

THE CHARACTER COUNTS COALITION PRESENTS

Paul Tracey's
"Your Character Counts!"

THE PROGRAM...

Created for K - 6, "Your Character Counts" is a dynamic introduction to the universal concepts of good character. It is a valuable reminder to children that the choices we make today turn us into the people we will be tomorrow. Paul Tracey has tackled this serious subject by creating eight delightful new songs with catchy choruses. This assembly promotes values that all American communities can agree upon.

ABOUT THE ARTIST...

Born in Africa, educated in England, world traveller Paul Tracey is an artist of many talents: instrumentalist, singer, song-writer, story teller and folklorist. He has starred on Broadway and appeared on several TV programs including "The Tonight Show," and ABC comedy specials, and some of his songs have been featured on "The Muppet Show." In 1996, the C.A.A.E. honored him as a professional artist with their "Lifetime Achievement Award" for his work in arts in education. He has seven other one-man shows.

TECHNICAL NEEDS AND TIPS...

45 minute performance. Two standard 6' tables requested. He brings his own p.a. system. Time needed between performances: 10 minutes. Where possible, students should sit on the floor, close, same level as performer.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES...

- Become aware of the elements that comprise a 'good character.'
- Introduce teachers and students to the "Six Pillars of Character," as identified by The Character Counts Coalition, a branch of the Josephson Institute of Ethics.
- Give students the idea that the choices they make in their every-day lives form their characters as they grow.

CHARACTER COUNTS COALITION
A Partnership for a Better Tomorrow

A National Partnership of Organizations and Individuals Involved in the Education, Training, or Care of Youth, Joined Together in a Collaborative Effort to Improve the Character of America's Young People Based on Six Core Ethical Values, the "Six Pillars of Character."

- TRUSTWORTHINESS
 - RESPECT
 - RESPONSIBILITY
 - FAIRNESS
 - CARING
 - CITIZENSHIP

For more information, and to learn what you can do, please contact
Character Counts Coalition
(310) 306-1868 FAX (310) 827-1864 • <http://www.charactercounts.org>

The six pillars of character and their sub-divisions were created by the Character Counts Coalition.

The teacher materials were written by Paul and Susan Tracey.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION...

Step 1.

Assess your students' prior knowledge on the traits of good character by seeing how much they already know.

Step 2.

Before the show, help them get smarter by introducing some of the topics and defining the following vocabulary words:

pillar
character
a person of 'good character'
trustworthiness
respect

responsibility
fairness
caring
citizenship
moral code

predict
tempted
conscience
Albert Einstein

Hint:

Watch your students during the telling of the story of Kala-kala, the crab. They will be asked to make quick moral choices and you can see which ones need to be worked on!

Understand why this assembly is being presented:

Paul Tracey is working with the Character Counts Coalition whose central mission is to combat youth violence, dishonesty and irresponsibility by strengthening the character of the next generation. Let there be no mistake: there is a crisis in character. In a recent survey done by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, one-third of high school students admitted they had stolen something from a store, 61% had cheated on an exam, 35% made serious ethnic slurs, and 20% had driven while drunk - all within the past year.

We see it over and over in court cases where people go to extreme lengths to blame others for their own actions. There is a remarkable lack of responsibility in our American society today. It's time to take a stand!

SUGGESTIONS FOR FOLLOW UP...

Changing attitudes and behavior is a long-term process; but the more knowledge and awareness that your students have of good character and its rewards, the more they will be motivated to change bad habits or strengthen good ones. Do not attempt to tackle the whole subject at once! Break it down into six units, perhaps two weeks or a month for each of the six pillars of character.

Here are suggestions for art projects, writing projects, drama and small and large group discussions.

While many of these teaching strategies can be used for each unit, we have developed them to highlight a specific pillar for clarity; for example, the chant about telling lies comes under the heading of Trustworthiness; other chants can be created to go with each pillar of character.

Theatrical improvisations will also be used as a technique for having students explore the consequences of certain behaviors in situations that have significance in their own lives. While this is featured under the Caring pillar, the same process can be used to create situations to be acted out under all the other pillars.

