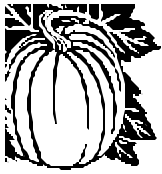


Dependability

Can I rely on
you?

Diamonds are only
chunks of coal that stuck
to their jobs.

Minnie Richard Smith



November Character Connection Theme: Dependability



Definition

Being dependable is defined as being trustworthy.¹ If you are dependable, you are believable and reliable. A dependable person persists or endures in a responsibility until the job is complete.

Twentieth century child psychologist Haim Ginott said, "How can we help a child change from undependable to dependable, from a mediocre student to a capable student, from someone who won't amount to very much to someone who will count for something. The answer is at once both simple and complicated: We treat a child as if he already is what we would like him to become."²

Quotes

"The greatest ability is dependability." -- Bob Jones (American Evangelist and college president)

"The lives and happiness of our children, as far ahead as the mind can reach, depend on us today. If we succeed, posterity looking back will record that this was indeed man's finest hour." --Carl A. Berendsen³

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

"Don't make excuses-make good." Elbert Hubbard

"It is our responsibilities not ourselves that we should take seriously."⁴

"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 Lavater⁵

The Champion⁶

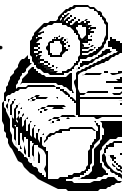
The average runner sprints until the breath in him is gone;
But the champion has the iron will that makes him carry on.
For rest, the average runner begs when limp his muscles grow
But the champion runs on leaden legs, his spirit makes him go.
The average man's complacent when he does his best to score,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

--Author Unknown

Activities

**As a class, list as many things as possible that we depend on. Divide the class in two teams and play Pictionary with the words. Talk about how the team depends on the artist to present the unknown word and thus score a point.

** Assign students to bring the various ingredients of a recipe. The next day, assemble the ingredients. Perhaps, a student will forget an ingredient. However, the recipe can be assembled without the ingredient, baked and tasted. *Talk about the importance of dependability in group projects of all kinds.*



¹ "dependable" The American Heritage Dictionary

² <http://www.bartleby.com/66/76/24976.html> Quoted in *Liberated Parents Liberated Children, Your Guide to a Happier Family*, speech, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (1990).

³ Zaadz Quotes <http://www.zaadz.com/quotes/topics/>, accessed October 5, 2005

⁴ PACE quotations for January: Being Dependable

⁵ http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_dependence.html TPCN-Great Quotations CyberNation International

⁶ <http://www.a-motive.com/quotes.html> Youth Motivation Institute

** Have students do a relay such as pushing a ping pong ball with a yard stick. *Talk about the importance of dependably trying hard during one's turn. How important is dependability in other games and team sports?*

**Pour flavored gelatin powder into a bowl. The gelatin should be about ¾"- 1" deep. With a medicine dropper, put a drop of water on the surface of the gelatin. Wait until water is absorbed, then add another drop. Continue the process until 6 drops have been placed on the gelatin. Now, scoop under the spot with a fork and taste the gummydrop. The sweet gelatin mix swells and holds water in a network of protein fibers. The gummydrop concoction is actually a liquid suspended in a solid.⁷ *Talk about the network that we form as family, friends, and a community. How do we dependably carry our fair share?*

Stories



A Reputation for Dependability

John and Horace Dodge were born in Niles, Michigan. They later commented, "We were the poorest little urchins ever born." Hard work and engineering genius soon led to their invention of a dirt proof ball bearing, then the manufacture of a bicycle. The red-headed brothers acquired their own machine shop and in 1903 were solicited by Henry Ford to work for his business.⁸ Soon their Detroit shop supplied car engines to the Ford Motor Company and transmissions for Oldsmobile cars. They amassed a fortune and in 1914 they introduced their own auto: a sturdily built Dodge.⁹ John and Horace epitomized the American work ethic and were known for paying their debts and being fair with their workers and business partners. Capitalizing on their reputation, they used their name, "Dodge Brothers" followed by "Reliable, Dependable, Sound" to market their products.¹⁰ Devoted Dodge customers raved about the rugged construction, quality, and power of their vehicles. Buyers consistently commented that this was a car that could be depended upon. In a Dodge marketing stroke of genius, Theodore MacManus coined the word "dependability." The new word began appearing in dictionaries in the early '30's.¹¹



Lord Horatio Nelson

There stands a great monument in England's Trafalgar Square. This landmark in the heart of London is of Lord Horatio Nelson, Great Britain's greatest admiral and naval hero. Nelson was the arch foe of Napoleon.

