

Fairness

Is
playing
by the rules

“The precepts of the
law are these:

To live honestly, to
injure no one, and
to give every man
his due.”

~Justinian~



March 2007 Character Connection Theme: Fairness



Definitions

To be **fair** is to be free of favoritism or bias. A fair person is impartial, just to all parties and equitable. Fairness means being consistent with the rules, logic and ethics. A fair person shows no evidence of favoritism, self-interest, or indulgence of one's likes or dislikes.¹ A fair person plays by the rules, takes turns and shares, is open-minded and listens to others, doesn't take advantage of others and doesn't blame others carelessly.²

Quotes

"Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up". –Reverend Jesse Jackson

"The true measure of an individual is how he treats a person who can do him absolutely no good."
–Ann Landers³

"The precepts of the law are these: to live honestly, to injure no one, and to give every man his due."—Justinian I⁴

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." –Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 1⁵



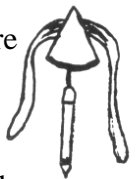
"IT IS REASONABLE THAT EVERY ONE WHO ASKS JUSTICE SHOULD DO JUSTICE." –THOMAS JEFFERSON⁶

"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."—Theodore Roosevelt⁷

Activities

****PLAY FAIR:** Divide the class in half and play balloon or regular volleyball. One side must obey the volleyball rules, the other side does not need to obey the rules. For instance: the "un-ruled" side may hold the volleyball any way they wish. After a few minutes switch the rule playing sides. Discuss the game. *What do rules and referees have to do with fairness?*

****Fairness: a Balancing Act.** Poke a half toothpick partway into the middle of the peel side of an apple wedge. Poke two forks into the cut sides of the apple wedge, (fork tines directed toward each other), at about a 45° angle with the toothpick in the middle. Now balance the toothpick (with the apple wedge on top of the toothpick and two forks hanging down) on the eraser of a pencil. Adjust forks until the toothpick is standing straight up.⁸ Talk about balancing, center of gravity (the point in an object where the force of gravity appears to act)⁹, and fairness. *How do you fairly share a package of M&M's, a piece of pie, a ball, a turn, or a cat?*



****Dr. Seuss was born on March 2, 1904.**¹⁰ Read The Sneetches and talk about the importance of treating others with fairness rather than prejudice. Talk about ways to celebrate differences. Find and write to pen pals from a different country or age. Perhaps students could write to a grandparent or someone in a nursing home.

¹ from The American Heritage Dictionary

² Six pillars of character, Definitions for Young People, Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, page 5

³ <http://www.josphoninstitute.org/quotes>

⁴ <http://www.josphoninstitute.org/quotes>

⁵ The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980

⁶ <http://www.josphoninstitute.org/quotes>

⁷ <http://www.josphoninstitute.org/quotes>

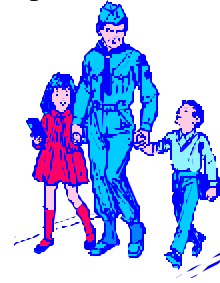
⁸ adapted from Herbert, Don, Mr. Wizard's Supermarket Science, page 77

⁹ See "Gravity, Center of," World Book, 1988 p.332 for directions in determining center of gravity of an object.

¹⁰ The Random House Calendar for Kids <http://www.josphoninstitute.org/quotes>

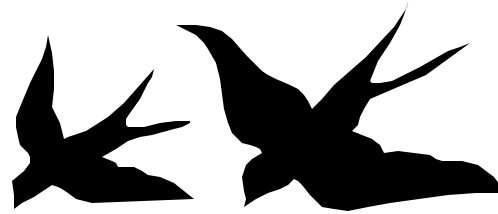
**The story of the Good Samaritan (see “The Good Samaritan” retold by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut in The Book of Virtues by William J. Bennett.)¹¹ has been recognized as a classic example in treating others with sympathy without regard to race or station. We, too, must compassionately reach out to others without prejudice. As a class, memorize a poem such as this one by Spencer Michael Free:

’Tis the human touch in this world that counts,
The touch of your hand and mine,
Which means far more to the fainting heart
Than shelter and bread and wine;
For shelter is gone when the night is o’er,
And bread lasts only a day,
But the touch of the hand and the sound of the voice
Sing on in the soul always.¹²



**A fair person does not take advantage of another because of his weakness. Likewise, a fair person does not take advantage of his sovereignty over animals. As a class, memorize a poem about kindness to creatures such as this one :

Little children, never give
Pain to things that feel and live;
Let the gentle robin come
For the crumbs you save at home;
As his meat you throw along
He’ll repay you with a song.
Never hurt the timid hare
Peeping from her green grass lair,
Let her come and sport and play
On the lawn at close of day.
The little lark goes soaring high
To the bright windows of the sky,
Singing as if ’twere always spring,
And fluttering on an untired wing—
Oh! let him sing his happy song,
Nor do these gentle creatures wrong.¹³



Stories

Clara Barton

Clara Barton was born in Massachusetts. She had two older brothers, two older sisters, and a dog named Button. At nine she attended a boarding school. At 17, she became a school teacher in a one-room schoolhouse of 40 children, ages 4 to 13. There were many laws that allowed free public schools. However, because of opposition, few were established. Clara was concerned about this unequal treatment of the poor. In Bordentown, New Jersey, she offered to teach 3 months of school for no pay in exchange for a run-down building to be used as a school. The school grew from 6 to 600 students. People who had previously fought against free schools now praised the idea. The public school teachers’ salaries were raised and a new eight-room schoolhouse was built.

