

Building Character



Using the Bible, Birds, and Team-Building



**A Multidisciplinary Unit for Grades 5 through 8
(Easily adaptable to high school)**



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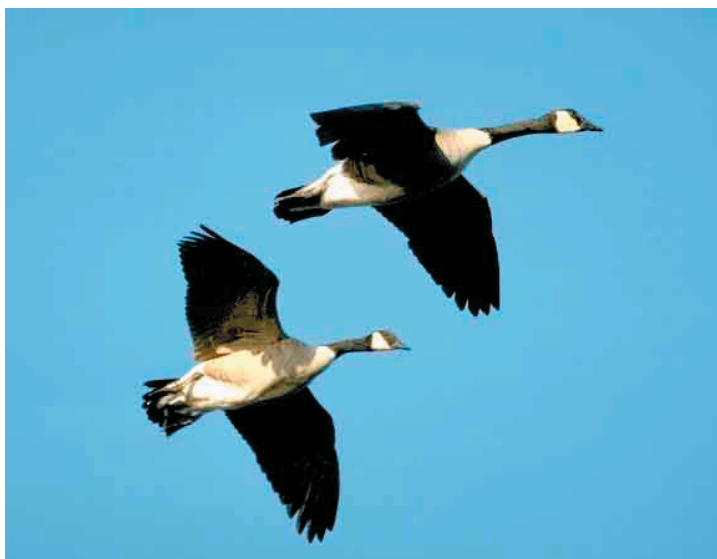
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*God's first book is the Bible; His second book nature,
and both of them have a lot to teach us about character.*



Unit Introduction

Note: The PowerPoint 'Introductory Presentation' is meant as a means to introduce this unit to the students.

The purpose of this unit is two-fold. One of the focuses is to expose students to animals and nature in an interesting and educational manner. Too little time and effort is devoted to the study and contemplation of 'God's second book' of nature.

Secondly, there are too many people who have dwarfed character traits and an extremely small ability to work successfully with other people. With families breaking apart, trusts being broken, responsibilities being shirked, and joy being forgotten, too many children are set adrift in a sea of broken relationships and shattered realities.

Among other things, this unit seeks to utilize Biblical stories to illustrate the need to develop character traits such as loyalty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and joy. The next step in this unit involves the practical practice and application of these traits in a group setting where a cooperative goal is in place.

I truly believe in this quote from the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) Website. "Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand."



Lesson Format Outline

There are 4 sections included in this curriculum. Each section is meant to span approximately one five-day week. My thought was to spend the first day on the Biblical Character Sketch, the second day finishing up the Biblical Character Sketch if needed and starting on the Animal Sketch, the third day finishing up the Animal Sketch, the fourth day working on the Unit Project, and the fifth day facilitating team/character-building group games. This will obviously vary between teachers and circumstances, but this at least gives you an idea to work from. In any case, the following elements will be included in each section:

- A. Resource Information** Unless otherwise stated, the information in this section comes from the Character Sketch books.
1. Animal Sketch and Information
 2. Scriptural Character Sketch and Information
- B. Multimedia Presentations**
1. Unit Introductory Presentation
I have included a short PowerPoint presentation to be presented at the beginning of the unit to be used as a method of introducing the unit to the students.
 2. Character/Team-Building Introductory Presentation
There is also a PowerPoint called "Lessons In Teamwork From Wild Geese" that can be used to start the students thinking and discussing about what teamwork is all about.
 3. Bird-Specific Sectional Presentations
There is a PowerPoint presentation for each section that covers the bird being 'sketched'. I suggest that you print out a hard copy of each PowerPoint so that you can know what is coming up and can take advantage of the occasional notes that I have included with some of the slides. These PowerPoint presentations are meant to be the medium through which the information on each bird is presented, studied and discussed. The "Animal Sketch and Information" section parallels the presentations quite closely and has a lot of good supplemental information that can be presented throughout the PowerPoint.
- C. Activities and Worksheets**
The activities and worksheets vary for each section and can include quizzes, Web quests, journal/discussion questions, coloring pictures, etc...
- D. Character/Team-Building Activities**
For each section there is at least one, if not several, character/team-building activities that can be facilitated. With each of these activities there is a description of what the activity involves, tips on safety/facilitation, and ideas about debriefing the activity.



Curriculum Fulfillment

Religion Curriculum Guide K-8:

The Holy Scriptures

- Identify the Bible as the standard by which to measure all things.
- Apply Bible lessons in daily life.

Formula For Abundant Life

- Demonstrate Christ-like character traits.
- Examine the natural effects of wise and unwise choices.

The Church and Its Mission

- Practice positive acceptance of people who are different from themselves.