When striving for change, it is important to identify each person's assumptions about the topic. For example, we need to find out what each of us assumes about human nature and our ability to shape our own character. Our personal assumptions lead us to look at things in only one way; they can act as barriers to developing new points of view. Examples of assumptions might be:

- Most people are bad
- Everybody lies a little bit (Hood did)
- Nothing bad will happen to me
- If you're good, no one will hurt you
- I was just born this way
- The things that I do now don't really count; they only count later on
- Finders keepers (if you find something, you can keep it)
- It's OK to be mean to someone who has been mean to you
- If no one is watching, people will steal
- It's OK to steal from rich people; (Robin Hood did)
- All adults can be trusted
- Life is fair

A Meaningful Task for Students

- Have your class make a list of assumptions. Select a few for discussion. Ask them to give examples pulled from their own observations and experiences which prove or disprove these assumptions. Ask them if they are willing to change or drop any of their assumptions.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Honesty

Do: tell the truth; be sincere.

Don't: betray a trust, deceive, mislead, cheat, or steal; don't be devious or tricky.

Integrity

Do: stand up for your beliefs; be your best self; walk your talk - do what you say you're going to do; show commitment, courage and self discipline.

Don't: do anything you think is wrong.

Promise-Keeping

Do: keep your word and honor your commitments; pay your debts and return what you borrow.

Loyalty

Do: stand by, support, and protect your family, friends, and country.

Don't: talk behind people's backs; spread rumors or engage in harmful gossip; don't do anything wrong to keep or win a friendship or gain approval; don't ask a friend to do something wrong.

Tasks for Students:

Create a chant based on one of the topics above. Write an original chant, or try the one below. For example under 'honesty,' is it really lying to avoid answering the question? Is this being devious? Use a percussion instrument (or even tapping a pencil on a table) to keep a good, steady beat going.

Solo voice:

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Did you ever tell a lie?

Answering group or groups alternating:

Are you talking to me?

What's that you say?

Are you ser-i-ous?

Do you mean today?

Why would I lie?

You're being so mean!

You make me mad!

You make me wanna scream!

Did you tell a lie?

I bet you lie.

Who d'you think you are?

I've got to go - bye!

RESPECT

Respect for others

Do: Judge all people on their merits; be courteous and polite, tolerant, appreciative and accepting of individual differences: respect the right of individuals to make decisions about their own lives.

Don't: Abuse, demean, or mistreat anyone: don't use, manipulate, exploit or take advantage of others.

Tasks for Students:

Who do you respect?

Ask your students to make a list of specific people they respect. (Parents? Friends? Neighbors? Doctors? Police? Local politicians? The President? Teachers?) Does this list include themselves?

Why do we respect these people?

What character traits do we not respect?

How do we show our respect and courtesy to others?

Should we treat all people with the same courtesy?

Drama: Create Tableaux.

Discuss the meanings of 'respect.' Divide the class into three groups, say 11 per group. 8 of these will be "clay" and 3 will be "sculptors."

The sculptors will mould those who are 'clay' into poses that represent any aspect of 'disrespect' - the opposite to the pillar of respect - bearing in mind normal restrictions on anything vulgar, inappropriate, or harmful to the body. The 'clay' agrees to be shaped and to hold poses until the tableau is complete. When the sculptors are satisfied with the effect, they exit the scene.

Those not actively participating should observe the scene, holding comments until later. After a minute, the sculptors re-enter to transform the poses into ones that show 'respect.' At the completion of this task, ask the students to discuss the differences between the two scenes.

Try this strategy with other pillars.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability

Do: think before you act; consider the consequences on all people affected; think for the long-term; be reliable; be accountable; accept responsibility for the consequences of your choices; set a good example for those who look up to you.

Don't: make excuses, blame others for your mistakes or take credit for others' achievements.

Excellence

Do: your best and keep trying; be diligent and industrious.

Don't: quit or give up easily.

Self-Restraint

Do: exercise self-restraint (control your actions) and be disciplined.