Clara Barton is probably best known as the angel of the Civil War battlefield. On the battlefield, she cooked meals, comforted the dying and gave relief to all that she could, regardless of their rank. She

¹¹ idea submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative

¹² submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative

¹³ submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative

was the founder of the American Red Cross, an organization that prevents and relieves misery at wartime or in peace among all peoples without regard to race, nationality or religion.¹⁴

A fair person treats others with dignity and compassion without regard to outward differences. A fair person seeks to alleviate those differences that handicap another's opportunities for future success.

The Honey Tree

A fable



Two men were foraging for food in the forest. One man spied a bee tree. "Look at the honey that I have found," he exclaimed. He started to extract the honey from the tree.

The second man came toward the tree, "You should say, 'Look at the honey *we* found.'"

Suddenly the men heard the whirring of a swarm of angry bees returning to their home.

"Alas, we are in trouble," said the first man.

By this time the second man was putting great distance between himself and his companion. He called back, "Oh no. You are in trouble."

If you expect to share the prize, you should expect to share in the danger.



Writing or Discussion Topics

** I Love You the Purplest, by Barbara M. Joesse and illustrated by Mary Whyte, is a picture book about a mother's reply to "Who do you love best?" "Jubilant Max she loves the 'reddest' and the quiet Julian she loves the 'bluest.' Together she loves both her boys the 'purplest.'" Discuss how being fair does not always mean being the same. Being fair with others does not necessarily mean treating people the same or giving people the same opportunities or responsibilities. Discuss how the fair treatment of an adult, a grandparent, or a toddler differs. Are each given the same portion of dessert? What work is expected of each?

**Have students talk to parents about what fairness has to do with the work place and family life. Graph different ways that families divide household chores. Talk about fairness in "The Little Red Hen" and "Ants and the Grasshopper." Hurry, Hurry, Mary Dear by N.M. Bodecker and Erik Blegvad is a picture book poem about a wife working to exhaustion to get ready for winter while her husband idly rocks his chair and gives orders. Discuss ways to make life more fair.

**What social changes of the past have made life more fair for everyone? In what areas are we still striving for equality? Have students write, "If I were in charge of the world, I would make life more fair by. . ." or "When I grow up, I will make life more fair for _____ by. . ."

Role Plays

**What is a fair way for Jordan to share a cookie with a friend. *Often one friend divides the treat and the other friend chooses his portion first. What other ways are there to fairly share?*

**Joseph watches his favorite basketball team lose. "It's not fair," he complains, "The refs didn't call it right." *If you were listening to Joseph what would you say? Would it make a difference if the winning team was your favorite? How does good sportsmanship relate to this situation?*

**Make two signs labeled "fair" and "unfair" for students to wear as they role play sharing a swing, deciding at whose house to play, what game to play, what treat to make, etc.

Book List

Frederick by Leo Lionni, Pantheon, 1967

"The Little Red Hen," The Children's Book of Virtues edited by William J. Bennett, Simon & Schuster, 1995, page 42

Tops & Bottoms by Janet Stevens, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995

APRIL: Integrity

MAY: Citizenship

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¹⁴ "Clara Barton" Kids Discover, New York, 1998 ; "Red Cross," World Book, 1988 p.187; "Barton, Clara," World Book p. 121



Name _____

Fairness

In the word search below, find and cross out the hidden words. Unscramble the remaining 7 *different* letters to complete the quote below.

O F O T R O R T E Q U A L O R F R O R T
 T R F U R T U I U T E T N F T U E U T T
 O R O N T S U J A O F O E O T O F N O S
 T F U P R R F U N F U O F N O F O U N T
 T O U R E E B A L A N C E D T N O F E R
 F U N E N R E F E E F T E T O F T U E A
 U R O J E I M P A R T I A L R N E O U I
 E F T U L N R S Q U A R E L Y O T U E G
 N U O D E F E F E U E F U R E O F O R H
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 U O N F U E U U E A N M R O F I N U E R
 T O E R D I S P A S S I O N A T E E U D
 T O B J E C T I V E T E N F O T E F N E
 U F N T R O F T O T T E D O E F N U U N
 F O U R T H O N E S T E Q U I T A B L E

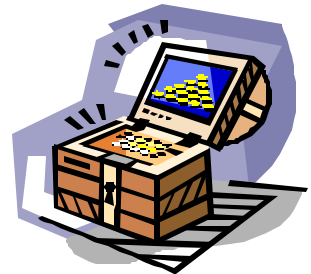
- fair
- just
- equitable
- impartial
- unprejudiced
- unbiased
- straightforward
- objective
- dispassionate
- squarely
- honest
- even
- balanced
- level
- uniform
- equal

"A reputation for good judgment, for fair dealing, for truth, and for rectitude, is itself a

_____."

--Henry Ward Beecher (1813-87) American clergyman¹⁵

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¹⁵ <http://www.Equoteworld.Eorg/searchEphp?thetext=fair>