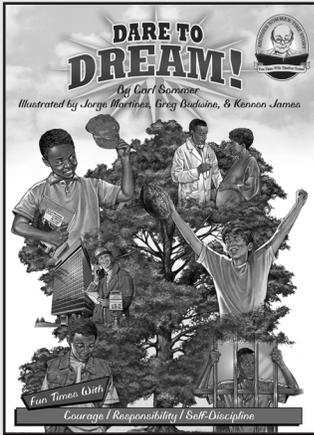


# Character Education Activities

## 2. Dare to Dream!



### Story Description

Roy wondered why his father was a successful doctor, his dad's best friend Jesse was an architectural engineer, and his dad's brother Alvin ended up in jail. His dad, Nelson, tells about his childhood of living in a single parent home in a poor area with gangs and drugs. His grandfather and grandmother taught him and his friend Jesse, but Alvin always resisted learning.

Grandma tells them about the struggles of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, and Abraham Lincoln. After hearing of their struggles, Nelson and Jesse felt ashamed that they had complained about things being difficult. Grandpa read to them, "Dare to Dream Guidelines." Alvin's refusal to listen caused him to end up in jail; however, Nelson and Jesse listened and became successful.

### Major Objective

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

- Self-Discipline
  - **Courage:** the ability to face danger without fear
  - **Responsibility:** being trustworthy to complete assignments and duties
  - **Self-Discipline:** controlling one's conduct for improvement

### Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *Dare to Dream!* After reading the story write these three virtues on a board: courage, responsibility, and self-discipline. Define and discuss these virtues.

Discuss the main characters:

Roy	Nelson (Roy's Dad)	Jesse
Alvin	Grandpa	Grandma
Benjamin Franklin	George Washington Carver	Helen Keller
Abraham Lincoln		

Ask: What was the main difference between Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin?

*The main difference between Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin is that Nelson and Jesse listened to advice, and Alvin refused to listen.*

Ask: When your parents or grandparents offer advice, do you listen?

*Let students ponder that question. Do not go into personal lives. This question is to help students think. Stress that some of the best advice students will ever receive comes from their parents and grandparents.*

## Activities

**Objectives:** To use the following activities to help reinforce the virtues of courage, responsibility, and self-discipline. Also to help students consider that working together can help them overcome obstacles and complete seemingly impossible tasks.

### Dare to Dream—Goal Setting

**Choosing a Goal:** Have students pick any goal they desire.

**Preparation to Obtain the Goal:** After writing the goal on a sheet of paper, the students are to write: Preparation to Obtain the Goal. Students are to list the necessary steps to achieve their desired goal.

**Advantages and Disadvantages:** Students are then to list in two columns the advantages and disadvantages for the goal. Example: If they want to become a doctor, some of the disadvantages would be the cost of the education and the time spent in college in order to become a doctor.

Teacher may choose a goal and have the class discuss the preparation and the advantages and disadvantages to obtain the goal. Many students wish to become sports heroes. This is fine if it is realistic. If they are 5 foot 6 inches tall, they shouldn't dream of becoming a basketball star. Discuss also the rarity of becoming a sports hero. If they attend college and get a sport's scholarship they should also prepare for an occupation that will support them.

### Harmful Habits

Have the students tell of harmful habits that can destroy one's dream. Write them on the board and have a class discussion on how these harmful habits can lead to destruction.

**Example:** Drinking, drugs, immorality, smoking, and other habits that students may encounter in your class, such as pill popping, glue sniffing, etc.

Ask: Why would one start a bad habit?

*Peer pressure. Acting cool. Trying to be different. Temporary good feeling.*

Ask: When Grandpa saw the drug addicts, what did he say about how most of these addicts became addicted?

*Grandpa said, "See those drug addicts? All they dream about is getting another high from drugs. They probably started by smoking cigarettes, and then friends encouraged them to try something stronger. They listened, and after trying all sorts of drugs—they're hooked."*

Warning—Beware of starting down the wrong path.