Tasks for Students:

• Write Your Own Verses

Focus on Paul's song about Responsibility. What parts of your life can you be responsible for? At what age do you think you are going to start taking responsibility for such things as knowing when it's your bed-time, keeping your room tidy, cooking a meal, scrubbing pots, taking out the garbage without being reminded, paying for the presents you give to friends, doing your own laundry, etc.?

• Quaker Reading

Xerox copies of the lyrics to Paul's songs on pages 11 & 12 (except 'A Perfect Man?'). You could also use other inspirational poems, stories, etc. Divide the class into 4 groups and give each group two songs. Ask your students to read the lyrics to themselves and then pick out a word, phrase or sentence with which they can really identify; something that has meaning for them. When they have all made their selections, have them stand up individually and speak them with conviction. There is no particular order; they stand and speak when the moment feels right. (This is the Quaker part, like a Friend's meeting.) Older children can put the thoughts into their own words.

This is a very powerful way to reinforce the messages. If two or more students choose the same phrase, that's okay. Repetition is reinforcing. Hearing peers say the same things as Paul did in the performance, and saying them with conviction, brings them to life. It makes the messages more relevant to the students and not just something that grown-ups talk about.

FAIRNESS

Do: treat all people fairly; be open-minded; listen to others; try to understand what they are saying and feeling, make decisions which affect others only after appropriate considerations.

Don't: take unfair advantage of other's mistakes or take more than your fair share.

Tasks for Students:

- Group problem solving. Have students draw a cake. Have them work together to figure out a way to divide it fairly between them. Ask them to share their method and discuss if it was fairly divided or not. This is an example of how Paul's father taught fairness in his family. "I cut, you choose." You either get to cut, or choose first. The cutter is forced to make the parts equal.
- Write Your Own Ending. Have your students brainstorm life situations where there is a conflict in fairness. Have them each select one and write a short story with a clear beginning, middle and end which shows how the problem was solved in a fair way to all. This can be done individually or in small cooperative learning groups.

Here are some examples of situations:

- 1) Brian wants to go to Disneyland for his birthday but it will cost a lot of money. He has two brothers but they only had birthday parties at home. What does Brian's mother decide to do so she is fair to all?
- 2) There are three children in the family, but only one can sit in the front seat of the car with the father. How does he handle this to make it fair for all?
- 3) One child in a family is very musical. Although they don't have much money, she gets music lessons twice a week. How can the parents be fair to the other children?
- 4) Jane has to wear all of her cousin's hand-me-down clothes, but her brother always gets new clothes because there are no older boys in the family to pass on clothes to him. How can this be handled fairly?
- 5) In a game of soccer, the referee unjustly red tags a player on the other team. You now have a much better chance of winning and going on to the playoffs. What should be done to be fair?

CARING

Do: show you care about others through kindness, caring, sharing and compassion, live by the Golden Rule and help others.

Don't: be selfish, mean, cruel or insensitive to others' feelings.

Tasks for Students:

- Design a Plaque of the Golden Rule

Create a plaque which features the Golden Rule. Take a lot of trouble to make this with care and pride. This can be done with crayons, paint, cut-out letters, Fimo or yarn glued on to tag board or wood. Decorate it to make it special; take it home to share with your family. Ask if you can hang it or put it in a place of honor.

- Create an Improvisational Scene

Ask your students to create a dilemma or situation that involves moral choices. This can be done with the whole class, or in smaller groups depending on their age and capabilities. Use the 6 playwrighting questions: 'Who? What? When? Where? Why?' to establish the scene. The students will improvise 'How?' their specific character will deal with the problem.

After each improvisation, discuss what happened, what choices people made, and how your students responded to the choices. Avoid judgemental comments on your students' responses to what is morally right; it is more effective to ask questions which will make them think for themselves.

A variation on this idea would be to repeat the scene using well-known people as the characters to see how they would deal with the conflicts. Examples might include George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Bart Simpson (or other current under-achieving TV personality).

An example: you are walking down a street when you meet a homeless person who says she is very hungry and needs some money for food. You give her some, but then you see her buy whiskey with your money. (You were caring and compassionate, but she lied about what the money was for.) What do you feel, and how do you respond?