Science Education Curriculum Guide K-12:

Biological Science

- Animals: Birds and behaviors.

The Integrated Language Arts K-8:

Writing

- Select and research a topic for a given purpose.
- Gather, evaluate, and select information to support a topic.
- Organize information and ideas in systematic ways.

Unit Goals

Content Goals:

1. The students will learn specific facts, behaviors and characteristics about the Canada Goose, Great Horned Owl, American Woodcock, and Black-Capped Chickadee.
2. The students will learn how various animals in nature illustrate the character traits of loyalty, trust, responsibility, and joyfulness.
3. The students will learn about the character traits of loyalty, trust, responsibility and joyfulness from the Bible and from interactions with each other.

Attitudinal Goals:

1. The students will learn about what God's creatures can teach them about the importance of developing specific character traits that will help them to work well with other people.
2. The students will learn about the importance, within a group/team setting, of acting responsibly, and of developing loyalty, trustworthiness, acceptance and joyfulness.



Process Goals:

1. The students will learn about particular animals, character traits and pertinent Biblical examples through the use of discussion, Bible readings, PowerPoint presentations and various other activities.
2. The students will learn how to practically apply the character traits being studied by working with each other in goal-oriented cooperative games and activities.

Segment Correlations

<u>Character Trait</u>	<u>Animal Sketch</u>	<u>Scriptural Sketch</u>	<u>Biblical Reference</u>	<u>Cooperative Activities</u>
Loyalty	Canada Goose	Mordecai	Esther 2:21-23	Magic Carpet
Loyalty	Great Horned Owl	Amasa	II Samuel 20:1-13	Numbers Maze
Joyfulness	Black-Capped Chickadee	Paul & Silas	Acts 16:11-34	Human Knot
Responsibility	American Woodcock	Eli	I Samuel 4:1-18	Trust-Fall Sequence

The Story Behind the "Character Sketch" Material

Much of the material found in this unit comes from a three-volume set of books called "Character Sketches." This resource is absolutely priceless as far as I am concerned and works very well in the application for which it was designed; as a resource for families. However, the material is so good that I wanted to expand the audience. My goal in writing this unit is to try and present this resource in a form that can be utilized in the classroom setting. Following is the rationale behind the Character Sketches books as stated on the website given below.

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee."—Job 12:7-8. The nature and character of God is seen all throughout His created universe. Even the heavens "declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork."—Psalms 19:1

The Character Sketch books are designed to show how God's creation demonstrates character. Using illustrations from nature, these books teach such character qualities as Attentiveness, Responsibility, Obedience, and Orderliness. Each of these beautifully illustrated books contain different character examples as seen in nature.

The primary purpose of this book is to place in the hands of fathers basic concepts of Scripture and interesting facts of nature that he may use to help teach character to his children. These are valuable resources that every family should have.

http://store.iblp.org/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=IBLP&Product_Code=C123



Introduction to Team-Building and Character Building Activities

It is always important to foster an atmosphere of safety within your class. However, when facilitating team-building games and initiatives, it is particularly important that you set up and preserve this atmosphere. With these types of initiatives there is often a greater level of vulnerability that happens within the group. This vulnerability should be fostered because it is a part of the process. However, with increased vulnerability comes the inevitable increase in the risk of emotional hurt. The idea is to bring students to this place in a controlled environment, where the greatest possibility for growth lies within the moments of greatest vulnerability. Therefore, it is important to set up with any group you are working with what is called a Full Value Contract. In essence, this is a verbal or even written set of guidelines by which each and every one of the group members agrees to abide by and strive towards. Ideally this is something that the group, with your facilitation, comes up with on their own. An effective Full Value Contract is one which each member of the group owns personally and then holds the rest of the group accountable to. Following is the Full Value Contract that I like to use. It has all of the basic elements and presents itself readily available for illustration and referral back to.

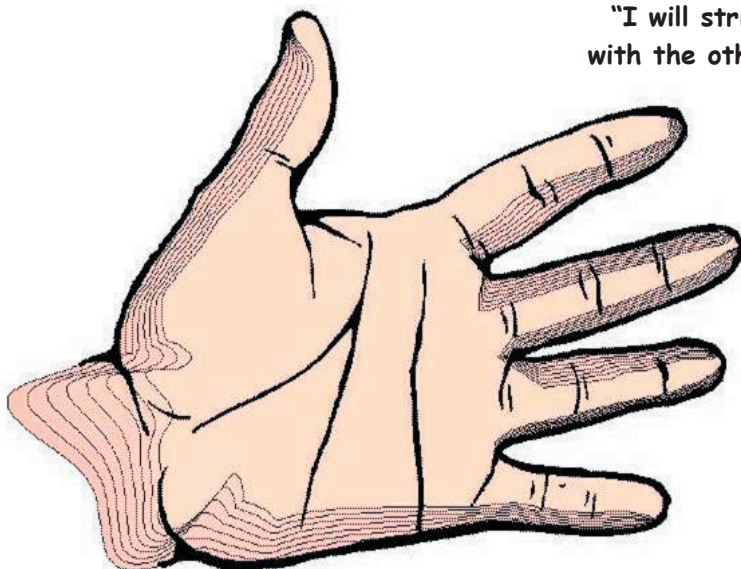
Full Value Contract (5 finger model)

--Thumbs up!

