

Building Character

9 Weeks of Character Development for Elementary Students (Ages 6-10)

Introduction

This 9-week curriculum helps elementary students develop godly character through engaging Bible stories, memorable verses, and practical application activities. Each week focuses on a different character quality, showing children how these qualities are demonstrated in Scripture and how they can be applied in everyday life. The program is designed to be both fun and meaningful, with age-appropriate content for 6-10 year olds that encourages lasting character growth.

Week 1: Kindness - Treating Others with Care

Bible Story: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Key Truth: God wants us to show kindness to everyone, even those who are different from us.

Memory Verse: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** Interactive retelling with bandages and first aid supplies to act out helping the hurt man
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Who showed kindness in this story? How?
 - Who would you find it hard to be kind to?
 - What are some ways you can show kindness at school this week?
- **Classroom Application:** "Secret Kindness Agents" - children draw names and secretly do kind things for their classmate throughout the session

Creative Expression:

- Create "Kindness Kits" with bandages, notes of encouragement, and small treats that children can use to show kindness to others
- Role-play different scenarios where kindness can be shown at school, home, and in the community

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Kindness Calendar" with daily acts of kindness to complete

- Family discussion: "Share about a time when someone was unexpectedly kind to you"
- "Kindness Catcher" (like a fortune teller origami game) with kindness challenges inside

Parent Connection: Newsletter explaining the kindness focus with suggestions for reinforcing kindness at home

Week 2: Honesty - Speaking and Living Truthfully

Bible Story: Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) for older children; Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27:1-38) for younger children

Key Truth: God wants us to be honest in our words and actions, even when it's difficult.

Memory Verse: "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy." Proverbs 12:22

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Truth or Consequence" game where children identify the consequences of dishonesty in the Bible story
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Why is it sometimes hard to tell the truth?
 - How does telling the truth build trust?
 - What should you do if you've been dishonest?
- **Classroom Application:** "Truth Test" scenarios - children respond to situations where telling the truth might be challenging

Creative Expression:

- Create "Honesty Pledge" certificates with personal commitments to truthfulness
- Draw "Before and After" comics showing the outcomes of honesty versus dishonesty

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Honesty Check" - children track how often they are tempted to be dishonest and how they responded
- Family discussion: "Talk about a time when being honest was hard but worth it"
- Truth challenge: "Practice telling the truth in all situations this week"

Parent Connection: Tip sheet for parents on how to encourage honesty without creating fear of punishment

Week 3: Responsibility - Doing What Needs to Be Done

Bible Story: Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

Key Truth: God gives us responsibilities and trusts us to handle them well.

Memory Verse: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." Colossians 3:23

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Talent Investment" activity where children receive "coins" and decide how to use them responsibly
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What responsibilities do you have at home and school?
 - Why is it important to be responsible with what God gives us?
 - How can you show more responsibility this week?
- **Classroom Application:** "Responsibility Relay" - teams complete age-appropriate tasks that demonstrate responsibility

Creative Expression:

- Create "Responsibility Badges" for different areas of responsibility (home, school, church)
- Design "My Responsibilities" charts with illustrations of tasks children are responsible for

Take-Home Challenges:

- "New Responsibility Challenge" - children take on one new responsibility at home for the week
- Family discussion: "What is the most important responsibility in our family and why?"
- Responsibility tracking sheet to check off completed responsibilities

Parent Connection: List of age-appropriate responsibilities and ways to teach responsibility without nagging

Week 4: Perseverance - Not Giving Up

Bible Story: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46)

Key Truth: God gives us strength to keep going even when things are difficult.

