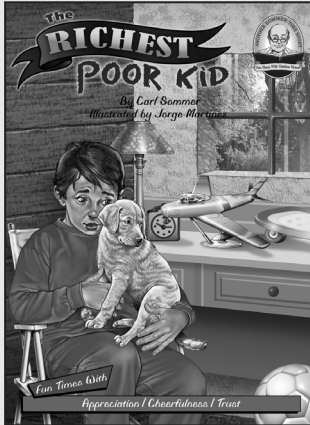


Character Education Activities

16. The Richest Poor Kid

Story Description



Randy was a young boy with an old problem. Everything he had was old. Mike his neighbor had a new bike and new toys, and he constantly teased Randy. Randy desperately wished he was rich so he could buy everything new. He was warned by those around him that riches alone don't bring happiness, but Randy never listened.

To Randy's great delight, his wish came true! Everything he touched turned into gold—even his beloved dog. As he held his lifeless gold dog, he realized he was now the most miserable kid in the whole world. He had one more wish, and he used it to have things return as before. His wish came true, and it became the happiest day of his life. Now when Randy went to school, he held his head high. When he rode his old bike, he often said, "I'm sure glad my bike isn't made of gold!"

Major Objective

To define and present the following virtues so they can be integrated into the life of each student:

- **Appreciation:** valuing or regarding highly; an expression of gratitude
- **Listening:** valuing the opinion of others
- **Self-Discipline:** controlling one's conduct for improvement

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *The Richest Poor Kid*. After reading the story write these three virtues on a board: appreciation, listening, and self-discipline. Define and discuss these virtues.

Discuss the main characters:

Randy

Mike

Dad

Mother

Brother

Sister

Teacher

Sandy

Words Do Not Hurt Me

Discuss the impact of words on the self-image and ways to evaluate and respond to criticism. Teach that a strong person does not let someone's criticism influence him or her.

People have two ears. Some things said need to go through both ears and out; while some things said need to enter into our hearts. Wise individuals know what to let pass through the ears, and what to let enter the heart.

Story: Randy had an old bicycle and a few old toys; but Mike, who lived across the street, had a new bike and new toys. Whenever he saw Randy riding his old bike, he would yell, "Get your trashy bike off the road!" Then he would laugh and laugh.

This made Randy furious. When Randy would turn the corner, he would give his old bike a hard kick and yell, “Oh how I wish I were rich. I’d buy a new bike and get rid of this old piece of junk!”

Lesson: What good did it do Randy to give his old bike a hard kick? How much happier Randy would have become if he had let Mike’s words pass through his ears.

Open Your Eyes

Some of the most precious things of life are free. Randy thought only of material things. He dreamed if he could only have new things then he would be happy. His dream came true, but he became extremely miserable. There’s nothing wrong with material things, but pity the poor people if that is only what they focus on. Pity also the people who wish only for wealth and miss the beauty around them. We need to open our eyes and appreciate the things around us.

Example: Look at a beautiful sunset.

Ask: Name things that are free and beautiful.

The beautiful ocean, lake, flowers, land animals, birds, fish, sun, sunset, sunrise, clouds, moon, stars, etc.

Go to the zoo or aquarium and marvel at the beautiful animals and fish.

Geography—Foreign Cultures

Goal: To help students learn to appreciate the things that they have. Many people living in foreign countries would be considered extremely rich if they had what some of the poorest children in the school have.

Assignment: Have student bring to class magazine or newspaper articles of other countries living in poverty and sickness. Students can also ask their parent for help.

Use a map and point out these countries.

Trusting Parents and Teachers

Teach children the importance of trusting parents. Stress how many problems children would avoid in life if they would just listen and trust their parents. Randy was living a very unhappy life because he didn’t trust his parents and teachers.

Ask: What advice do your parents give to help you become successful?

Why is it important to obey your parents?

It is important to obey parents because they are concerned for your safety and want the very best for you.

The instruction they give is based on their concern for your well being.

Parents and teachers want students to be safe. Learning to trust those in authority and to be instantly obedient may even save the student’s life. Parents or teachers may sometimes recognize danger that is hidden from children. Children should learn to trust and obey their parents and teachers.

Stress that the students parents were once exactly their age. Parents have much experience—children should learn to listen and obey them.

Appreciation for Parents

Goal: To help students realize all the things their parents do for them.

Class Discussion: How do you think Randy’s mother felt because he always complained about all his old things?

Ask: What could Randy do to make his mother happy?

Randy’s mother would have been happy if he had listened to her.

Instead, Randy always complained about his work and poverty.

What could you do to make your parents happy?

Project A: Things My Parents Do For Me

Have each student in the class make a list of all the things that their parents do for them. Title the paper: "Things My Parents Do for Me." After students have written their paper, have a class discussion so that students can add other things to their list.

Project B: Things I Can Do to Make My Parents Happy

Have students take another sheet of paper and title it "Things I Can Do to Make My Parents Happy." After students have written their paper, have a class discussion so students can add other things to their list

Project C: Thank You Cards

Have students make thank you cards for their parents. They are to list all the things on the card that they are thankful for. Students may also put a letter in the card expressing their thanks.

Project D: Contracts

Have the student make a contract to insert into the thank you card. Contract ideas:

I will do the dishes for one week (take out the garbage, feed the baby, etc.).

I will mow the lawn

I will wash the car

I will dust the house

I will clean my room

I will wake up in the morning and get dressed right away

I will put my clothes away

To get other ideas, ask the students some of the things they can do that would make their parents really happy. Have them sign their names on the contracts.

Switch Roles

Goal: To have children appreciate what their parents do for them.

Procedure: Children are to place themselves in their parents' shoes. The girls will write about: If I were my mother, these are the things I would have to do. The boys will write about: If I were my father, these are the things I would have to do.

Have the students write in class all the things that their parents have to do to support them.

Have the students take their papers home and ask their parents what else they have to do for them.

Tying It All Together

Randy lived a miserable life always thinking what others thought of him. If what you're doing is right, you should not be concerned with what others think. Randy's mom was poor, so she could not provide the things that Mike his neighbor had.

Nothing changed in Randy's life from before or after his wish. What changed was his attitude about who he was. Students need to learn to change what they can change, and to accept the things they can't change. Randy became a very happy boy once he learned to accept who he was.