

Character:

Displaying the qualities of honesty, courage, and integrity.



May 2009

Theme
Of the
Month

This month our
weekly lessons
will cover:

Dear Parents,

Building good character will be our school's focus this month. Most of us work hard to teach our children to be honest, not to cheat, and to keep their

promises. Unfortunately, as they get older, the challenges to maintaining good character become even greater. That is why it is so important to consistently emphasize good character as an essential part of healthy living.

The martial arts have a long history of helping parents develop strong character traits in their children. The principles of respect, honor, courage, and responsibility taught through the martial arts hopefully reinforce the messages you are already giving them on displaying good character.

What can parents and caregivers do to help their children develop good character?

Discuss the importance of character to their success. Often, children might see short-term gain in doing the wrong thing – cheating on a test and not getting caught, for example. They need help to understand that over the long term, being a person of integrity will be far more beneficial to their success in life.

Praise them for displaying good character. When your child tells the truth, even when it gets them in trouble, or when they resist peer pressure to do something inappropriate, or when they stick up for someone being picked on by others, reward them for displaying good character. They need to hear your words of affirmation that they are doing the right thing. It is much easier for them to continue doing so, when they know you notice and when they hear your approval.

Display good character to them. We've all heard it before, "actions speak louder than words." But it's true. Children will watch how the adults around them behave and take that as the model for their behavior. If you have promised them something, keep your word. If you have the opportunity to display caring, compassion, or respect to others, talk to your child about it and explain how and why you did it.

Identify positive role models. The more children see good character in others, the more they will develop it in themselves. Discuss the other people in their lives that display the traits of honesty, courage, compassion, and integrity you admire. Help them to recognize those traits in others.

Week One:

"Character is doing what's right when nobody's looking."

*J.C. Watts, Jr.,
former Congressman*

Week Two:

"Really big people are, above everything else, courteous, considerate, and generous – not just to some people in some circumstances – but to everyone all the time."

*Thomas J. Watson, Jr.,
former chairman, IBM*

Week Three:

"Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity."

*W. Clement Stone, author,
Think and Grow Rich*

Week Four:

"Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy."

*Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf,
Allied Commander, Gulf War*

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