"I will be positive and upbeat"

--Pointer Finger (pointing@ others)

"I will strive to communicate effectively with the others in the group."



--Middle Finger (pointing down)

"I will not devalue or put down myself or others down"

--Ring Finger

"I am committed to growth in myself and in others. I am committed to the well-being of the group"

--Pinky Finger (look out for the 'little guy')

"I will promote the safety of group members in all aspects"

Introducing The Unit Project

Character Traits Activity

Divide the students into group of three to four. In their groups have them put together a list of as many different character traits as they can come up with. After five minutes or so, have the groups share what they came up with and compile the lists on the board. Next, have each person in the group pick three of the listed character traits that grab their attention and write down what they think that character trait means. Ask each student to share, if they are comfortable, one of the character traits they wrote down and what they think that it means. This activity is a lead-up to introducing the ongoing unit project.



Unit Project

The unit project will consist of a written paper including all of the required elements and a verbal presentation of their project to the rest of the class. The intent of this ongoing project is that by the end of the unit each student will not only have a deeper understanding about a particular character trait and its development, but will also have included in miniature most of the elements that you have used in the presentation of this unit. Below, I have outlined what I think should be included in the final project. Below that is a version that can be printed out and given to each student.

Character Trait

- Statement and dictionary definition of the positive character trait chosen.
- A personal definition and paraphrase of the character trait.
- A one-page story written by the student that illustrates their character trait. (It may be either fiction or nonfiction.)

Animal Component

- An animal that they feel illustrates their character trait and why.
- One page of information about the animal (Where it lives, what it eats, physical features, overall habits, reproduction, etc...)
- A short half-page story written by the student about the animal that illustrates how the animal shows their particular character trait. (It may be either fiction or nonfiction.)

Biblical Component

- A Biblical character that they feel illustrates their character trait and why.
- A paragraph stating facts about what they have researched about their Biblical character.
- A half-page paraphrase of the story in the Bible where their chosen character illustrates their character trait.



Personal Component

- The inclusion of the following questions and the responses of the students to these questions.
- How well do you think that you demonstrate the character trait that you picked? What are ways that you can improve in this area? (Write at least a paragraph.)
- What are two things that you learned about the animal that you researched?
- Do you think that your friends and family would say that you exhibit this character trait? (Explain with at least a paragraph of response.)

Paper Specifications: Title page (including a relevant picture or graphic), default margins (no more than 1.5 inches), double spaced, Times New Roman font, and 12 point font size.



A List of Some Positive Character Traits

- | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| humble | unselfish | happy | hardworking | curious |
| courageous | generous | independent | helpful | witty |
| humorous | respectful | studious | gentle | determined |
| resourceful | considerate | intelligent | loving | energetic |
| loyal | imaginative | honest | neat | cheerful |
| caring | creative | friendly | cooperative | thoughtful |
| responsible | fun-loving | adventurous | ambitious | mannerly |
| bold | joyful | lovable | quiet | calm |

Unit Project

Following Components

1. Character Trait Component

- A. Statement and dictionary definition of the positive character trait chosen.
- B. A personal definition and paraphrase of the character trait.
- C. A one-page story that you have written that illustrates your character trait. (It may be either fiction or nonfiction.)

2. Animal Component

- A. An animal that you feel illustrates your character trait and why.
- B. One page of information about the animal (Where it lives, what it eats, physical features, overall habits, reproduction, etc...)
- C. A short half- page story that you have written about the animal that illustrates how the animal shows your chosen character trait. (It may be either fiction or nonfiction.)

3. Biblical Component

- A. A Biblical character that you feel illustrates your character trait and why.
- B. A paragraph stating facts about what you have researched about your Biblical character.
- C. A half-page paraphrase of the story in the Bible where your chosen character illustrates your character trait.

4. Personal Component

Include the following questions and your responses to them.

- A. How well do you think that you demonstrate the character trait that you picked? What are ways that you can improve in this area? (Write at least a paragraph.)
- B. What are two things that you learned about the animal that you researched?
- C. Do you think that your friends and family would say that you exhibit this character trait? (Explain with at least a paragraph of response.)

