

TEACHING GUIDE



For use with
Program 4

FAIRNESS

In the Children's Video Series



THIS PROGRAM TEACHES CHILDREN:

- What fairness is and what a fair person does.
- How fairness and unfairness affect their relationships with others.
- How to solve problems by thinking.

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HOW TO BE A FAIR PERSON

Treat people the way you want to be treated.

Take turns.

Tell the truth.

Play by the rules.

Think about how your actions will affect others.

Listen to people with an open mind.

Don't blame others for your mistakes.

Don't take advantage of others.

Don't play favorites.

THE STORY

Act 1

Essie agonizes about how to be fair to her friends, Burna and Muggsy, when she has to choose which of them will get the starring role in the annual Popcorn Park play.

Act II

Tortured and confused, Essie goes to a gazebo in the park called the Thinking Place, where she has an imaginary dialog with two park statues - Socrates and Diotima. The statues help Essie think clearly about what fairness is, and lead her to a creative idea about how to make this difficult choice.

Act III

Emboldened by her new found clarity, Essie returns to the theater and conducts a trial in which the three of them work out a solution that is fair to all.

**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:

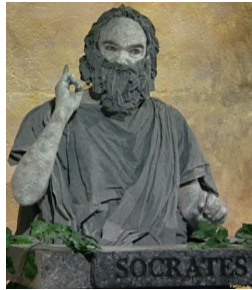
- Thinking clearly and honestly about a problem.
- Sorting out issues.
- Using questions to drive thinking and problem-solving.
- Asking the right question.

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.

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>** 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>**
- The **Character Education Partnership** outlines *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* on their very useful website at **<www.character.org>**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question to ask before showing the video.

1. Have you ever said, "that's unfair"? How do you know when something is unfair?
2. Has anybody ever tricked you or cheated you? How did you feel about it?

Questions to ask after showing Act I

3. Describe what happened in Act I.
4. Do you think Burna was being fair with Muggsy? If not, what did she do that was unfair? Was Burna being honest with Muggsy? What did she do that was dishonest? Was Burna treating Muggsy the way she would want Muggsy to treat her?
5. Do you think it was fair for Muggsy to accuse Burna of stealing his script? Why, or why not?
6. Burna gave a better audition than Muggsy. Is there any reason she shouldn't get the part?
7. Muggsy pleaded with Essie to give him more time to find his costume. Burna objected, saying that would be unfair. Whom do you agree with, Muggsy or Burna? Why?
8. How did Muggsy and Burna feel about each other at the end of Act I? Why?
9. What is Essie confused about? Why is she having trouble deciding what is fair?
10. What would you do if you were Essie? What are some of her options?
11. Can you predict what might happen next?

Questions to ask after showing Act II

12. Socrates said that the best way to solve a problem is by thinking. Do you agree? Why is thinking a good way to solve problems?

13. Socrates told Essie that if she doesn't know what fairness is, she should try asking what unfairness is. Did that help Essie? Did she have any trouble thinking of things that were unfair? What were the things Essie said were unfair? (*Getting blamed for something she didn't do, not playing by the rules, not listening with an open mind, playing favorites, taking advantage of people.*)

14. Were Burna and Muggsy guilty of any of these unfair things Essie mentioned? Which ones?

15. Socrates said, "without rules we are nothing but animals." What did he mean by that? Do you think he's right? Why, or why not? What does following rules have to do with fairness?

16. Socrates said to Essie that if she doesn't do any of the things she considers unfair, she'll probably be fair. What do you think of that idea? Is it useful? Did that completely solve Essie's problem? Why not? What was missing?

17. Essie comes away from the Thinking Place planning on having a trial. Can you predict what might happen when Essie brings her fighting friends together in a courtroom?

Questions to ask after showing Act III

18. Do you think Essie's idea of having a trial was a good one? What did this trial accomplish?

19. Essie gave Muggsy and Burna three rules they had to follow during the trial. What were they? (*Take turns, listen to each other, tell the truth.*) What do you think of these rules? Do they have anything to do with fairness? What?

20. Essie said "in order to be completely fair to both of you, I promise to keep an open mind and give you each an equal chance to make your argument." What do these things have to do with fairness?

21. Did Essie do a good job of running a fair trial? Explain your answer.

22. Did the trial help Muggsy and Burna understand the unfair things they had done to each other? How can you tell?

23. Do you think a trial like that might be a fair way for you and your friends to settle conflicts?
24. Was it a good idea to let Muggsy and Burna come up with their own solution?
25. What do you think of the solution Muggsy and Burna came up with? Was it fair? Can you think of a better solution?
26. What did you learn from this video?
27. In every situation is it possible to be fair to everyone? Should you try? Why, or why not?
28. What does treating people fairly mean? Does fairness mean everyone gets the same amount, like an equal piece of a chocolate bar? Does fairness mean enforcing the rules for everyone, even if it means losing a game?
29. How should you treat people who are not fair with you?
30. How does fairness affect your relationships with other people - your friends, for example?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. If your students are old enough to write book reports, have them write about how the characters in the book behaved in either a fair or an unfair 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.
2. Think of a time when you've taken unfair advantage of a person or a situation, or when someone has taken unfair advantage of you. Describe it. What was unfair about it? How did it make you feel? What did you learn from the experience?
3. How is fairness related to having respect for others? How is it related to honesty? To being reliable? To being a good citizen?
4. Think of something that you consider to be unfair. Describe it in detail, and write what you think should be done about it. Is there anything you can do to help change it? If so, what?
5. Sometimes to make a fair decision you have to consider the "stakeholders" - all the people who will be affected by your decision. Set up a situation in which you have to make an important decision. For instance, choosing someone to play on your basketball team. Are there more stakeholders than just the two applicants? How can you tell who has a stake in your decision? How does considering the stake-holders help you make a fairer decision.
6. Did you know that almost every decision you make (even small ones) affects other people? Think of a few decisions you have made, and write about how those decisions affected other people.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. What does it mean to be a fair person? Have your class brainstorm a list of do's and don'ts for being fair. Ask for specific examples of each behavior they identify. Compare their list with the one on page 2 of this guide. Hang the list up on the wall as a reminder.
2. Take some of the behavioral examples from activity #1, above, and turn them into role-play situations. The kids can act them out themselves or use puppets. First have them role-play the unfair behavior, and then the fair behavior. Have the group analyze each of the role-plays.
3. Bring in articles from newspapers and magazines describing situations in which fairness and justice is an issue. Have a discussion about who is acting fairly, and who is acting unfairly in these situations.
4. Invite a judge (or a trial attorney) to come and talk to your class about how the justice system works and about how he/she tries to keep things fair in the courtroom.

(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: FAIRNESS***" featuring the **Popcorn Park Puppets**. This video teaches children lessons about fair and unfair behavior, and shows how being a fair 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 Fair Person.*" Discuss the rules for fairness listed on this page. Perhaps post them in a place where your child will see them often.
- Talk with your child about the importance of being fair with people. Make sure he/she knows that it is important to you, and that it will lead to stronger friendships.
- Watch a television program together. Perhaps find a non-violent courtroom drama. And talk about the various ways in which the characters acted unfairly towards one another.
- Remember that you are a powerful role model for your child. If you treat people fairly, that is what your child will learn from you.

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.

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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