**Role Play:** Have students act out as someone who resists peer pressure, and one who yields to peer pressure. *Wishy Washy* yields to peer pressure. *Strong Sally* or *Strong Sam* resists peer pressure. Have students act like cigarette smoking is cool and beneficial. *Strong Sally* or *Strong Sam* gives all the reasons why it isn't cool or beneficial. Encourage all students to participate.

Teacher or student: Go on the Web and get recent statistics on smoking.

### Smoking Role Play: Peer Pressure

1. Hold up a smoking advertisement and ask students, "What does the advertisement tell us about smoking?" Does it make it look like it's cool? Are you glamorous when you smoke?

#### Lesson Presentation:

1. Ask students what smoking really does to you.

2. Ask if the smoking advertisement is truthful or misleading. Would a smoker look like this? What would a real smoker look like?

3. It is misleading because...(list on board)

- \* Tobacco can raise blood pressure and make a heart beat faster
- \* Smoking gives people bad breath—not cool
- \* It makes it more difficult to run so playing sports is harder
- \* Smoking can cause lung cancer or emphysema
- \* People can develop smoker’s cough
- \* Cigarettes are expensive. Find the cost for a pack of cigarettes and calculate the cost for a year if a smoker uses one pack a day. Ask students if the annual cost for cigarettes is worth all the detriments listed on board.
- \* Kids who smoke are more likely to use drugs, or become drinkers—this is definitely not healthy

4. Ask students if they can list other detriments.

**Lesson Learned:** Just like Nelson and Jesse learned to say no to peer pressure, so we must learn to stand up for what we know is right. It’s not always easy, but it’s the path of those who are successful.

## **Obstacle Course—Becoming a Risk Taker**

**Create an Obstacle Course:** Students compete individually in various timed events. The one (or two) with the best time and most points wins.

Focal points of the competition include completing the course and conduct (character skills).

Obstacles might include:

- Car dolly race—person lies face up on a creepy crawly car dolly and works through a short race track around various obstacles.
- Candy and spoon race—students with a spoon must pick up the candy with the spoon only and run to a line and back.
- Plate race—person balances a paper plate on top of a dowel and carries it to designated person.
- Hop race—students are to run to a line and back with their ankles tied.

## **Seeking Advice**

**Goal:** To teach children that much can be learned by seeking advice from people with experience.

**Assignment:** Students are to ask their parents and their grandparents this question: “What’s the most important thing that I should do to become successful?” If a student cannot get to their grandparents, let them ask someone who is older the same question.

In class have students give their reports. Use this time to encourage students to become diligent, responsible, and self-disciplined.

## **Overcoming Hardships**

**Option 1:** Discuss the life of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, and Abraham Lincoln. Divide the class into four groups and assign one of the individuals for the group to study. Let the group pick a spokesperson for the group. After discussion, the spokesperson tells about the hardships that person overcame in order to achieve success.

**Option 2:** Teachers can have the entire class discuss the hardships that each individual had to overcome to achieve greatness. List the difficulties on the board.

**Option 3:** Go to the library or get the four biographies from Advance Publishing to gain further

insight into the lives of these great individuals. The biographies from Advance Publishing are short enough to be read in class. Read-alongs are also available ([www.advancepublishing.com](http://www.advancepublishing.com)). Have students list the difficulties that person had to overcome. List the difficulties on the white board.

## **Dedication**

### **Examining the Lives of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Abraham Lincoln, and Helen Keller.**

Let students first study the lives of the four great American leaders before they examine the subject of dedication for themselves.

This subject can be done individually or as a class project.

Question: How did Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, and Abraham Lincoln show dedication?

### **Benjamin Franklin**

After one year in school, he was the best student in his class.

Even though Ben was no longer in school, he loved learning so much that he spent all his money to buy books

The workers called him, “Water American” because he drank water while they drank lots of beer.

Ben boarded a ship to return to Philadelphia. On board ship he made good rules for his life—and he lived by them.

His work was so great that his print shop became the official public printer for Pennsylvania.

Ben’s eagerness to learn and to do what was right led him to become a writer, businessman, inventor, scientist, and an ambassador. Benjamin Franklin had many reasons to give up, but he never lost his dream!

