

## TEACHING GUIDE



For use with  
Program 3

## RESPONSIBILITY

In the Children's Video Series



THIS PROGRAM TEACHES CHILDREN:

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

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### HOW TO BE RESPONSIBLE

**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.**

### THE STORY

#### Act 1

Emotions run high when Burna dumps her responsibility on Muggsy, and Groark makes a mistake and lets Muggsy take the blame.

#### Act 2

Wracked with feelings of guilt, Groark goes to a gazebo in the park called The Thinking Place, where he has an imaginary dialogue with two park statues - Socrates and Diotima. The statues help Groark think clearly about how his actions affect other people, and what he needs to do to be a more responsible dragon.

#### Act 3

Recognizing the error of his ways, Groark admits his mistake to Muggsy, and together they teach Burna a lesson in responsible behavior.

**Use Popcorn Park videos  
to facilitate character education,  
social and emotional development,  
and critical thinking in your students.**

**Character Education:** means helping students *know* what is right, *care about* what is right, and *do* what is right. These videos and their follow-up activities promote all three aspects of the process.

- **Knowing:** Popcorn Park videos portray issues of right and wrong in terms of concrete behaviors which young children can recognize and understand.
- **Caring:** These videos depict good character in a context that makes it desirable to young children, i.e. the reward for having good character is that we have better friendships.
- **Doing:** Popcorn Park videos emphasize that character is expressed in what we do, not how we think or feel. The stories are designed to inspire action.

**Social and Emotional Development:** The stories in these videos are rooted in inter-personal relationships. The videos, together with the discussion questions and other follow-up activities, will help your children:

- Understand and identify feelings.
- Recognize the difference between thinking, feeling, and acting.
- Understand how their actions affect other people's feelings.
- Develop empathy - the ability to take someone else's perspective.
- Handle their relationships with other people in a positive way.

**Critical Thinking:** These videos explicitly encourage thinking as a means of problem-solving, and help kids learn to think through situations where personal feelings present an obstacle. Some of the critical thinking skills modeled in these stories are:

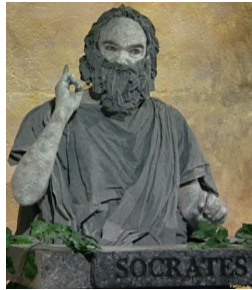
- Thinking clearly and honestly about a problem.
- Sorting out issues.
- Using questions to drive thinking and problem-solving.
- Asking the right question.

## The Thinking Place

The second act of each video takes place in *The Thinking Place*, a gazebo in the park populated by two statues - Socrates\* and



Diotima\*\* - who come alive in the presence of anyone with a thorny problem and a good imagination. The story's main character arrives here confused and conflicted, bringing to life the two statues, who coach him/her in critical thinking and problem solving. Their guidance empowers the character to do the right thing in Act 3.



### Socratic Method

True to his nature, Socrates' approach to thinking is, well, Socratic. He never tells anyone what to do, he just asks questions. Lots of good questions. And by asking the right questions he artfully guides the character to a clear understanding of what

must be done. But that only solves half the problem.



### Emotional Intelligence

As we know, there is a difference between knowing what to do and having the will or ability to do it. Often, emotional and interpersonal concerns are actually the biggest part of the problem, and this is where Diotima comes in. Diotima deals with

the human dimension and sparks the insight that eventually helps the character carry out the right decision.

\***Socrates** is credited with being the first person to apply serious critical thinking to questions of morality and conduct.

\*\***Diotima** was a legendary Greek priestess and teacher who taught Socrates the connection between love of people and love of wisdom.

For guidance on conducting Socratic discussions in your classroom, please visit [www.goodcharacter.com/popcornpark](http://www.goodcharacter.com/popcornpark).

## How to Use This Video

Popcorn Park videos are structured in **three acts**. We strongly recommend that you **stop the video** after each act and conduct a class discussion (the breaks between acts are clearly marked in the video). Pages 7-8 of this guide provide **discussion questions** that will help you engage your students in **meaningful reflection** about what they have just seen, exercise and train their thinking skills, and give you a way to assess and reinforce their understanding of the important ideas before proceeding. Breaking the video up in this way may be especially advisable for the younger grades. It is not necessary to show the entire video in a single day.

In addition to the discussion questions, this guide also provides **writing assignments, group activities**, and a **parents' take-home page** to maximize the impact and usefulness of the video. **You may have to rephrase some of this material to suit the age level of your children.**

- If you would like to teach your kids the **songs** from these videos, you'll find the lyrics (and much more) on our character education website at **<[www.goodcharacter.com/songs.html](http://www.goodcharacter.com/songs.html)>** The song lyrics are also in a PDF file on this DVD.
- This video series was produced in association with **Character Counts!** For more "Six Pillars" related activities and materials, please visit their website at **<[www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)>**
- The **Character Education Partnership** outlines *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* on their very useful website at **<[www.character.org](http://www.character.org)>**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### *Question to ask before showing the video.*

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

### *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 she 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?
- 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**

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?



## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. How responsible are you? For each of the responsible behaviors listed on page 2, 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 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. You'll find them all at <[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)> under "teaching guides."

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Page 2 of this guide (*How to be a Responsible Person*) gives guidelines for responsible behavior. Write these behavioral 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?

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

## PARENTS' PAGE

Dear Parent,

Your child has just viewed a video entitled "***The Six Pillars of Character: RESPONSIBILITY***" featuring the **Popcorn ark Puppets**. This video 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 this video program and what he or she learned from it.
- Ask you 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.

**goodcharacter.com**

**Free Character Education Resources at  
www.goodcharacter.com**

This content-rich website offers free character education resources, organized by topic and grade level, for K-12 teachers, coaches, and youth group leaders. You'll find curriculum materials, discussion questions, writing assignments, group learning activities, opportunities for student action, and lots of teacher support material. Many teachers have found this to be an excellent place to start for immediate implementation of a character development unit for any grade level.

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This video series was produced in association with  
**CHARACTER COUNTS!™**

The CHARACTER COUNTS! coalition is a consortium of the nation's largest and most influential educational and youth-serving organizations united in one overriding mission: strengthening the character of America's youth.



**CHARACTER COUNTS!**  
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