Paper Specifications: Title page (including a relevant picture or graphic), default margins (no more than 1.5 inches), double spaced, Times New Roman font, and 12 point font size.

A List of Some Positive Character Traits

humble	unselfish	happy	hardworking	curious
courageous	generous	independent	helpful	witty
humorous	respectful	studious	gentle	determined
resourceful	considerate	intelligent	loving	energetic
loyal	imaginative	honest	neat	cheerful
caring	creative	friendly	cooperative	thoughtful
responsible	fun-loving	adventurous	ambitious	mannerly
bold	joyful	lovable	quiet	calm





Experiential Worship
My God Is...
Guides in reflection on God's character



Space/place: Can be done virtually anywhere.

Props: None

Group Size: Can be done with almost any size group.

Approximate Time: ten to fifteen minutes.

Briefing:

-“God has many different characteristics and is called by many different names in the Bible.”

-Read: “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

-Have them think of some words that describe what God means to them and some of the things that he’s done in their life. (Give them a minute or so.)

Activity:



- The first person begins by saying “My God is..” (quality or character trait beginning with an ‘a’)
- The second person will begin by saying “My God is..” (names first quality and then adds on with a quality beginning with ‘b’)
- This goes on until ‘z’ or until group runs out of ideas.
- Have the group help members to remember and name all the qualities in order without assistance and to help each other with qualities if needed.

Debriefing:

-Pick several of the traits mentioned and have the group discuss them.

-For Example: Ask “So what does God do to show you that He’s caring?” “How can you see that he cares for you?”

-For Example: Ask “Why do you think that God is sacrificing?” “What does he or has he sacrificed?”

-Encourage them to take a new look at the character traits of God and try and emulate them.

Additional Comments:

Qualities and character traits can be gathered by brainstorming and then written on a board as well, but this tends to involve some members more than others. To lengthen the process and to make group members think more, each person can also be encouraged to tell why they think that God has a certain trait each time they come up with one. Steer the coming up with qualities/character traits away from becoming a competition if it begins to become so, and encourage support and assistance in remembering qualities and in coming up with new ones.

Loyalty...



**is standing with those I am
serving in their time of need.**

**The Canada Goose
and
Mordecai**



The long migration flight finally terminated for the Canada geese. The nesting colony, flying in a large wedge, returned at last to the breeding grounds where they had been reared.

The colony rested with sentinels standing guard while others fed on grain and tender shoots of plants. Within a few weeks the serious task of nesting began. The paired geese searched for a suitable location for their nests.

One goose and gander, just three years old, chose an abandoned shoreline beaver lodge for their nesting site. The beaver lodge met the necessary requirements of proximity to the water and afforded protection from enemies. All considerations for safety had been taken into account-except one.

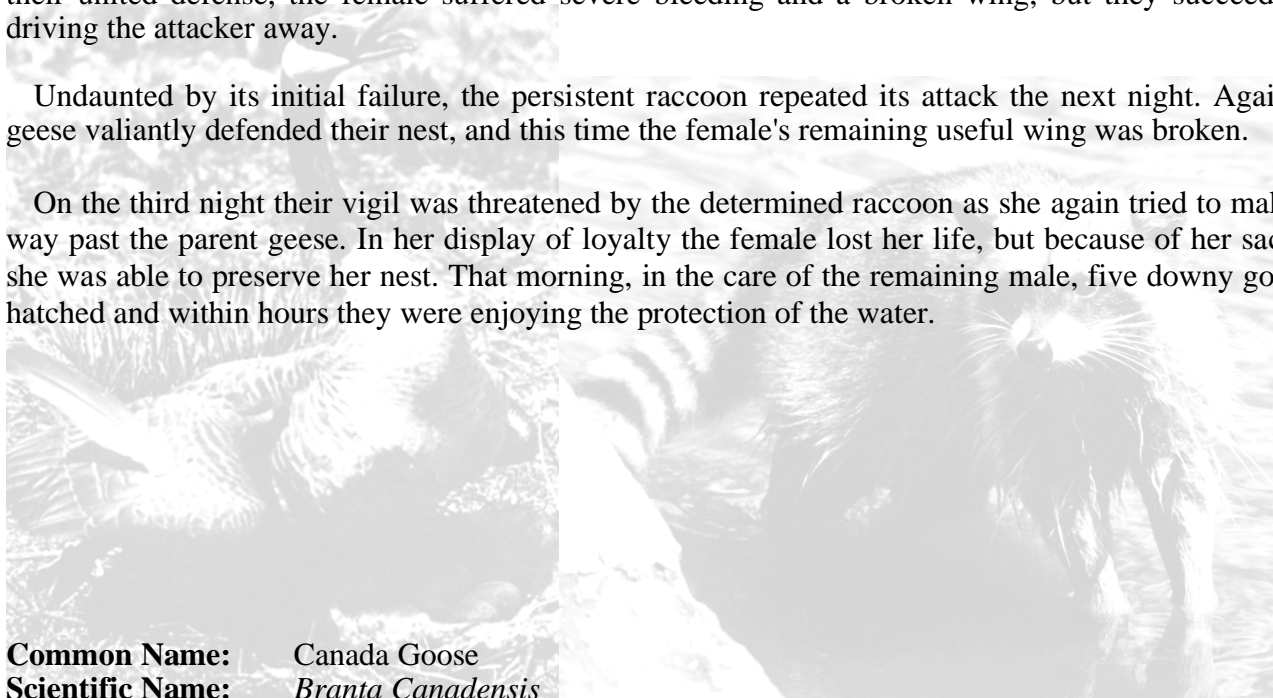
A nearby wooded area housed a raccoon family. Raccoons are a treacherous threat to all waterfowl. They raid nests indiscriminately for eggs and for newly-hatched chicks. But the geese had no way of knowing that any were so near. Oblivious to their danger, the pair heaped grass and sticks on top of the lodge as the nest took form.