### **George Washington Carver**

As a young boy, George became curious. He studied why some plants grew better in the shade and others grew better in the sun. He learned what made trees and plants sick, and he experimented with different kinds of soils.

George had lots of questions. He needed books to provide the answers. His adopted mother, Susan, gave him an old spelling book and helped him learn to read. But that was not enough. George wanted to learn more.

At age 12, George left home to go to school. To pay for his schooling, he did laundry and housework

Some white folks once beat him because he was a black boy carrying books. But that did not stop him from getting an education. George kept working and going to school. When he was 21 years old, he graduated from high school.

At 26 years of age he was accepted at Simpson College in Iowa. George again did laundry work to pay for his education.

## **Helen Keller**

Helen first strongly resisted learning. But after Annie Sullivan applied love and discipline, Helen was taught to obey. Even though Helen was blind and could not see, she learned words by using hand-talk.

Helen also wanted to learn how to speak. Even though this was harder than learning to lip-read, with Annie's help she mastered how to speak.

Helen wanted to attend a regular college. She chose Radcliffe College—the best university for women in the United States!

Helen passed the entrance exam to Radcliffe College when she was 19 years old.

At college Helen learned to read and write French, Greek, German, and Latin.

Helen graduated with honors from college.

## **Abraham Lincoln**

Abe loved to read.

The family Bible was the only book in Abe's home, so he read it over and over.

Abe ran for the Senate and spoke against slavery. He lost. Again he ran for the Senate. He lost. Determined Abe would not give up. Then in 1860 his party nominated him as their presidential candidate. Abe was the only candidate who spoke against slavery. This time he won.

Abraham Lincoln became the 16th president of the United States.

Abraham Lincoln was born into poverty and faced constant defeat. He lost eight elections, failed twice in business, and suffered a nervous breakdown. He had every reason to give up, but he never lost his dream! He became one of America's greatest presidents.

## **Dedication to Others**

How did Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, and Abraham Lincoln show dedication to others?

### **Dedication to Others—Benjamin Franklin**

Ben's work was so great, that his print shop became the official public printer for Pennsylvania.

Ben printed a newspaper that became the best in all of the American colonies.

Ben helped Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence.

### **Dedication to Others—George Washington Carver**

George became known as the "Plant Doctor."

When George finished college he helped Booker T. Washington, founder of a school in Tuskegee, Alabama. The school was poor, but that did not stop Carver from teaching his students well.

Carver also traveled teaching poor farmers, both black and white, how to plant.

Carver became a famous scientist, recognized all over the world. From the peanut alone he created 300 products!

### **Dedication to Others—Helen Keller**

Helen Keller wrote six books and traveled around the world speaking to promote the needs of the physically challenged.

## Dedication to Others—Abraham Lincoln

Abe made it a habit to be honest.

When Abe and a neighbor built and opened a small log cabin store, he had overcharged a woman a few pennies. Honest Abe walked twelve miles round trip to return the money. Although his business venture failed and his partner died, Abe paid all the money he owed.

In the 1850s, more and more people were against slavery. They formed the Republican Party. Abe ran for the Senate and spoke against slavery—he lost. Again he ran for the Senate—he lost. Determined Abe would not give up. Then in 1860, his party nominated him as their presidential candidate. Abe was the only candidate that spoke against slavery. This time he won.

In 1863, Abe signed the Emancipation Proclamation that stated, “All persons held as slaves within said designated states...shall be free.” In 1865 the North won the war, and all slaves were set free.

### Student Dedication

**Self-Examination of Students:** Let students first study the lives of the four great American leaders before they examine their dedication to themselves and to others.

Have students list things that they can do to show dedication to themselves.

**Examples:** Doing their best in school. Living a drug free life. Being careful in their choice of friends, etc.

Have students list things that they can do to show dedication to others.

**Examples:** Reading to kindergarten students. Helping mom and dad in the home. Helping a younger brother or sister with their schoolwork. Doing chores around the house without complaining.

