

We're Counted On

Character Skills

- Responsibility
- Respect

SEL Skills

- Responsible Decision-Making
- Social Awareness

Academic Skills

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Effective Problem-Solving

Read the story and then use the questions to discuss responsibility.

Discussion Questions

- What does a responsible person do?
 - Offer examples, such as: If our parents count on us to brush our teeth or clean our rooms, we do it.
- Ask the students what it means to count on someone. Remind them that doing what we are supposed to do shows others that we are responsible
- Invite the students to share an example of how others count on them.
- Ask the students to explain why King Alfred was not responsible.
 - Remind them that the woman counted on him to do something, and he didn't do it.
- What was the responsible thing to do?
 - If King Alfred had been responsible, everyone would have had cakes to eat. Suggest that King Alfred and the couple would have been able to enjoy tasty treats if the king had been responsible.
- Ask if the king did anything to try to make up for failing to do what he was supposed to do. (He stacked the wood.)
- Discuss the importance of being accountable for one's mistakes and resolving to do better.

Story: The Tale of King Alfred

After being defeated by warriors from another land, King Alfred and his soldiers were forced to leave their homes. To avoid being captured by these warriors, the king disguised himself as a poor shepherd and went into the woods to hide. But the king was not familiar with the woods and soon became lost. Unable to find his way out of the forest, he wandered alone for several days. Finally, he came upon a cottage. He knocked on the door and told the man and woman who lived there that he hadn't had a meal or a warm place to sleep for many nights. The woman, not noticing that this ragged fellow was actually the king, asked him for something in return.

"We must go chop and gather wood for the stove," she said, "so when I'm gone if you will watch the cakes baking on the stove and prevent them from burning, I will give you supper when I return." Alfred thanked the couple and agreed to watch the cakes. But he was tired from wandering in the woods and shortly after they left, Alfred fell asleep. He awoke to the smell of smoke. The cakes now looked like small, black lumps, and it was too late to save them.

The couple returned to the cottage and the woman scolded Alfred for not keeping his promise. "You lazy man! You told me you would watch the cakes, but you slept while they burned." She turned to look at him more closely and suddenly realized that the man she was scolding was (cont'd)

actually the king of the land! Both the man and woman dropped to their knees, apologizing for speaking to the king so harshly.

“Please, my friends, you owe me no apologies,” said King Alfred. “It is I who must beg for your forgiveness. I accepted responsibility for watching the cakes and I have no one to blame but myself for letting them burn. I apologize to you, for anyone who agrees to a task, big or small, should do what is promised.”

All was forgiven and the couple fed the king and prepared a bed for him to sleep in that night. The next morning when the man and wife awoke they found that King Alfred had chopped and neatly stacked their gathered wood by the door before going on his way.

Definitions

Responsibility

- Do what you are supposed to do; try your best
- Persevere; keep on trying
- Be self-disciplined
- Think before you act; consider the consequences

Respect

- Follow the Golden Rule
- Be accepting of differences
- Be courteous to others
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults, disagreements
- Be considerate of others' feelings

Responsible Decision-Making

Make decisions based on rationality, ethics, and effectiveness

Social Awareness

Assess the feelings of others and be sensitive to the feelings and needs of others

Critical and Creative Thinking

Acquire, remember, understand, and apply knowledge

Effective Problem-Solving

Make rational, ethical, and effective decisions to find the best solutions to problems

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