

# CHARACTER



Fairness

March 2007

**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

“That’s not fair!” How many times have you heard that phrase, or even thought it yourself. As a parent, it is probably one of the most disliked sentences that parents hear from their children. One of the earliest concepts learned by children is fairness and it is interesting that one of the first stories in the Bible also raises the issue of fairness. Cain’s raging jealousy and eventual murder of his brother Abel was provoked by what he saw as unfair treatment by God who “paid heed” to Abel’s offering but ignored his. It is a concept that must be learned to get along in this world. It involves give and take and understanding on each person’s side. Sigmund Freud said, “Justice (fairness) is the first requisite of civilization.”

Being fair is defined as showing no sign of favoritism, self interest, or the indulgence of one’s likes and dislikes. The ancient Egyptians placed great value on how fair a person was in his mortal life. In fact, this fairness was the basis on whether or not he would make it into the next world. According to the ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, when a pharaoh died, he was placed on a boat mounted on wheels that was pulled into his tomb by oxen. After the tomb was sealed, the dead man’s soul traveled to the underworld, where gods and goddesses sat in judgment at the throne of the goddess Maat. The goddess wore a beautiful ostrich feather on her head. Before each soul lay the scales of justice or fairness. These scales were a set of balances where an object was placed on one side to be weighed, and balanced against a set of known weights on the other. The god Anubis, Lord of Mummy Wrapping, stood beside the goddess. His task was to weigh each human heart on the scales of justice. At the trial of souls, the dead person’s heart

was placed on one side of the scales, the ostrich feather from Maat’s headdress on the other. The feather represented justice and truth. The heart represented the dead soul’s conscience. An ideal heart was neither too heavy nor too light to balance against the feather. If the scale tipped to the left or the right, the heart failed the test and was immediately devoured by Ammitt, a ferocious animal. If the soul held in perfect balance with a feather of justice and fairness, the god Thoth took note, and the dead soul approached immortality.

Our culture has it’s own set of rules to weigh whether a person is fair or not in this life. The following is a list of how to be a fair person:

1. Treat people the way you want to be treated.
2. Tell the truth.
3. Play by the rules.
4. Think about how your actions will affect others.
5. Listen to people with an open mind.
6. Don’t blame others for your mistakes.
7. Don’t take advantage of other people.
8. Don’t play favorites.

To be responsible members of society, we need to understand what it takes to be a fair person and that life doesn’t always seem to be fair. Franklin D. Roosevelt said this about fairness: “If you treat people right they will treat you right...ninety percent of the time.”

Yvonne Silva

Lindon Resident

“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 Landers

“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 Roosevelt

## Book List

### Frederick

by Leo Lionni

### Tops & Bottoms

by Janet Stevens

### “The Little Red Hen,” The Children’s Book of Virtues

edited by William J. Bennett



## Family Activities

**\*\*PLAY FAIR:** Play a board game. Talk about the importance of playing fair.

**\*\*EVENLY SPLIT:** Give each member of the family an ingredient for a banana split. Talk about how fairness means sharing. When all are fair then each in the group has a wonderful time eating a delicious treat.

**\*\* Dr. Seuss** was born on March 2, 1904. Read **The Sneetches** and talk about the importance of treating others with fairness rather than prejudice.

## Kid’s Corner

Being fair means everyone gets the same chance or opportunity and treating all people equally with respect.

At school we have recess. Kids get to choose what to do with their time and only a few adults are outside to help. Learning how to get along in a large group by ourselves teaches us how important rules are. A rule or law tries to make it fair for everyone.

When we play four-square or soccer, a rule is made to make things “fair.” Everyone has to agree to the rule and everyone has to follow it. Bad feelings happen when one person wants to change the rule just for him or won’t obey it.

In our community, we live together and we have to work together to set rules, treat each other with respect, obey the rules, and discipline those who won’t obey the rules. This makes our democratic government fair and protects everyone.

Tiffany Nicholson

**We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at [www.lindoncharacterconnection.com](http://www.lindoncharacterconnection.com). If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to [arlainea@isquaredinc.com](mailto:arlainea@isquaredinc.com)**

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