Think about different attitudes and actions that people you know might have taken. George Washington might say, "OK I'll give you some money if you earn it. Milk this cow first." Martin Luther King, Jr. might say, "I won't give you money, but here is some food." Bart Simpson might say, "Hey, this is a great way to make money without working; I'll join you!"

CITIZENSHIP

Do: play by the rules; obey laws; do your share; respect authority; stay informed; vote; protect your neighbors; pay your taxes; be charitable; help your community by volunteering service; protect the environment; conserve natural resources.

Tasks for Students:

- A 3 - D Arts Project.

(For grades 2 - 6.) Take empty cardboard boxes of varying sizes; divide the interior into sections which can represent a three-dimensional street, building, park, school or natural setting. Paper or cardboard figures and furniture, trees etc. can be made and placed to create a specific environment where students can manipulate figures to demonstrate a good citizen 'doing their share.' These activities can include; voting, obeying traffic laws, picking up trash, recycling newspapers and cans, obeying rules.

This box can also become a doll house with two floors. Paper furniture and figures of children and parents can be made and placed in positions that demonstrate any of the pillars of character. 'Responsibility' could be shown by having the children making their beds, cleaning up in the kitchen etc. 'Respect' could show the children listening to the parents.

For more animation the figures could have small magnets imbedded in their feet. They can then be manipulated from underneath with another magnet mounted on a stick. (Magnets can be inexpensively bought in stores like Radio Shack)

- A Moveable Character Art Project.

(For grades K - 2) Take light tag board. To demonstrate being responsible for the environment, students might draw a figure holding a watering can. Make the clothing from colorful cloth. Glue it on. Make a separate arm and attach it to the main figure by inserting a brad at the elbow to make it moveable. Mount the figure three dimensionally on another tag board with drawings of flowers in a garden. The figure can now be manipulated to 'water' the flowers, demonstrating citizenship in 'protecting the environment.'

These art ideas designed by Linda Fuller, visual arts educator.

Lyrics to songs from "Your Character Counts"

Your Character Counts

1) There's more to growing up
Than growing very tall,
Growing strong and healthy's very good,
But that isn't all.
It's what's inside your head
I'm happy to announce
That makes you fun to be with,
It's your character that counts.

CH) It's your character that counts,
It's your character that counts.
It makes a big a-difference,
Oh yes, a huge amount.

There are 6 pillars to character.

2) One! Can you be trusted?
Two! Do you respect?
Three! Are you responsible?
Which ones have you checked?
Four! Is for your fairness.
Five! Is do you care?
Six! Is for your citizenship
And do you always share?

3) There's more to growing up
Than growing very tall,
Growing strong and healthy's very good,
But that isn't all.
So feed your growing character
With pillars one through six,
And you will feel so good inside,
That's what I predict.

A Perfect Man?

Me! Look at me!
Was there ever such a perfect man in all of history?
Me! Check me out!
If you want perfect, here's what perfect's all about!
Inside my perfect body,
Inside my perfect head,
I'm the smartest man alive,
Now that Einstein's dead.
Me! Look at me!
A perfect example of humanity!

2) Me! Don't look at me!
I lied to you, I'm sorry, I'm a heap of misery.
Me! Don't check me out!
If you want useless, here's what useless is all about.
I cry myself to sleep at night,
Oh you should hear me sob,
I never finished high school,
I don't even have a job!
Me, don't look at me,
I'm the worst example of humanity.

3) Me! Look at me!
I'm your average kind of Englishman, I like my cup of tea,
Me! Check me out!
If you want average, here's what average is all about.
I've done some silly things, as anyone can do,
But I have learned some lessons that I'd like to share with you.
Me! Look at me!
How do you do? My name is Paul, I'm Paul Tracey.

Choices, choices, choices

Choices, choices, choices,
Which one should I choose?
Chose the right one we all win,
The wrong one we all lose.

Do you remember at bedtime when you were very young?
1) Did you like to have your blankies tight, or have them loose?
Did you like to drink your milkie? Or did you like juice?
Well, it doesn't make a difference
Which ever one you say,
That one's not a big decision,
Either one's okay.

CH.