Lord Nelson had been made commander-in-chief of England's naval fleet in May 1803. He led from the flagship *Victory*. On October 21, 1805, just off Cape Trafalgar on the coast of Spain, Nelson hoisted the signal "England expects that every man will do his duty." Then he sailed with 27 vessels against the combined French and Spanish fleets. A fierce battle followed. Nelson was mortally wounded by an enemy sharp shooter and was carried below deck. Living long enough to know of England's victory, his last coherent words were, "Thank God I have done my duty." Napoleon's fleet of 33 warships was destroyed and Trafalgar became the decisive naval battle of the Napoleonic Wars. This victory gave Britain rule of the sea for over 100 years.



⁷ Herbert, Don Mr Wizard's Supermarket Science. New York: Random House 1980

⁸ Zacharias, Patricia, "Mrs. Dodge and the regal Rose Terrace,"

<http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=97&category=locations>

⁹ Wright, Richard A. "Dodge literally invented the word 'dependability'" <http://info.detnews.com/joyrides/story/index.cfm?id=281>, accessed June 8, 2005

¹⁰ Zacharias, Patricia, "Mrs. Dodge and the regal Rose Terrace,"

<http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=97&category=locations>

¹¹ Wright, Richard A. "Dodge literally invented the word 'dependability'" <http://info.detnews.com/joyrides/story/index.cfm?id=281>, accessed June 8, 2005

The poet, Robert Southey paid homage to Nelson with these words, "England has had many heroes. But never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow countrymen... With perfect and entire devotion he served his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength."¹²

We depend on our military and their commanders to keep our country, freedoms, and lifestyle safe. Their dependability and devotion are indispensable in preserving our liberty.



Writing or Discussion Topics

** Discuss what would happen if nature (sun, rain, seasons) were undependable. What are some symbols of dependability? Who depends on us? On whom do we depend? List the many service professionals that stand ready to help in every type of emergencies. What would happen if public servants (firemen, policemen, sanitation workers, teachers) did not do their jobs? Talk about the courage it takes to be dependable and do one's duty in face of great danger. For example, there were many firemen, policemen and rescue workers who risked their lives after the World Trade Center was attacked. Many of these died as heroes rescuing others.

**Discuss ways to develop dependability. How does our nation, world, and environment depend on us? William Penn said, "Governments, like docks, go from the motion men give them, and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined also. Therefore governments depend upon men rather than men upon governments." Buck Rodgers, an American businessman, is attributed with this quotation from IBM's Business conduct Guidelines: "We depend on you to do the right thing; right for both you and the company. It is no exaggeration to say that IBM's reputation is in your hands."¹³

**In the November 1997 Character Connection newsletter, a Lindon resident writes of a 32 year old government executive that took time to call her mother in a rest home every night at 7:00 p.m. No matter what was happening, this commitment was kept each evening. Have students talk to their parents about being dependable. How important is the character trait of dependability in the world of work and family?

**When an elephant herd faces danger, adult elephants encircle the calves to protect the young. When the conversation turns to an absent member of our group, one who like the elephant calf may be weak or unable to defend oneself because of absence, how should we make a circle of protection for that person's name and reputation? Can we be depended upon to be a friend at all times? What does dependability have to do with friendship?

Role Plays

**It is Jan's responsibility to keep her room clean. Unfortunately, there always seems to be many more fun and interesting things to do. The room has become a mess. Jan is part of a group of students doing a report on Asia. She finished her part of the report a week ago and set it aside, ready to hand in. It is now 8:30 a.m. The report is due at 9:00 a.m. and Jan cannot find her part of the report beneath all of the clutter in her room. *What should Jan do? Are there other character traits that also contribute to being dependable?*

**Cory has promised his mom that he would vacuum the basement by Saturday. Friday afternoon he comes home late from school. His friends invite him to the premier of a new movie. He attends and does not get home until very late. Waking up late on Saturday morning he remembers his research paper (due on Monday), basketball practice, and club meeting. Already his Saturday seems completely scheduled. There just doesn't seem to be any time for house work. Besides, his little sister has just made an even bigger mess with her toys in his area. He wonders if cleaning the house is really that important compared with everything else that he has going on. *If you were Cory's friend, how would you advise him?*

Book List

Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss

The Little Engine that Could

The Little Hero of Holland (The Book of Virtues, page 533)



December: Friendship

January: Cooperation

February: Trustworthy

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¹²“Nelson, Horatio” World Book Encyclopedia, 1988, pp 121-123

¹³ Zaadz Quotes, <http://www.zaadz.com/quotes/search/?page=3&search=depend>, accessed October 4, 2005

November Character Connection Theme: Dependability

I depend on _____.

* * * * *

_____ depends on me.

On the back of this paper, write as many different words as possible using the letters from the word **DEPENDABILITY**.