



## Development Stages of School-Age (6 – 10 years) With Implications and Activities for Character Education

### What they do...

- Spirited with boundless energy
- Girls will be maturing faster than boys; some may be entering puberty
- Large and small muscle development, strength, balance, and coordination are increasing
  
- Enjoy group activities and cooperation. Feel loyal to group or club
- Prefer to be with members of the same sex
- Admire and imitate older boys and girls
- Need guidance from adults to stay on task and to perform at their best
  
- Interests often change rapidly and do best when work is presented in small pieces
- Vary greatly in academic abilities, interests, and reasoning skills.
- Easily motivated and eager to try new things
  
- Comparisons with other youth are difficult and erode self-confidence. Prefer recognition and praise for doing good work

### What that means for us...

#### Physical

- Provide active learning experiences
- Avoid competitions between girls and boys (Respect, Fairness)
- Plan activities that allow youth to move about and use their bodies

#### Social

- Emphasize group learning experiences and form groups to plan activities together (Responsibility, Respect)
- Plan learning experiences to be done with members of the same sex (Trustworthiness, Respect, Citizenship)
- Encourage experiences with and mentoring by older youth (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility)
- Work closely with this age group and enlist older youth to help you with this task (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility)

#### Intellectual

- Allow for many brief learning experiences and give simple, short directions (Respect)
- Offer activities appropriate for a wide range of abilities so that all children have a chance to succeed (Respect, Fairness, Caring)
- Provide a variety of different activities

#### Emotional

- Instead of comparing youth with each other, help youth identify their own successes by comparing present and past performances for the individual. (Trustworthiness, Respect)

Source: Volunteers...the foundation of youth development Internet course, University of Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs

## Six Pillar of Character™ Activities

The following briefly describes each of the Six Pillars of Character. They are accompanied by example activities that are age appropriate. Most require few supplies and could be led by older teens as well as CYS staff.

### Trustworthiness

- Be honest
- Don't deceive, cheat or steal
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

#### Activity 1 - Six Feelings

*Supplies:*

Seven large signs with one name and/or picture of each of the Seven Dwarfs on each sign (Happy, Sneezzy, Bashful, Dopey, Grumpy, Sleepy and Doc.) Post these signs on the wall.

Ask the participants to look at all the signs on the wall. Have club members and guests stand by the sign that best describes how they feel at the moment. Explain that it is okay to be honest about what and how they are feeling. Give each group about 10 minutes to create a 30 second commercial to show their emotion. Have each group act out their commercial.

*Discussion question:*

1. Do you think how you feel or act affects whether a person feels they can trust you or not? Why or why not?

(Adapted from Building Character and Community in the Classroom, Creative Teaching Press, 1997)

#### Activity 2 - A Tower of Trust

*Overview:*

Children learn about building trust by citing ways they can earn it. They then illustrate these ideas on index cards which are affixed to small boxes to build a "tower of trust."

*Preparation/Materials:* One index card for each child; small boxes or other cube-shaped items to use as building blocks (one for each child); tape; enough crayons for all the children to color at the same time

*Procedure:*

Ask the children: "If your mom asks you to pick up your toys, can she count on you to do it?" Wait for responses, and then ask: "Can she count on you to pick up those toys, even if she isn't looking?"

Field their comments and then explain what it means to have good character: "People with good character do good things – even when their moms aren't looking. When you do good things over and over again, even when parents and teachers aren't looking, you earn trust. Nobody is trusted automatically. But when your parents and teachers realize that you have a habit of doing good things without being asked, then they let you do more things on your own. What are some things you can do to show your mom you can be trusted?" Solicit answers and praise them for their good ideas.

Distribute index cards and crayons to the children and have them draw pictures of themselves doing the things they mentioned. Allow a few minutes for the children to draw and color, then ask them to share their pictures with the rest of the group. Say: "These are good examples of ways to earn trust. Let's use them to make a "trust tower." Tape each card to a building block (cut the cards to reduce their size if necessary), and carefully stack them to form a pyramid-shaped tower. Tell them that building trust takes several good examples like the ones on the blocks.

When you've completed the tower, say: "It has taken a long time to build your mom's trust in you. But it doesn't take long at all to destroy the tower of trust. What if you tell your mom you picked up all of your toys, and she finds them under the rug? What will that do for the trust you've built?" When one of them says it will damage it, affirm this and illustrate how it weakens trust by carefully pulling a block from the tower.

Ask: "What if you tell your mom you ate your green beans and then she finds them wadded up in your napkin? What will that do for the trust you've built?" Again, illustrate how it weakens trust by pulling another block from the tower.

Ask: "What if you tell your mom you will wear your coat when you're outside and then she sees you playing with only a T-shirt on? What will that do for the trust you've built?" Pull another block from the tower.