2) Then it's time to make a choice of who your friends will be;
Why do you like Fernando and hate Rosalei?
People judge you by your friends, no matter what you do,
If you hang out with liars,
We'll think that you're one too.

3) Then one day a 'friend' will say,
"Take this, you'll feel real good."
He never said "It's drugs," 'cause if he did, you never would.
So now it's up to you,
Lose a friend or go along,
The choice you make will change your life,
That's why I wrote this song.

A Moral Code

Everybody ought to have a code,
A moral code.
Everybody ought to have a code,
To show you the road,

It's a kind of map that shows the road to take,
So when you make a choice,
You won't make a mistake.

It's a kind of guide
That you believe is true,
So when you make a choice,
You'll know what to do.
Everybody ought to have a code,
A moral code.

Not a code in der nose
I don't mean one of dose,
Not a code in the head,
They'll send you off to bed.
Not a comb for your hair,
(I don't have any there)
I mean a code for you that tells you what to do.
Everybody ought to have a code,
A moral code.

CH.

2) And in this code, it says "Until I die,
I will never cheat and I will never lie,"
And in this code, this is how I feel,
You can always trust me, I will never steal.
Everybody ought to have a code,
A moral code

Not a code in der nose
I don't mean one of dose,
Not a code in the head,
They'll send you off to bed.
Not a comb for your hair,
(I don't have any there)
I mean a code for you that tells you what to do.
Everybody ought to have a code,
A moral code

CH.

3) And once it's known that you're always fair,
That you're always truthful,
That you always care;
And once it's known, I know that you'll go far,
And you'll have lots of friends
Who like the way you are,
Everybody ought to have a code,
A moral code

Conscience Calypso

1) Did you know, inside your head,
Maybe inside your heart?
There is someone living there,
You two will never part.
He, or she, is somebody
Who knows you inside out.
He, or she, is there to guide you
When you are in doubt,

I'm inside your body,
Anywhere you go;
When you're tempted to say "Yes!"
I say "No, no no!"

2) This fellow's name is conscience,
He - she - will be your guide,
Pinnochio forgot him - her
Every time he lied.
And look what trouble he got in,
His nose grew very long;
Remember children always listen
To this little song:

CH

3) I'm too fat already
But should I eat more cake?
Should I make excuses
If I make a mistake?
Should I break a promise
Get out of it by lying?
If I do I know I'll hear
My poor old conscience crying:

CH

4) Don't argue with you conscience
He - she - is always right.
You waste your time, you always lose
If you get in a fight.
Ah ha, yes, yes, ah ha, go on,
I'm listening to you;
My conscience tells me what I say
Is absolutely true.

CH.

The Golden Rule

1) When I was just a little kid,
Much younger than you guys,
I tried to figure out my life,
How could I become wise?
My brother told me
"Patience! They'll teach you that in school."
And sure enough I soon discovered
This fantastic rule, it's called

The Golden Rule
And all you have to do,
Is do unto others
As you'd have them do to you.

2) When I was young I used to be
As lonely as a clam,
I thought "I'll never make a friend,
That's just the way I am."
Then someone told me something
That's worth its weight in gold,
"To make a friend - be a friend."
That's what I was told, it's called

CH

3) Now if I tell my friend
That you're a liar and a cheat,
You'll start a rumor telling her
That I've got smelly feet!
But if I say "You're clever,"
And I mean it honestly,
Chances are you'll think of something
Nice to say to me, what's it called, it's called

CH

I used to be the shiest kid
You ever want to see;
Then I found out that shyness
Was a selfish thing to be.
I only thought about myself,
My personality.
Now I think of others,
So they think well of me, it's called

CH.

It's Your Choice

So go back home and tell your folks
You heard it in a song.
That they should teach you what is right
And teach you what is wrong.

If we want the world to be
A better place for you and me,
If we want to live in peace
And want to live in harmony..

So show me by the way you act
That you know what to do,
Only you can make a difference,
The whole thing's up to you
It's your choice,
 it's your choice,
 it's your choice.

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Cassettes of the songs and the story are available for \$5.00 at performances or \$7.50 by
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