

Parents - If you haven't already read the pages on "Developing Character in Your Children," you might want to go there first before reading these pages.

"Virtue is praised by all but practiced by few."
--Thomas Fuller

Bunches of Heroes

Create a grapevine by twisting green crepe paper into vines. Let the children cut out and staple or glue on leaves. Drape the vine in a conspicuous place in your home.

Draw a cluster of grapes on purple construction paper and have available. When your children find a story about someone who has displayed virtue in some way, clip out or write the story, then glue it to one of the grape bunches. Add it to the vine with a paper clip.

This can be an on-going project to encourage the children to think about virtue.

Tips for Parents to Encourage Sincerity

Virtue is built in us, and in our children, one decision at a time. It is like a building composed of many blocks of choices toward good character, with a solid foundation and strong walls. Making right choices, and amending wrong choices in a healthy way, develop a mindset, a grid of character, through which we can view opportunities set before us. That grid might be called "virtue"-or "moral essence."

That is the goal in raising our children, so that they aren't dependent ultimately on our opinions, but on the moral grid we have helped them build. Helping them analyze situations, whether in real life or in the stories they see and hear through books and media is the best way we can help them develop that grid.

Let them be aware of your own personal choices, even wrong ones that you have corrected and the grid through which you evaluated them. Help them understand the value of standards that are non-optional, not subject to the whim of the moment and the pressure of peers. Speak of these standards, display them, reward for keeping them, and discipline for breaking them.

Praising achievement causes insecurity (leaving the question, "what if I can't do as well the next time?") Praising character creates a sense of security because it is from the heart, something that the child can duplicate because it is becoming part of his inner being.

Be sure to instill in your child the value of being able to stand alone, because the desire to lead a virtuous life will certainly require it. Find stories of heroes who have had to do just that and talk about what made them strong.

"It is ordinary people of character, due to circumstances out of their control, who affect the world greatly--at least in their own little corner."



Dodge Ball

Use the game of Dodge Ball to illustrate the value of "standing alone."

A child volunteers to be "it." The other children stand within a ring of your choice and try to dodge the ball as "it" throws it toward them. The last one to be left in the ring is the winner. He gets to be "it" next.