Continue with examples until your tower crumbles. When it falls down, tell them: "Now it's even harder to build trust because we have to clean up all of this mess before we can get started building again!"

*Discussion questions:*

1. Will you keep this tower in mind to help you remember to build trust?
2. What good things are you going to do to build trust with your parents?
3. Your teachers?
4. Your baby-sitters?
5. Your brother and sisters?

(Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, 2002-2003 edition, Josephson Institute of Ethics, Adapted from "Exercising Character" lesson plans and activities by Peggy Adkins, Marina del Rey, CA, 1995.)

### Activity 3 - Chain of Events

This activity sheet is designed to reinforce the idea that trustworthy actions set off a positive chain of events. Please work together as a family to do the activity. Have your child return the chain to school.

*Directions:*

Think of a trustworthy action someone in your family could take. Write it on the first link. Then list in order the results that might occur. Cut apart the links and glue them together to make a chain. End with the link that tells which family members participate.

Trustworthy Action
Result 1
Result 2
Result 3
Family Participants

(Character Education, Grades 5-6, Josephson Institute of Ethics.)

<b>Respect</b>
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- Treat others with respect, follow the Golden Rule
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

### Activity 1 - "Respect"acles

*Supplies:*

Pipe cleaners and scissors

We are going to make "respect"acles. These "respect"acles can be worn and used to talk about getting along with others. Wearing "respect"acles means that we watch and listen for other people's feelings. When worn we respect others as well as the rules of good behavior – like standing in lines, keeping a quiet voice when asked, picking up our rooms, helping at home or school and respecting others that are alike and different from us.

*Directions:*

1. Twist ends of the pipe cleaner together to form a circle.
2. After it is securely fastened, twist the circle to make a figure 8 – make sure both circles of the figure 8 are about the same size.
3. Give the figure 8 an extra twist to make the bridge of the glasses and to secure the circle.
4. Attach pipe cleaners – one on each side – to form the earpieces.
5. The "respect"acles can be decorated using other pipe cleaners.

*Discussion questions:*

1. In what ways do you show respect to others?
2. Is it always easy to show respect to others?
3. How does it feel when others do not show you respect?
4. Do you think they feel the same way when you don't show respect?

(Thought, Word and Deed, State Farm Insurance, 1994)

**Activity 2 - Make a Book**

Create individual books that summarize how students show respect. Write these eight sentence starters on the chalkboard. Have students copy each one on a separate sheet of paper and finish it. Then let them illustrate each page. (You may want to do this as a computer activity if you have a writing/drawing program.) Direct students to create a cover for their books and staple the pages together. Provide time for students to read aloud their favorite page to the class or share their entire book within a group.

- I show I respect myself by...
- I show I respect my friends by...
- I show I respect my classmates by...
- I show I respect my teachers by...
- I show I respect my family by...
- I show I respect my community by...
- I show I respect my country by...
- I show I respect my planet by...

(Character Education, Grade 5-6, Josephson Institute of Ethics)

**Activity 3 - Respect or Disrespect (Role Playing)**

*Overview:*

Students will learn to better distinguish between respectful and disrespectful statements and actions through role-playing exercises.

*Procedure:*

Have a brief discussion about what it means to show respect to others. Then call on youngsters to role-play the situations on the "Respect or Disrespect?" activity sheet. After each one, ask if it was a good example of respect or disrespect. Depending on how the students carry out the role-playing, some scenes may be characterized by both respectful and disrespectful behavior. Tell the group to watch for this. Finally, call on them to describe how anyone showing a lack of respect could have acted respectfully.

(Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, 2002-2003 edition, Josephson Institute of Ethics, Adapted from "Developing Character-Building Values," by John Gust (Good Apple, Morristown, NJ), 1995.)

<b>Responsibility</b>
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- Do what you are supposed to do
- Persevere keep on trying
- Always do your best
- Use self-control
- Be self-disciplined
- Think before you act – consider the consequences
- Be accountable for your choices

**Activity 1 - Responsibility Calendar**

*Supplies:*

Blank calendar page or calendar page of a specific month.

As family members and members of groups and organizations we all have responsibilities that require us to be prompt and not miss meetings or other assigned responsibilities. Your job for this month is to mark your responsibilities on the calendar. Share and talk about your calendar with your family.

Here's some ideas to include on your calendar:

- Attend monthly organization meeting
- Take out the trash on Friday

- Finish the character poster for CYS

*Discussion questions:*

1. Was it difficult to remember to mark the responsibilities down on the calendar? Is that an important first step in being responsible?
2. Is it always easy to complete all the jobs that you know need to be done? Why or why not?
3. Did you complete your responsibilities in a timely manner or did you put your jobs off until the last minute?

