

Character Education Monthly

MARCH 2010 (COOPERATION)

COOPERATION

Cooperation is defined as “An act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit, a joint action.” It should be pretty obvious that cooperation is an important skill for being successful in life. Often we find that some tasks are far too difficult for us to complete on our own and that is why cooperation is so amazing. It allows a group of individuals to accomplish a task together that they would have not been able to accomplish alone. It is important to cooperate because it shows others that we are team players and that we are capable of working well with and helping others. Cooperation can be expressed in many different ways through many different actions.

In this edition of Character Education Monthly we will explore some ways that we can cooperate and we will learn a little more about what cooperation really is.

Did you know that we cooperate all the time in our daily lives as a society. If you think about it you would find that you are probably cooperating all day while at school. When we refuse to cooperate with others we are limiting our own potential as well as the potential of others . Here is a list of some great guidelines that you can follow in order to make sure that you are being the most cooperative person that you can be.

Listen carefully to others and be sure you understand what they are saying

Share when you have something that others need to borrow or want to use

Take turns when there is something that everybody would like to use or when everybody wants to do the same thing

Compromise, when you have a serious conflict

Do your part the very best that you possibly can

Show appreciation to people for contributions that they have made

Make people feel needed. Working together is a lot more fun that way

Don't isolate or exclude anyone. Everybody has something to offer and nobody likes being left out.



What To Do?

Now lets consider what we would do if we were put in some tricky situations. Remember in most cases it is a good idea to cooperate so that we can accomplish difficult tasks for the benefit of ourselves and others.

What's Happening

What would you do?

Your best friend wants you to go to a movie, but you have a lot of chores to do. How could you cooperate?	
Your brother needs help painting his bedroom. He could do it alone, but it would probably be a lot less difficult for him if you helped out.	
You have to do a group project for school, but you do not like the people in your group. You feel like they are holding you back and that you could probably work faster on your own.	

Make A List

Now that we understand what happens when we do not cooperate with others lets make a list of all of the things that we do in our daily life (at home or at school) that require us to cooperate. Remember that cooperation is any time that people work together towards a common goal.

1. _____

6. _____

2. _____

7. _____

3. _____

8. _____

4. _____

9. _____

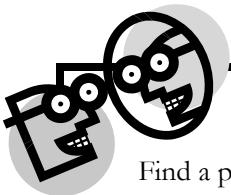
5. _____

10. _____

Cooperation Game

Human Mirror

Find a partner and stand facing each other, a few feet apart. Choose one person to be the "leader" and the other to be the "mirror". The leader does an action (moving arms, hands, feet, or legs; or making faces) and the mirror has to try and copy them at the same time. The point is to work together so it looks like you are doing the same things at the same time, so don't make quick movements or do anything too difficult. Take turns being the leader.



Write About it

Write about a problem in YOUR SCHOOL that might be solved if people would cooperate more. Why aren't they cooperating now? How could they do a better job of cooperating?

A Difficult Time

Describe a time you had difficulty cooperating. What made it difficult? What did you do about it? Is there something you could have done that would have made it easier?

Are You A Cooperative Person?

Are you a cooperative person? For each of the cooperative behaviors listed, rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=awful, and 5=terrific). If you scored a 3 or below, write something you could do to improve.

1. Do you listen to others? _____
2. Do you share your thoughts and ideas? _____
3. Do you take turns without being told or asked? _____
4. Can you compromise when you have a serious conflict? _____
5. Do you always do your best? _____
6. Do you show appreciation to those who help you? _____
7. Do you encourage others to do their best? _____
8. Do you make others free needed? _____
9. Do you include everyone regardless of their talents? _____

Wordsearch

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

Word Bank

COMPROMISE COOPERATION GOAL
HELP LISTEN OPPORTUNITY
SHARE TEAMWORK TOGETHER
UNITY



Cooperation is both a skill and an opportunity. It is not always easy to work with others. It can sometimes seem as though it would be easier for us to accomplish tasks on our own. Despite this it is important for us to remember that when we work with other people we gain insight that we did not have before. We hear ideas and points of view that we may never have even considered. This allows us to grow and allows us to produce work that is better than it could have been had we worked alone. Every experience is an opportunity to grow and learn and in some cases even teach the skills that we have developed to others. It takes patience and dedication to listen to the ideas of others, but this is the only way to cooperate effectively. The next time that the opportunity to cooperate arises consider what you may have to teach or learn from the experience and as always remember to do your best.

COOPERATION QUOTES OF THE MONTH

‘NO MATTER WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU MAKE, SOMEBODY HELPED YOU.’

ALTHEA EA GIBSON 1927 -2003 FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN ON THE WORLD TENNIS TOUR

‘THE ONLY THING THAT WILL REDEEM MANKIND IS COOPERATION. ’

BERTRAND RUSSELL 1872-1970 BRITISH LOGICIAN & PHILOSOPHER

‘IT IS THROUGH COOPERATION, RATHER THAN CONFLICT, THAT YOUR GREATEST SUCCESSES WILL BE DERIVED.’

RALPH CHARELL