### Dedication of Others

Poster—Newspapers and Magazines

Have students collect examples from newspapers and magazines about men and women who have shown dedication to helping others. Make a large poster and put on the poster the articles students bring to class. Students or the teacher can discuss the dedication of these individuals.

### Becoming a Risk Taker for the Good

A risk taker is one who is willing to do something unusual or out of the ordinary to attain a goal.

Ask: Who was the risk taker in *Dare to Dream*?

*Nelson and Jesse*

Ask: What did they do?

*Nelson and Jesse refused to join a gang, even though it would have made their life much easier at the time.*

Ask: What happened because Nelson and Jesse followed “Dare to Dream Guidelines”?

*By following “Dare to Dream Guidelines,” Nelson and Jesse became successful.*

Ask: What kind of students were Nelson and Jesse?

*Nelson and Jesse wanted to learn all they could.*

To become a risk taker, you must be determined to achieve the desired goal. Refuse to listen to the voices that would lead you to misery and defeat. Do not give in to fear of failure or embarrassment because worrying about it will only distract you from achieving your goal. Whether the goal is met or not, by not giving in to these fears will make you stronger and more successful.

## Dare to Dream Guidelines

Print free copies of “Dare to Dream Guidelines” from [www.advancepublishing.com](http://www.advancepublishing.com) and click Dare to Dream story book. Give each student a copy, and then have a class discussion about the importance of these guidelines for personal success.

1. Stand up straight and do what’s right.
2. Choose your friends and music carefully.
3. Be honest and work hard.
4. Never do anything that harms your body.
5. Refuse to listen to voices that lead you to poverty and ignorance.
6. Earnestly desire wisdom and understanding.
7. Find places where good people meet and join them.
8. Listen to your parents.
9. Never let tough times and discouragement stop you from doing your best.
10. Dream realistic dreams that build on your desires and on your abilities. But dream big, for dreams are the paths to your future.

## Interview Report

**Goal:** To help students understand that there are certain procedures they must take to become successful

**Assignment:** Students are to find someone they consider successful and write a report showing what the individual had to do to become successful. They should ask what made them successful. Ask about their education, work habits, and any other information that helped them become successful.

**Share:** Let students share their reports with the class.

**Teacher:** Find one or more common themes in the reports, and emphasize the themes so they will be reinforced.

## Responsibility Required for Plants to Grow

**Make a Class Garden:** The object is to reinforce the idea that in order to grow plants, proper preparation must be made for the plants to grow.

Materials (Make assignments for each step of the garden):

1. Decide how many containers and what kind of plant containers to use for plants (plastic flower pots, window boxes, pint or half-gallon milk containers, etc).
2. Decide what kind of plants to grow: trees, greenery, flowers, or vegetables. Suitable plants: English Ivy, Angel Wing Begonia, Foliage Begonia, Coleus, Shrimp Plants, Geranium, Impatiens, African violets, and others (check with a garden shop in your area for additional plants suited to your climate region).
3. Have the class fill the containers and plant seed or small plant. Let the plants grow in class. After a certain time, let the students take the plants home.

Go on the Web and search for other ideas about planting. Type in: “growing plants from cuttings.” Also search for best planting time for trees, flowers, and vegetables. Conditions vary according to the climate of your area. Stress that proper preparation must be made for optimal growth.

Stress planning for success. Just like growing plants successfully requires proper plans and procedures, fulfilling your dreams also requires proper plans and procedures.

## **Community Workers**

**Goal:** Help students realize the different kinds of work people do in their community.

**Procedure:** Students are to make a list of the different kinds of work that people do in their community. Without everyone's help, there would not be a community. Some of the occupations are doctors, nurses, engineers, fishermen, plumbers, electricians, machinists, sales personnel, fire fighters, police, school teachers, principals, guidance counselors, librarians, trash collectors, custodians, etc. Do not minimize the low-skill trades. We need them also in a community.

### **Tying It All Together**

Decide what is really important to you. Setting goals, making a plan to reach the goals, and staying focused on the goals—all are key factors to succeeding. Hard work is the key to making it all happen along with not worrying about what others may think.