



Activity # 1– Lifeboat Activity (borrowed other versions)

- Target grade level: elementary/secondary/college
 - Character quality emphasized: empathy
1. Explain to the students that a small passenger liner is sailing from Britain to Australia (a nice long cruise). Halfway through the journey it begins to sink. You are the only one who brought a large lifeboat along the trip, but it can only support 10 people. Since you found the lifeboat you get to decide the 9 other people who will join you. Hand out the list below or show on the screen. You can have the students do this individually though having them in small groups would certainly spur interesting discussion. Remind them that 6 of the following people will die and they have to justify their decisions. Try to have them avoid hypothetical situations (e.g., a younger person could swim better if the lifeboat sinks, etc.)
 2. A Doctor, GP, who has an addiction to drugs and is very nervous (Male/60 years old)
 3. A Protestant Minister, (Male/27 years old)
 4. A prostitute, but is an excellent nurse, she has already saved a drowning child and put him on another lifeboat (Female/37 years old)
 5. A criminal. Charged with murder but can navigate the boat. (Male/37)
 6. A mentally disturbed man, but who carries important government secrets in his head (Male/41)
 7. A law-abiding salesman. He sells automatic washing machines and is also a leading member of his community. (Male/51)
 8. A crippled boy, paralyzed since birth. He cannot use his hands and is dependent on others. (Male/8)
 9. A housewife with two children at home (Female/23)
 10. A Jewish restaurant owner, married with 3 children at home. (Male/40)
 11. A Teacher considered one of the best in England. (Female/32)
 12. A Catholic Nun, supervisor of a girl's school. (Female/46)
 13. An unemployed man, formally a professor of literature. He has a great sense of humor and is a decorated soldier for his contribution in the last war and was in a concentration camp for 3 years. (Male/53)
 14. An Irish man studying to be a pharmacist. (Male/23) And is married to...
 15. An Irish woman, studying to be a nursery teacher. (Female/22)
 16. An American, he is also a Neo-Nazi and thus hates Jews. However he has a large box of food which he will throw into the sea unless he goes into the lifeboat. (Male/20)
 17. In the end, students will arrive at varying opinions, and feel free to have them share their thoughts. However, instruct them that honestly any decision of whose life is more important is a false choice, as all lives have equal significance, regardless of age, ability, or other factors. Hopefully, at the end of this exercise, they will become more empathetic towards others and recognize that all human beings have equal value!

Activity # 2 – It’s the insides that count! (idea from CharacterCounts!)

- Target grade level: elementary
- Character quality emphasized: honesty, empathy
- 1. Wrap several gift boxes or jars in bright colors with ribbons and bows.
- 2. Fix the lids so they can be easily opened.
- 3. Leave one of the jars plain or wrap it in old newspaper.
- 4. Illustrate that it is what is on the inside that counts by putting a surprise in the plain box. (Fruit, candy, erasers, etc.)
- 5. Put small stones, gravel, dried leaves or egg shells in the fancy boxes.

Activity #3 – Understanding human nature

- Target grade level: secondary/college
 - Character quality emphasized: honesty, empathy, leadership, conflict resolution
 - 1. Explain that newspaperman Charles Dana observed that Abraham Lincoln “understood human nature”, meaning he knew how to respond to people, and really tried to understand what makes each person “tick.” Failing to understand others, or not even trying to understand others, is the reason for disputes of all kinds.
 - 2. Have students research either a historical event or a current situation which involves groups or individuals who think differently about a situation. It might be useful to make it a local issue which the students might find interesting. Have them write how the two (or more) sides are different, and have them propose a compromise to solve the situation.
- Extrapolate lessons of understanding each other, and have students suppose how Lincoln was able to understand other points of view so well.