

# Dilworth Elementary Character Education

## Justice and Fairness (January)

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**Pre-teach:** Begin by greeting the students and telling them that you will be discussing the traits justice and fairness with them today. Ask the following questions and call on different students for answers. Below each question are examples of the type of responses you are looking for. You may need to rephrase students' answers or guide them along.

**(Ask) What is justice?**

1. Treating everyone fairly under established rules and laws. (You may want to give an example, such as following classroom rules.)

**(Ask) What is fairness?**

1. Treating all people with honesty and respect.
2. Giving everyone equal opportunities to succeed.
3. Cooperating with one another.
4. Celebrating the uniqueness and value of everyone.
5. Making sure others are not treated badly.

**(Ask) Why are justice and fairness important?**

1. To make sure that everyone has the chance to succeed.
2. To make our home, school, community and world a better place for all people.

**(Ask) Who are some people that have fought for justice and fairness for others?**

1. Martin Luther King, Jr.
2. Rosa Parks
3. Abraham Lincoln
4. Susan B. Anthony

**Book:** Read and discuss a story that teaches a lesson about justice and fairness.

**(Ask) What are ways we can show justice and fairness at our school?**

1. Treat all people equally—the same.
2. Cooperate with one another.
3. Be respectful and listen to what others have to say.
4. Be willing to do what is best for everyone.
5. Play by the rules at all times; be a good sport.
6. Include others in games and activities. Don't leave people out.
7. Understand that being fair doesn't always mean the same treatment. (You may have an earlier bedtime that you older brother, or your younger sister may not have as many household chores.)
8. Stand up for someone you see being treated unfairly—you can make a difference!

**Activity:** Complete an activity to go along with your lesson. (Activity suggestions attached.)

**Closing comment:** Life may not always be fair to you, but you can always be fair in life!

**"I know, up on top you are seeing great sights. But down at the bottom we, too, should have some rights." ~Dr. Seuss**

## Justice and Fairness Activities

### Fair Treatment—All Dilworth Kindergarten Classes

**Materials:** Bag of candy containing 5 less than the total number of students in the class (bring 5 extra separately for the close of the activity).

Pass the bag around and tell everyone they may take one. When the students discover the unfair situation that there is not enough candy for everyone, discuss the following questions: How did those students that did not get the candy feel? How did those feel who got the candy and knew others did not? What would be the fair solution to the problem? Can you think of another situation when people might feel left out or rejected? How could they help prevent that situation? (Offer the left out students their piece of candy as you close the discussion.)

### The Fair Eggs-periment—All Dilworth 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** Clear drinking glass filled with one cup of water, fresh egg, 1/4 cup salt, a permanent marker, and a tablespoon

Carefully place the egg in the glass of water. Tell the students that the egg (you may want to give it a name) represents someone who is not being treated fairly. Sinking to the bottom represents how someone who is left out or mistreated would feel—sad, depressed, defeated, unappreciated, and unloved.

Remove the egg from the water and set it aside. One tablespoon at a time, add salt to the water. As you stir in each spoonful, explain that the salt represents different ways to show fairness towards others. For example: following the rules when playing a game, taking turns and sharing, treating others with honesty and respect, and taking action to help someone being treated unfairly.

After you have added all of the salt, put the egg back in the water (if you want, you can first draw a smiley face on the egg with the permanent marker first) and it will now float. Explain that now the person is being supported with kindness and “held up” by the fairness and acceptance of others. (*10-Minute Life Lessons*, by Jaime Miller)

### Fair Cents—All Dilworth 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** ten pennies, two nickels, and one dime

Stack the pennies on top of one another, stack the nickels next to them, and place the dime beside the nickels. Ask the students if they know what each stack has in common, and what is different. Discuss the fact that although each set of coins looks different, they all have the same value. This is the same with people. We may look different on the outside, but we are all of equal value and deserve to be treated fairly. When you share, take turns, and treat others equally and with respect, you are showing fairness.

