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Teaching Guide: Responsibility

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for grades K-5



This page is from the teaching guide for the video *Responsibility* in the video series *The Six Pillars of Character™* featuring the *Popcorn Park Puppets™*. Even if you aren't showing this video there is a lot of material here you can use to create a lesson. Feel free to modify it to suit your needs.



HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON

- **Be reliable and dependable; when you agree to do something, do it.**
- **Take care of your own business. Don't make others do what you are supposed to do.**
- **Take responsibility for your actions; don't make excuses or blame others.**
- **Use your head; think before you act; imagine the consequences.**

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

CHILDREN LEARN:

- What responsibility is and what a responsible person does.
- Why it is important to behave responsibly.
- How irresponsible behavior can damage their relationships with others.
- That being a responsible person results in better friendships.
- How to solve problems by thinking.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you are using the video, ask the first question before viewing.

1. Have you ever let somebody else take the blame for something you did? What happened? How did the other person feel about it?

THE VIDEO STORY

Questions to ask after showing Act I

2. What happened in the video so far?
3. Who had the main responsibility for taking care of Renaldo the lizard? (*Burna*)
4. Why did Burna give Renaldo to Muggsy?
5. How did Burna get Muggsy to take Renaldo?
6. Do you think Muggsy wanted to take care of Renaldo for Burna? Why did he agree to it?
7. Was that fair to Muggsy? Was it right for Burna to do that? Was she acting responsibly? Was she being a good friend? Why not?
8. When Groark tells Muggsy that he didn't bring the bat, his excuse is "I forgot." Do you think that forgetting something is always a good excuse. Is it irresponsible? Why, or why not?
9. When Groark accidentally let Renaldo escape, he tried to cover it up by telling Muggsy that Renaldo was hiding in the cage. Was that a responsible thing to do? Why, or why not?
10. Why did Groark let Muggsy think he (Muggsy) was at fault, when it was actually Groark's fault that the lizard escaped?
11. Was Groark being fair? Was he being honest? Was he being responsible? Was he doing the right thing? Was he being a good friend? Why, or why not?
12. Groark has two choices. He can speak up and take responsibility for losing Renaldo, or he can keep quiet and let Muggsy take the blame. Do you think he knows which is the right thing to do? If so, why doesn't he do it?
13. What do you think Groark will do? What do you think he should do? Why?

Questions to ask after showing Act II

14. Why is this place called The Thinking Place?
15. Socrates said that a good imagination is a powerful tool for solving problems. How can your imagination help you solve problems?
16. Socrates asked Groark to imagine that he went to a circus instead of working on a class project, like he had agreed to.
 - Was Groark able to imagine that?



Groark & Muggsy lose Burna's lizard.

Groark and Burna learn that being irresponsible can be unfair and hurtful to everyone, including themselves. When Burna neglects an important responsibility by dumping it on Muggsy, and Groark makes a mistake and lets Muggsy take the blame, the result is a tangle of hard feelings that nearly brings their friendships to a painful end.

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The Six Pillars of Character

- **Trustworthiness**
- **Respect**
- **Responsibility**
- **Fairness**
- **Caring**
- **Citizenship**

- What were the consequences of choosing to go to the circus?
- In Groark's imagination, how did his friends react to him not helping them on the project?
- How did that make Groark feel?
- Was Groark glad he had chosen to go to the circus? Why not?

17. Diotima asked Groark to imagine that his good friend made a serious mistake and then let Groark take the responsibility.

- Was Groark able to imagine that?
- How did Groark feel about what his friend did?
- Did this help Groark think more clearly about what he had done to Muggsy?

18. Do you think these imaginary situations will help Groark do the right thing, now and in the future?

19. Have you ever used your imagination to solve a problem, or to predict what might happen if you did something? Do you think it's a good idea? How did that help you (or, how could that help you)?

20. What did Groark's learn from his visit to The Thinking Place?

Questions to ask after showing Act III - General questions about responsibility:

21. How can acting irresponsibly hurt people's friendships? How can being responsible make you a better friend?

22. What does it mean when someone is described as being a "responsible" person?

23. Do you consider yourself to be a responsible person? Why? In what ways?

24. Does it matter to you whether or not people think of you as responsible? Why, or why not?

25. How do you feel about people who are irresponsible?

- How do you feel about people who are responsible?
- What difference does it make to you whether or not your friends are responsible people?

26. What is good about being a responsible person?

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Color these
characters!

Click on the Popcorn Park Puppets below to get blackline masters you can print out for your children to color.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. At the top of this page are some behavioral guidelines for how to be a responsible person. Write these guidelines on the board. Have the

children think of as many examples of each as they can, and write them on the board. Can they think of any other responsible behaviors that should be added to the list? Have a class discussion about these behaviors. Have the children make posters of these behaviors to put up around the school.

2. Take the examples from activity #1, above, and turn them into role-playing situations. The kids can act them out themselves or use puppets. First, have them role-play the irresponsible behavior, and then, the responsible behavior. Have the group critique each of the role-plays.

3. In the video, Socrates and Diotima put Groark through some imagination exercises by setting up pretend situations in which Groark had to make choices. Try doing the same with your students. Have them close their eyes while imagining themselves in a situation you describe. Make sure it requires them to make choices that are either responsible or irresponsible. Have them test different choices and describe in detail the consequences of those choices. The more detailed their descriptions, the more real the experience will feel to them, and the more they will understand the consequences of their imagined actions. (Afterwards you might tell them how Albert Einstein used this technique to create all kinds of theories in math and physics.)

4. For the upper grades: Have your students look for magazine or newspaper articles in which responsibility is an issue. Discuss these issues in the context of responsible and irresponsible actions. What are the stakes? What are the consequences?



WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. How responsible are you? For each of the responsible behaviors listed at the top of this page, rate yourself on a scale of one to five (1=awful, and 5=terrific). For each of these behaviors give an example of how you are either responsible or not, and what you could do to improve.

2. Can you think of a time you did something really irresponsible? Describe it in detail. Why did it happen? How did you feel about it at the time? Did it affect anybody else? Did it cause any problems for you? How do you feel about it now? What did you learn from it? Or, perhaps you would prefer to write about something you did that was very responsible.

3. If your students are old enough to write book reports, have them write about how the characters in the book behaved in either a responsible or irresponsible way. Do the same with movies or television programs they have seen. If your children are too young to write book reports, do this as a class discussion about the books they are reading

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or that you are reading to them.

4. Write about someone you think is very responsible. What do you like about that person?

5. Write about how it makes you feel when somebody lets you down.

See the other guides in this series for writing assignments you can adapt to this topic.

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(Copy this block and send it home to the parents.)

FOR PARENTS

Dear Parent,

Your child has just viewed a video entitled ***The Six Pillars of Character: RESPONSIBILITY*** which teaches children lessons about responsible and irresponsible behavior, and shows how being a responsible person leads to good friendships and positive interpersonal relationships.

Here are some things you can do to reinforce the message of this video and our related learning activities.

- Ask your child to tell you about the video program and what he or she learned from it.
- Ask your child to show you the page entitled "How to be a Responsible Person." Discuss the guidelines for responsible behavior on this page. Perhaps post them in a place where you child will see them often.
- Have a discussion about responsibility in the family. What are your child's responsibilities (other than chores), and what are your responsibilities? Perhaps make a chart. What happens if you or your child are irresponsible? How does taking responsibility make your home a happier place to be?
- Catch your child being responsible. Make sure your child knows he or she has just done something good. Expressing your approval is a powerful way to reinforce good behavior.
- Remember, your child is watching what you do. Be sure to model the kind of responsible behavior you want your child

to adopt.

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