**Activity 2 –Scrapbook**

*Supplies:*

Pre-made scrapbook or handmade scrapbook; group pictures etc.

Introduce the project by explaining to the children that they are going to make a legacy of their class in the form of a scrapbook. The book will contain bits and pieces of information about who they are and what they are like.

Explain that as a member of the group, each person will want to contribute to the scrapbook. Each child will be given a full day to add his or her contribution and to take responsibility for caring for and safeguarding the book. One that day, the child is not to let the book out of their sight. They will take it everywhere, including home that night and back the next morning. (Don't forget that you are a member of the group. Do your page first to set an example and establish the tone of the project.)

While the book is under each child's guardianship, they are to add something to their page. Encourage the child to ask family members to work on a contribution for the book – it might be a family picture.

**Activity 3 – Responsibility Hats**

*Supplies:*

2-inch clear tape, newspaper or tissue paper in the character colors of blue, yellow, green orange, red and purple, miscellaneous art supplies (markers, yarn, glitter, pipe cleaners, or character stickers)

*Directions:*

1. Place the middle of two or more large, square sheets of newspaper or colored tissue paper on the top of a child's head. Gather the paper around the top of the child's head to form the crown of the hat, permanently forming the hat crown by taping around the child's head.
2. Curl up the edges of the paper to form the brim of the hat. Have the children decorate their hats with different art supplies.
3. Be sure to talk about the colors or paper the colors of decorations and which pillar of character they represent. Encourage them to be particularly responsible when they wear their responsibility hat. Have them take their hat home and explain to their family what it means to be responsible.

(Adapted from Junior Master Gardener: Quick Guide to Activities, Texas Extension, Texas A&M University)

<b>Fairness</b>
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- Play by the rules
- Take turns and share
- Be open-minded; listen to others
- Don't take advantage of others
- Don't blame others carelessly

**Activity 1 - A Tall Order of Fairness**

*Overview:*

Working as a team to complete a competitive task with limiting rules, the participants learn what skills are necessary to play fair.

*Supplies:*

40 straws (for each group); 20 paper clip (for each group); Adhesive tape (for each group); Scissors (one pair for each group)

*Procedure:*

Explain that the lesson will focus on fairness. Reiterate key qualities of fairness. Then ask: "How do rules affect fairness?" Offer the students examples and have them come up with more. Next ask: "What types of situations make sets of rules hard to follow? Why?" Lead the discussion to the importance of teamwork and the influence of competition on fairness. Ask them to explain why people cheat. Then solicit examples of consequences for such behavior. Introduce the task. Say: "We are going to complete a competitive task today to see who can build the tallest tower out of certain materials. However, there are certain rules and limitations." Distribute materials and divide the students into four or five groups. Say: "Your group will have five minutes to design a tower and five minutes to build it. Every person in the group must be involved in the planning and building of the tower. Finally, you can only talk while you are designing the tower. Once you start building it, you cannot talk to one another. If you talk during the building stage, your group will have to start over and will lose any materials that have been used up to that point." Finally, ask: "What is the most important thing to remember? After fielding answers, say: The most important thing is not to win but to play fair."

Once the game is over, discuss the role of fairness in their tasks and what is taught them about solving problems fairly,

(Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, 2002-2003 edition, Josephson Institute of Ethics)

**Activity 2 – Taking Turns**

*Supplies:*

Empty milk carton, playground balls.

Explain to the group that taking turns is an important trait of fairness. Ask: How does taking turns show we are fair? Field answers from the group. Then say: We are going to plan a game that will test your cooperation skills and show how well you can follow the rules of taking turns.

Set up an empty milk carton. Distribute the playground balls to the children. Designate the place from which the children will roll their balls. Explain the game: After the first ball is rolled, each of you will work together to help it hit the milk carton without knocking it over. You will each take a turn rolling your balls to try and gently bump the first ball rolled so it can lightly touch the carton. Remember, we don't want to knock the carton over.

Each child takes a turn rolling a ball until the first ball touches the carton. If the carton is knocked over, the child who rolled the last ball begins the next game.

Ask the children to talk about how they cooperated and why taking turns was important to their success with this game.

(Adapted from Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character – 2002/2003 ed.)

**Activity 3 – Upset**

Have the children decide if the following scenarios are fair or not and have them explain why. You might have the group stand in the middle of the room before each scenario. If they think the answer is "Yes" have them move to the right side of the room. If they think the answer is "No" have them move to the left side of the room.

Bobby stepped on Rico's shoelace and Rico tripped. Would it be fair for Rico to be upset with Bobby?

Sara called Yuri stupid when he didn't make the goal during a soccer game. Would it be fair for Yuri to be upset with Sara?

When Dee got home from school, she found her baby sister playing with Dee's favorite doll. Would it be fair for Dee to be upset with her baby sister?