After the five eggs had been laid, the female began incubating them. But four weeks later, a deadly assailant skirted the abandoned lodge area during the early hours of a spring night. A mother raccoon, searching for food for her growing young, spotted the nest and approached it confidently.

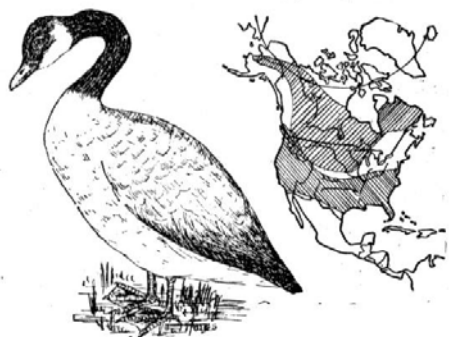
The female was guarding the nest alone, but she quickly signaled her mate when she faced the murderous attacker. A vicious struggle began, and the male flew immediately to her aid. As a result of their united defense, the female suffered severe bleeding and a broken wing, but they succeeded in driving the attacker away.

Undaunted by its initial failure, the persistent raccoon repeated its attack the next night. Again the geese valiantly defended their nest, and this time the female's remaining useful wing was broken.

On the third night their vigil was threatened by the determined raccoon as she again tried to make her way past the parent geese. In her display of loyalty the female lost her life, but because of her sacrifice she was able to preserve her nest. That morning, in the care of the remaining male, five downy goslings hatched and within hours they were enjoying the protection of the water.



Common Name: Canada Goose
Scientific Name: *Branta Canadensis*



The Canada goose is the most familiar member of its family. It can attain a wingspread of up to 76 inches and is commonly seen in the spring and fall, flying in V-formation to and from its breeding grounds. This species is the only goose with a white chin strap.

Facts and Information about the Canada Goose

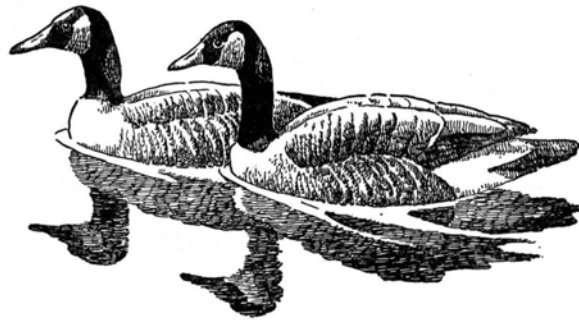
Selecting and Caring for a Mate

When a male Canada goose is attracted to a partner, he must be prepared to battle for her. If he makes his intentions known and another goose does the same, they will engage in a contest of strength.

If two males battle over a mate, the winner is not assured of success with the watching female. Even though he has defeated the competitor, the victor must still win her acceptance of him. He attempts this by showing special attention to her until she either accepts or rejects him as a mate.

Once the female has accepted a partner, they establish a relationship which is likely to last for a lifetime. This lifetime partnership is one explanation for the strong bond of loyalty which the Canada geese display. If a rival approaches, both geese will probably drive it away.

If a goose is shot down by a hunter during the fall migration flight, its mate has been known to circle back, risking death itself, in order to help its partner. If one is wounded, the other will remain with it until it is healed. If the partner cannot be found the, other will often stay behind to look for it, enduring the hardships of winter in that area in order to continue its search.



Nesting and Incubation



Nests are usually built in secluded places such as islands or the top of beaver or muskrat dwellings. By choosing inaccessible places the parents are better equipped to protect their young from predators.