Memory Verse: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Garden Prayer Stations" where children experience different aspects of Jesus' perseverance in prayer
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What was difficult for Jesus? How did He persevere?
 - When is it hard for you to keep going?
 - How can prayer help us persevere?
- **Classroom Application:** "Perseverance Challenges" - physical and mental tasks that require persistence to complete

Creative Expression:

- Create "Don't Give Up" encouragement cards for others who might be struggling
- Craft a "Perseverance Mountain" with steps to the top listing perseverance strategies

Take-Home Challenges:

- "One Week Challenge" - children choose something difficult to persist in for one full week
- Family discussion: "Share about a time when perseverance paid off for you"
- Prayer journal focusing on areas where perseverance is needed

Parent Connection: Guidance for parents on helping children develop grit and determination in age-appropriate ways

Week 5: Respect - Valuing Others as God Values Them

Bible Story: David and King Saul (1 Samuel 24:1-22)

Key Truth: God wants us to show respect to others because all people are valuable to Him.

Memory Verse: "Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor." 1 Peter 2:17

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Respect Role-Play" - children act out ways David showed respect to Saul even when it was difficult
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How did David show respect to King Saul even when Saul was trying to harm him?
 - Who deserves our respect? Why?
 - What are ways we show respect with our words, actions, and attitudes?
- **Classroom Application:** "Respect Detectives" - children identify respectful and disrespectful behaviors in various scenarios

Creative Expression:

- Create "Respect Glasses" - paper glasses that remind children to "see" the value in others
- Design "Ways to Show Respect" posters for different relationships (parents, teachers, friends)

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Respect Check" - children track how they show respect to different people each day
- Family discussion: "How can we show more respect to each other in our family?"
- Practice respectful responses to difficult situations

Parent Connection: Family respect covenant template for establishing mutual respect at home

Week 6: Self-Control - Managing Thoughts, Words, and Actions

Bible Story: Daniel's Diet (Daniel 1:1-16)

Key Truth: God helps us control ourselves when we need to say "no" to things that aren't good for us.

Memory Verse: "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Daniel's Challenge" - children role-play making good food choices despite peer pressure
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How did Daniel show self-control? What was the result?
 - When is it hard for you to have self-control?
 - How can God help us show self-control?

- **Classroom Application:** "Stop and Think" freeze game where children practice stopping and thinking before acting

Creative Expression:

- Create "Self-Control Stoplight" craft with "Stop, Think, Act" steps
- Design a comic strip showing a character using self-control in a difficult situation

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Self-Control Journal" - children record struggles and victories with self-control
- Family discussion: "What are our family's biggest self-control challenges?"
- Practice the "Stop, Breathe, Choose" technique when tempted to lose control

Parent Connection: Tips for parents on teaching impulse control and delayed gratification

Week 7: Generosity - Sharing with a Happy Heart

Bible Story: Widow's Offering (Mark 12:41-44)

Key Truth: God loves when we give generously, no matter how much or how little we have.

Memory Verse: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Coins in the Treasury" activity comparing the widow's small gift with larger donations
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Why was the widow's small gift so special to Jesus?
 - What can you give to others besides money?
 - How does it feel when you give generously?
- **Classroom Application:** "Generosity Stations" where children practice different ways of giving (time, talents, treasures)

Creative Expression:

- Create "Giving Banks" with three sections: Spend, Save, Give
- Design "Generosity Coupons" with services children can offer to family members

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Secret Giver Challenge" - children find ways to give anonymously to others
- Family discussion: "What's something meaningful our family could give away?"
- Declutter and donate unused toys and clothes

Parent Connection: Guide to teaching financial generosity and non-material giving to children

Week 8: Forgiveness - Letting Go of Hurts

Bible Story: Joseph Forgives His Brothers (Genesis 45:1-15)

Key Truth: God asks us to forgive others just as He forgives us.