Jan promised to call Marlee on Saturday, but she never called. Would it be fair for Marlee to be upset with Jan?

(Adapted from Character Education Teaching Values for Life, Instructional Fair, Grand Rapids, MI)

**Caring**

- Be kind
- Be compassionate and show you care
- Express gratitude
- Forgive others

- Help people in need

### Activity 1 - How I Can Help

*Supplies:*

Paper and pencils are crayons

Give each member a piece of paper and pencil or crayon. Ask them to draw a gingerbread type figure on the paper.



- From one of his hands have each person list five things they can do to help someone else. (read to someone, clean up a yard, etc.)
- From one of his feet have each person list five places they can go to help someone else. (nursing home, hospital, etc.)
- Have each person draw a shirt pocket on the figure and list five things they can give to someone else to show they care. (flowers, cookies, etc.)

*Discussion questions:*

1. How does it make you feel when you show someone else you care?
2. Can only older and bigger people do things for other people to show they care?
3. How do you feel when someone does something nice for you?

(CHARACTER COUNTS!™ training, Denver, CO, 1996)

### Activity 2 – Caring Coupons

*Supplies:*

Photocopied and cut out “caring coupons” (enough for each child to assemble a book of 5-10 coupons); pencils or pens; stapler and staples

*Procedure:*

Ask the children: “Would you like to get your mom, dad or someone else you care about a gift that they’ll love – and not have to spend a dime for it? Here’s an idea: make a book full of “caring coupons: for them.” Distribute the sample coupons or have the children make a whole book themselves.

Tell them to think of caring acts that their parent(s) or other special person would appreciate. Have them list these acts on the coupons. For example, they might make a coupon redeemable for one morning so their parents could sleep in; a coupon for yard work or one for extra house cleaning chores. Even a good hug and kiss would be great.

When they have completed their coupons and stapled them together with a creative cover they are ready to give to the special people in their lives.

\*\*\*CARING COUPON\*\*\*

This coupon can be redeemed for the Caring act described here:

I will... \_\_\_\_\_

(Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character – 2002/2003 ed.)

### Activity 3 – Feeling Collages

*Supplies:*

Magazines, paste, scissors, paper

Have each child choose a feeling word (caring, like, love, etc.) Have the children “write” the word on a piece of drawing paper by cutting the appropriate letters out of magazines and pasting them to the paper. Have them illustrate the feeling by cutting out and pasting pictures that show faces expressing that feeling. When the collages are finished, have the children share them.

*Discussion questions:*

1. How did you decide which feeling words to illustrate:
2. What words were easiest to illustrate?

## Citizenship

- Do your share to make your school, center and community better
- Cooperate
- Stay informed; vote
- Be a good neighbor
- Obey laws and rules
- Respect authority
- Protect the environment

### **Activity 1 – Collage of Citizenship**

*Supplies:*

Scissors, current newspapers and magazines and glue or paste

Have the children make a collage of people exercising their citizenship responsibilities (e.g. Recycling, voting, showing respect for the law, speaking out against social injustice or defending our country.)

Ask each child to contribute at least one piece to the collage. When the collage is complete ask each child to identify his/her contribution and explain why they selected it.

Discuss what these actions represent, how they affect us and how and why we should each be involved in similar activities.

(Adapted from Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character – 2002/2003 ed.)

### **Activity 2 – Community Pride**

A community may be defined in many ways. The entire town you live in is a community; the Installation your family lives on or works on is a community and the CYS program is a type of community. One aspect of citizenship involves taking pride in our community. Have the children work in small group to design a brochure that highlights their community (they will first need to decide what community they want to feature in the brochure.) Suggest they use descriptions of people or places of interest, including pictures and captions. The information in their brochures should both inform and make the reader want to visit or learn more about the community. Talk about how words are used to show a place in its best light.

You may want to suggest writing a brochure of your CYS program and share it with another installation's CYS program.

(Character Education Teaching Values for Life, Instructional Fair, Grand Rapids, MI)

### **Activity 3 – Citizenship at CYS**

Part of the responsibility of being a citizen involves following rules and doing your part to ensure that everyone is safe. No matter what kind of group a person belongs to, there are almost always rules designed to protect the rights of its members and to keep them from harm.

As citizens of CYS there are certain rules to follow. Brainstorm with the group a list of rules you have at CYS. As youth mention each rule, ask them why they think that rule is needed.

Next, ask them to think about the rules they have at home. Remind them that every family is unique and that the rules may vary from one home to the next. As they mention each rule, record it on a chart. Ask the children to explain why that rule is important in their household.

(Adapted from Character Education Teaching Values for Life, Instructional Fair, Grand Rapids, MI)

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CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Six Pillars of Character are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. [www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)