When each egg arrives, the female plucks out down feathers from her breast and places them around the egg. As she continues to remove these feathers, a bare spot eventually appears which is referred to as the "incubation patch." The body heat of the female is transferred to the egg as it is in direct contact with her skin. These eggs are periodically turned to maintain consistent heat.

The eggs must maintain a temperature of 100.4° F. to 101.3° F. Down feathers were highly valued by the pioneers as excellent insulators of warmth. Their ability to lock in heat enables the parents to leave the nest for brief periods of time and attend to their own personal needs. With the down feathers under and around the eggs and the warm incubation patch gently pressed against the top of them, the high temperature which the eggs require is ensured.



Loyalty to Nest and Eggs

The female has been known to continue sitting on a nest of infertile eggs up to five months past the time in which they were to be hatched. When eggs are destroyed early in the nesting season a new clutch may be laid.

Several years ago in Alaska, an unseasonable late spring snowstorm came to a breeding ground of the Canada goose. The snow continued falling to a depth of three feet. Days later as the snow melted away, an amazing picture of protection was revealed. Scores of dead geese were still on their nests. They had chosen to suffocate rather than leave the eggs they were protecting.

Natural Enemies and Management of Threats

Although mature geese have few natural enemies, they are very alert to predators which endanger their goslings. Those they fear the most are the raccoon and fox. Large fish or snapping turtles can attack from the water as the young goslings are learning to swim. The possibility of the destruction of the eggs from winged enemies such as the crow or raven requires constant vigilance.



The day after the goslings hatch, they will enter the water for the first time. They will swim in potentially dangerous water-vulnerable to the attack of snapping turtles, bullfrogs or large fish such as pike or muskie. The female signals her mate and he beats the water wildly with his wings and makes loud squawking noises. This technique frightens enemies away and protects the young goslings from danger.



How does the Canada Goose demonstrate loyalty?

The allegiance of the female goose saved her nest from destruction because she was willing to defend it at all costs. Early in life, she carefully chose the one to whom a lifelong commitment would be made.

The Story of Mordecai

As the king entered his magnificent palace, two guards stood at attention. Their stern faces concealed the hatred they harbored toward the king they were guarding. Often they had talked to each other about how they would like to kill him.

One day they conceived their plan. It would be easy for them to kill their king since they guarded the door of his bedchamber. They were sure that others would sympathize with them. The king was difficult to get along with. Even his former queen despised him.



As they whispered the details of their plan to each other an alert listener sat nearby. They paid little attention to him, never realizing that a lower court official would be loyal to such a despised king, especially since his family had been brought there as exiles from another land. They were sure that he hated the king, too. But they were wrong. This man had learned the lesson of loyalty. He had purposed to stand by the one he served, even in a time of need.

Overhearing their plot, he realized quickly that the king was in great danger. When the guards walked away, he left that part of the palace and immediately sent a message to the king. When the king heard the message, he was amazed. Could the report be true? He called in a trusted servant and ordered him to investigate the facts.

The report was true, and swift action was taken. The two guards were quickly apprehended, confronted with the evidence and immediately impaled. The king's life had been spared through the faithful official's report. The events were carefully recorded in a book.

But the story doesn't end there. Two great and unexpected rewards resulted from this brave man's loyalty. The first reward came months later when the king was unable to sleep. He thought that if one of his servants read aloud, he might be able to fall asleep. The servant read from the book of records the account of how the king's life had been saved. The king remembered that he had never rewarded the man who protected him, and he decided to raise this loyal subject to a new level of honor.

The second and greater reward came because the one whom Mordecai had raised as a daughter learned from his example. The same loyalty which he displayed toward the king was instilled in her life.

In the face of grave danger, she remained loyal to her own people and saved them from cruel destruction. This event is still remembered and celebrated by millions of descendants of those who were saved by her courageous and loyal actions.

From Esther 2:21-23

Scriptural Sketch

A court official learned of a plot to kill his king. Because of his willingness to stand by the one he was serving even in his time of need, a dramatic series of events resulted. His people were saved from the fate of a cruel decision as a result of his loyalty.



Why didn't Mordecai want to see a Godless king killed?

Mordecai was a wise man who had learned from the mistakes of his forefathers. He knew from the words of the prophet Jeremiah that rebellion against God-ordained authority had been responsible for the captivity of his family and nation for over a century (Esther 2:5,6). Jeremiah had predicted a curse for any nation that rebelled against the king of Babylon and a measure of blessing for any nation that remained submissive (Jeremiah 27:6-11). Mordecai was also familiar with the prophecy of Isaiah which transferred that principle to Cyrus, the first king of the Persian Empire (Isaiah 45:1-3). Conscious of God's hatred of rebellion against authority and aware of God's creativity in working through even the cruelest of kings to accomplish His purposes, Mordecai's loyalty to the king remained steadfast (Esther 2:22).

