HEMPSTEAD
City of Character

"Building On a Solid Foundation"

"Joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service, and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness." --Tolstoi

Featuring this month~

Joyfulness
vs. Self-pity

"Maintaining a good attitude, even when faced with unpleasant conditions."

I will:

- Look for good in all things.
- Smile at adversity.
- Not give in to discouragement.
- Not allow my emotions to rule my mind.
- Take time out of every day to laugh and sing.

More...

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What is Joyfulness?

"Joyfulness" comes from the Latin word "gaudium," from which we get words such as joy, jest, joke, juggle, gaudy, and yodel. It means "to be glad, to have delight."

Real joyfulness is based on having a life purpose, rather than just a feeling. Feelings are usually dependant on circumstances and can come and go. However, having joy is a decision, stemming from character, to continue in hope even when life's difficulties come.

With life purpose, a person can overlook present troubles to focus on long-term goals and on accom- plishing something beyond himself. The fulfillment achieved in this way results in true joy.

"To pleasure philosophy...an material success can for a moment give such inner satisfaction as the sense of living for good purposes...."
Minot Simons

Like happiness, which is an emotion, a hot air balloon is beautiful to behold but lacks direction and purpose.

Like joy, a character quality, an airplane has a destination and purpose.

The Otter

" Otters exemplify joy! Whether it be winter or summer, the otter finds ways to have fun in his environment-sliding on ice, swimming, playing tag, tug-of war, and chase.

Click here for more about the nature analogy for joy found in the otter.

"To lose oneself in a great cause, in proportion as one loses himself in this way, in the same degree does he get the highest happiness out of his work."
--Booker T. Washington
(For more about Mr. Washington, click here.)

Abraham Lincoln was known for his humor, often joking about his own appearance and dire situations. When asked about his humor, he replied:
"I laugh because I must not cry; that is all--that is all."

Humor is an effective means of building joy. It is important to learn to balance humor with discretion-to pause to think and to be sensitive to others' feelings. A time of humor and joking can slip into foolishness.

"The difference between humor and folly is this: humor strengthens wisdom while folly mocks it."
--Character First

Foolishness / folly	Humor
--mocks wisdom	--enhances wisdom
--jokes at other's expense	--builds relationship by sharing amusement
--lacks true joyfulness	--supports and develops joyfulness
--tears others down to build self up	--builds others by putting difficult situations in perspective

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the difference between humor and foolishness. Can you describe situations where each was used? What was the result?

2. Can you describe a time where having a larger purpose helped bring joy into a dark situation?

3. Are you aware of music as a language of emotions? Can you describe some music (or better yet, hum it) that brings you joy? What is it that makes music sad or joyful? (You might want to listen to music selections as a group to aid this discussion.)

4. When you are hit with discouraging events, what has worked for you to bring joy back?

5. Have you been aware of the atmosphere of your work or home situation changing because one person is negative? joyful?

6. What practical actions can bring a joyful atmosphere into your workplace or home?

Practical Benefits of Joyfulness

--Honors and respects others, showing appreciation to their value. Honor is empowering!
--Encourages others like a "ray of sunshine."
--Brings hope and energy.
--Strengthens relationships.
--Makes the workplace easier to function in.
--Lightens the load.
--Is contagious!

--Concept from Character First

Parents - **Click here** for tips on encouraging your children to develop the character quality this month.

Check out the **Just for Kids** pages for joyfulness in a nature analogy and a historical lesson.

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