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Character Development

Lesson 2: Introduction to Character

Lesson Keys

- Definition
- Character Lab
- Activity
- Character Foreshadow

Preparation

Be familiar with the definition of character. Building a life on character is not the key, it is building it on godly character. Pray that you are able to present and explain the importance of developing godly character.

Supplies

- Plastic Jar
- Sand
- Rocks
- 12 cans of soda
- 3 car washing sponges

Scripture Guide

Romans 5:3-5
Matthew 7:24-27

Teaching Coach

Try to come up with an example from your own life where you had to make a decision based on character. This will be a more tangible example of how either good or bad character work.

Introduction

What is character?

- Ask several kids to give their definitions of character
- Have kids give examples of character

Definition - *The essential nature of a person or a group. A distinguishing feature.*

- Character is basically who you are. Character consists of the principles and ideas that often determine what we say, what we do and how we act.
- Character is recognizable. People can often determine what kind of person you as a result of the character traits that they see in you.

Example:

- If selfishness is a character that you have in your life, then your actions will display this character. You will make decisions and do things that will benefit you simply because you are selfish. People will usually see this and recognize you as a selfish person.
- If loyalty is a character that you have in your life, then your actions and words will show this character. The things you say and the things you do will show true loyalty and commitment because this is the kind of person that you are. Others will notice this trait and be more willing to trust you because of your loyalty.

Two Kinds of Character

Everyone has character. The goal of Christians is to develop godly character in your life. Once godly character such as honesty, loyalty, patience and courage are a part of our lives, we will begin to act more like Christ. This is a building process, a process in which we build our lives on the foundation of godly character.

Matthew 7:24-27

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The

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Matthew 7 clearly explains the importance of a godly, biblically foundation we need to build to be successful.

Be descriptive and interactive with the kids in this demonstration. When you bring out the rocks, let a few kids hold it or pass it around. Let them get a feel of how character is hard, heavy and difficult to move. Let the sand fall through your fingers. Show a few grains of sand and relate each grain to a specific memory or event (this one is that trip to the ball park with my dad, this one is my first day in the fourth grade). Show how all the little grains add up to form a full life.

Give them your answers to these questions. Explain how practice and repetition develops character. Bad character can be developed just the same way, so we need to focus on developing only godly character.

rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

The Word of God (Bible) teaches character principles. When we base our lives on the Bible, we will have a strong character foundation, when we build our lives on ungodly foundations, our lives will crumble.

Character Lab

Experiment:

- Pull out the Jar, the rocks and the sand
- Begin to fill the jar with sand up until half way
Say: Our lives are a lot like this jar. When we are born, it is empty, but as life goes on, it is filled with experiences, activities, ideas and habits.
- Fill the jar as much as possible with the rocks on top of the sand
Say: These rocks represent godly character. If we wait too late in life it is very difficult to get them all in our lives.
- Empty the jar and begin again by placing the rocks in first followed by the sand
Say: The best way to get all the rocks in is to fill our lives with godly character while we are young and then begin to fill our lives with experiences, ideas and habits. Notice how the rocks determine where the sand goes. In the same way, godly character in your lives will determine your experiences, habits and ideas.
- Shake the jar so that all the sand settles and fill it to the top
Say: How difficult would it be to pull the rocks out now. When we place godly character in our lives now, they will shape the rest of your lives and give you strength and stability. It will not be likely that you will lose this character since it is imbedded in your life. The key though is getting the character in now while you are young. The longer you wait

Results:

- Would bad character traits be just as difficult to remove from a full life?
- Is it likely that there are some character traits that need to be removed from your life?
- How might you add character to your life as a young person?

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If a team somehow balances a tower on the sponge, pound the table beside the sponge (earthquake). Sometimes our lives get shaken.

If necessary, bring up Matthew 7 again. Explain that it was the foundation that made all the difference.

If time allows, have the children pray by themselves as well, asking God to help them build a solid foundation.

Activity

- Foundation Challenge
- Give every child a canned soft drink
- Spilt the kids into three groups
- Have each group try to balance as many cans on top of each other on top of a sponge
- After several attempts, have the children try to balance as many cans as they can on top of each other using the floor or a table top as the foundation.

Ask the children the following questions:

- What was your biggest problem when stacking on top of the sponge?
- Why was using the table or floor a better base?
- If you were building an expensive house, which would you rather build on, the sponge or the floor?

Foundations Example:

- Houses and building require a solid and sturdy base upon which to build
- Without a solid foundation, buildings could collapse, fall over or even sink
- Very large buildings actually have iron poles that go hundreds of feet down into the ground and are anchored to the bedrock for stability

Application:

Godly character is a lot like a foundation. It is the foundation for your life. The character that you put into your life will determine your success and happiness in life. Having bad character in your life increases the chances that your life will experience disaster, failure and misery. This class is designed to help you lay a proper foundation for your life. It is designed to help you put the character in place that will make your life happy and successful.

Conclusion:

The next 12 weeks will be us under construction. We will be laying the foundation for a successful and godly life. Different parts of the foundation will include integrity, perseverance, humility, courage, stewardship, faithfulness and others. Come prepared and with open hearts, ready to be changed and renewed.

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Prayer

Pray over the children corporately for an open heart and a willingness to change.