Was Mordecai displaying contempt for authority when he refused to bow before Haman?

Bowing down before a Persian monarch was interpreted as an act of worship rather than an act of respect. Haman commanded worship as a god, a demand beyond his sphere of jurisdiction which Mordecai refused. His decision was based on higher loyalty to a specific law of God (Exodus 20:3-5). It is very likely that Mordecai believed that as a Jew he was exempt from obeying this command and that the command itself was illegal according to the laws of the Medes and Persians which could not be repealed (Esther 1:19; 3:4). There is strong indication that the Jews enjoyed special privilege from certain Persian laws, namely, any law which would force them to disobey a specific law of God. This privilege was due in part to Daniel's strong influence during the reign of Cyrus the Persian (d. Daniel 3:28-30; Ezra 1:1-3). The fact that Haman was hesitant to challenge Mordecai's claim and his contempt for the Jews' privileged laws seem to confirm this view (Esther 3:6,8).

Why was it so difficult to ask Esther to intercede before the king?

Esther had not been called into the king's presence for 30 days. Unless given a special dispensation, the automatic penalty for one entering the king's inner court without permission was execution. The Greek historian, Herodotus, mentions an incident which had recently occurred which gives an insight into Ahasuerus' character and temperament.

While passing through Lydia, a rich man named Pythius generously entertained Ahasuerus' troops and contributed an enormous sum of money toward the Grecian campaign. He then requested that the king exempt the eldest of his five sons from the army to be of comfort to him in his declining years. The request was reasonable enough, but the enraged Ahasuerus ordered the son to be sliced in half and commanded the army to march between the two halves as an example of what he considered to be a lack of dedication. It is no wonder that Esther asked Mordecai and all the Jews in the city to fast for three days before her bold entrance to the king.

The Rest of The Story: History Background and The Results of Mordecai's Loyalty

This account takes place during the reign of Ahasuerus (486-465 B.C.), known through Greek and Roman historians as an extravagant, immoral and cruel tyrant of the Persian Empire. Through no effort of his own, he inherited the wealthiest and most powerful position in the world, developed by the brilliant administrative energies of his father. He inherited the empire but not the ability to govern it. His Grecian campaign is an infamous example to military scientists of blatant miscalculation and overconfidence.

After the campaign, when the mood of the empire toward their king was at a low ebb, two of his court attendants, Bigthan and Teresh, began plotting the king's assassination. The conspirators were unaware that their plan to eliminate the despised king was discovered by Mordecai. Even if they had known, they would have expected the support of a displaced Jew living in a foreign land with unsympathetic customs. They did not realize that Queen Esther was Mordecai's cousin, trained and raised in his home as his own daughter. Mordecai saved the king's life by informing him of the plot through Queen Esther. After an investigation, Bigthan and Teresh were executed as a public example.

Shortly after this incident, King Ahasuerus reorganized his leadership and appointed Haman, a man whom he thought was loyal and had his interests at heart, second in command over his kingdom. His responsibilities included guarding the kingdom against any threat to the king's security, and in an effort to quickly establish Haman's authority and prestige the king commanded all of the court officials to bow down before him. Mordecai claimed exemption from the new law as a Jew and refused to bow.



Haman was insulted by Mordecai's refusal to bow to him and determined to avenge this lack of reverence. With dual motives of personal vanity and a desire to increase his wealth and the wealth of the kingdom, he devised a plan to destroy the entire race. Because of Haman's position, the king routinely signed into irrevocable law a proclamation allowing the complete destruction of all people of Jewish origin throughout the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire.

But God used Mordecai's past loyalty to the king and Esther's loyalty to Mordecai to save His people. Mordecai informed Esther of the grave situation caused by Haman's cruel decree and instructed her to appeal to the king. Esther, fearing for her life, requested Mordecai and all the Jews in the capital to fast for three days before she brought such a bold request before her husband. After successfully gaining an audience, she invited the king and Haman to a small banquet she had prepared. Esther knew that if she arranged for two meetings, one to prepare the king for her request and the other to actually present her case before him, she might have a more sympathetic ear. Both Haman and the king were present at the first meeting, and the king agreed to attend the second banquet.

Elated by the queen's invitation, Haman became overconfident. Assured that the king would endorse any request which he might make, he boldly constructed a gallows on which to hang Mordecai.

But that very same night the king was reminded that Mordecai had never been rewarded for saving his life from the would-be assassins. The next morning, before Haman had a chance to secure what he thought would be quick approval, King Ahasuerus instructed him to publicly honor Mordecai by leading him through the streets.

