me. I want to transcend the limits that I have placed on myself. I believe there is more to do; more to know; more to see; more to laugh; more to love; more to live. Yes, and there are more dark nights to bear. That is the hard part. I thought life would get easier as I grew older. THAT is not happening for me.

This may sound like I am seeking to be Perfect. If that is so, it is not in the sense of having no faults. It may be more about getting rid of the parts that don't help me be a better educator and replacing them with parts that help me improve. Or, as Antoine de Saint-Exupery said, "Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

I believe now that Wisdom is looking at life through those Transcendence-colored glasses. Transcendence requires us to look to the Future, the Unknown. We have figures of speech for this: Think outside the box. Take your blinders off. Get the view from the balcony. At any rate, it does not mean looking from the past or from the side. Don't you feel that, too? Don't you have More to do? It probably isn't surprising if we go through the Past, Present, and Future stages. Our students are traveling the same road. Bon Voyage to all of us.

"Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold."

--Leo Tolstoy,  
Russian writer

Bill Croskey is a  
retired school  
psychologist from the  
Loveland City Schools



The Character Council of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky

P.O. Box 33144

Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Mary Andres Russell, Executive Director

E-mail: [mrussell@charactercincinnati.org](mailto:mrussell@charactercincinnati.org)

[www.charactercincinnati.org](http://www.charactercincinnati.org)

Written by Jill Tomey,  
Character Education Consultant

© 2017 Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky

The 49 Character Qualities are adapted from Character First! materials and are used with permission.

Use of external website links in our articles does not imply endorsement of the site, its content or the views and opinions of the external Web site's sponsoring organization. Please use your own discretion when using material from these links.

**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.