### Fair vs. the Same—All Dilworth 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** Large piece of paper or whiteboard, writing utensil

Discuss as a class when “fair” means “the same.” When does “fair” not mean “the same”? Draw two columns, labeling them Fair Is the Same and Fair Is Not the Same. Ask the students to list things in the classroom that are the same for all children and things that are not the same, but are fair, for all children in the classroom. For example:

#### Fair Is the Same

- All children must raise their hands before talking.
- All children must have permission slips signed before going on a field trip.
- All children must use respectful language.

## Justice and Fairness Activities (continued)

### Fair Is Not the Same

- All children can go to a center, but the centers are not the same.
- Everyone may check out a book at the library, but the books are all different.
- Each child gets a chance to be a helper for a day, but each helper's task is different.

(From *Character Education: Ideas and Activities for the Classroom*, Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company)

### Laws of the Land—All Dilworth 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** Large pieces of paper; markers; index cards, each with the name of one “land” and its premise

Divide the class into groups of 5 or so students. Each group should have paper, markers, and an index card listing a “land.” Explain that each group will spend 10 minutes developing and writing down the laws for a basic government for their land. It should include 4 or 5 laws for governing those in the land, and should specify the way in which their leader is elected.

The 6 lands:

1. Candyland (everything in it is made of candy)
2. Magic Kingdom (all the fairytale characters live there)
3. Never Never Land (no one ever grows up)
4. Tropical Paradise (everyone has everything they need)
5. Toyland (everything is under the control of the dolls and toys)
6. Computer Land (everything is run by computers)

Ask each group to take a turn explaining their government. Discuss: How are the systems similar or different from the one we have in the United States? Why does any government need laws? What would happen in the make-believe lands without laws? What would happen in our country without laws? And what happens when people don't agree with a law? (You might have the class vote at the end of the exercise on where they'd most like to live.)

(From *Character Education Activities for K–6 Classrooms*, Sandra Peyser and Miriam McLaughlin)

### You Be the Judge—All Dilworth 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** Slips of paper

Before your lesson, write down on slips of paper different “crimes” such as cheating on a test, disobeying a teacher, fighting in the hallway, and stealing a cookie from the cafeteria.

Have the students role play a scene where the “criminal” picks a crime from the hat and the “jury” (the class) decides his sentence. How harsh should the punishment for each crime be? Should the punishment for some crimes be worse than others? Discuss the justice and fairness of the punishments decided by the jury. (From *The Best of Character*, Duane Hodgkin)

## Additional Justice and Fairness Activity Options

### **Sing about Justice and Fairness** (Suggested for grades K–2)

**Materials:** None

(Sing to the tune of “You Are My Sunshine”)

Justice and Fairness, Justice and Fairness, Treat others kindly, respect the rules. Stand up for people who are mistreated, Make a difference in the world.

### **Fairness Role Play** (Suggested for grades 2–4)

**Materials:** None

Ask the students to brainstorm ideas about and then role play a scene involving a conflict and a resolution of their choosing based on a title they’re given about fairness and justice:

How to Play Fair

The Little Boy Who Cried, “It’s Not Fair!”

Two Apples, Three Children

You’re Not Old Enough

Fairness Is the Way

If Cinderella’s Stepsisters Were Fair

How I Would Make the World More Fair

(From *Character Education: Ideas and Activities for the Classroom*, Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company)

### **Ponder This...** (Suggested for grades 4–5)

**Materials:** None

Write this quote on the board:

“It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself.” —Eleanor Roosevelt

Discuss with the class the meaning of this quote by a former first lady who dedicated her life to improving the quality of people’s lives around the world. Have students brainstorm situations they see as unfair and then come up with some solutions together.

Help the class write their own quote about justice and fairness to post in the classroom. For example, “Always be fair and square” —Ms. Johnson’s class