Memory Verse: "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Joseph's Journey" - trace Joseph's path from hurt to forgiveness through interactive stations
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How did Joseph show forgiveness to his brothers?
 - Why is it sometimes hard to forgive?
 - What happens when we choose not to forgive?
- **Classroom Application:** "Forgiveness in Action" - role-play situations requiring forgiveness with guided solutions

Creative Expression:

- Create "Forgiveness Journals" where children can privately process hurts and steps toward forgiveness
- Craft "Let It Go" balloons with hurts written on paper inside that children symbolically release

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Forgiveness Steps" - children identify someone they need to forgive and take steps toward forgiveness
- Family discussion: "How does it feel when someone forgives you?"
- Practice saying "I forgive you" and "I'm sorry" when needed

Parent Connection: Guide for parents on modeling forgiveness and helping children work through deep hurts

Week 9: Courage - Doing What's Right Even When Afraid

Bible Story: Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel 6:1-23)

Key Truth: God is with us when we need courage to do the right thing.

Memory Verse: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Character Connection Activities:

- **Story Exploration:** "Lions' Den Experience" - darkened room with lion sounds and images where children practice praying like Daniel
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How did Daniel show courage?
 - What situations make you feel afraid?
 - How can remembering God helps us be courageous?
- **Classroom Application:** "Courage Challenges" - age-appropriate scenarios requiring children to stand up for what's right

Creative Expression:

- Create "Courage Shields" decorated with Bible verses about courage
- Design "Brave and Bold" comic strips featuring courageous choices

Take-Home Challenges:

- "Courage Calendar" with one brave action to take each day
- Family discussion: "Share about a time when you had to be brave"
- Practice a "courage prayer" to use when feeling afraid

Parent Connection: Tips for helping children overcome fears while developing moral courage

Final Celebration - Character Showcase:

- Children present what they've learned about each character quality
- "Character Champions" awards ceremony highlighting growth
- Family character commitment for continuing development at home

Implementation Resources

Weekly Session Format (60-90 minutes):

1. Welcome Activity (5-10 minutes): Engaging activity related to the character quality
2. Bible Story Presentation (15 minutes): Interactive storytelling using visuals, props, or drama
3. Character Connection (15 minutes): Discussion and activities linking the Bible story to personal application
4. Creative Expression (15-20 minutes): Craft or creative project reinforcing the character quality
5. Application Challenge (10 minutes): Practical activities practicing the character quality
6. Memory Verse & Prayer (10 minutes): Learning the verse with motions and themed prayer time
7. Take-Home Challenge Introduction (5 minutes): Explaining the family connection activities

Age-Appropriate Adaptations:

- **For Younger Elementary (6-7 years):**
 - Simpler story presentations with more visuals
 - Concrete examples of character qualities
 - More guided discussion with specific questions
 - Simplified crafts with more preparation done in advance
 - Basic application activities with clear directions
- **For Older Elementary (8-10 years):**
 - More nuanced character discussions
 - Advanced application scenarios
 - Open-ended discussion questions
 - More complex creative expressions
 - Peer leadership opportunities
 - Deeper reflection on personal character growth

Visual Reinforcement:

- Character Quality Posters for classroom display
- "Building Character" wall display that grows each week
- Character trait icons or symbols for visual recognition
- Character connection charts showing Bible story, modern example, and personal application

Assessment Tools:

- Beginning and ending character self-evaluation (age-appropriate format)
- Weekly character reflection moments
- Parent observation forms tracking character development at home
- "I spotted..." cards where children and teachers can recognize character qualities in action

Additional Resources:

- Character Quality Cards for review and games
- "Character in Action" video clips showing examples
- Character-based object lessons for each trait
- Song suggestions related to each character quality
- Character-building classroom games collection

Teacher Preparation Guidelines:

1. Read and reflect on the Bible story and related passages
2. Pray for each child's character development
3. Prepare personal examples of the character quality
4. Anticipate challenging questions or situations
5. Create a classroom environment that nurtures character growth

Parent Partnership Strategy:

- Weekly parent newsletters with character reinforcement ideas
- Mid-program parent workshop on character development
- Character quality definition cards for family discussion
- Suggestion box for parents to share character-building ideas
- End-of-program family celebration recognizing growth