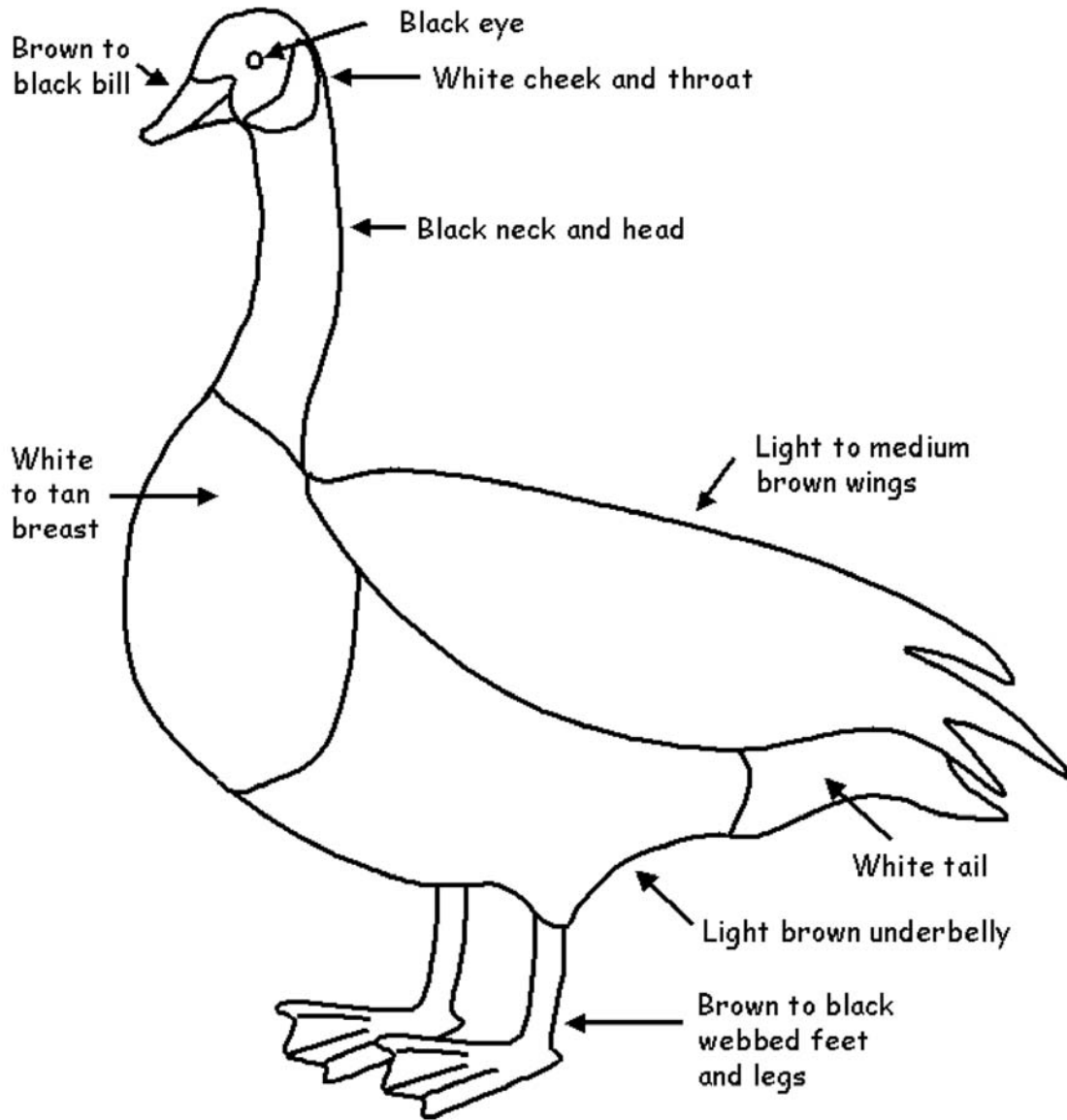
Later that day, Haman, humiliated by this turn of events, attended the second banquet where Esther revealed her Jewish identity and exposed the background of Haman's decree to destroy her people. The shocked king, recognizing that the law he had signed was not intended to benefit himself but represented a personal ambition of Haman instead, realized that he could no longer trust Haman and eliminated him. Haman was hanged on the same gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

Mordecai, the only person who had proved his loyalty beyond doubt, became Haman's natural replacement. He quickly used his position and his expertise in law to compose a new decree which allowed the Jews to defend themselves. On the appointed day, God gave the Jews a great victory over their enemies and preserved the race from genocide.

Today, the loyalty and courage of Mordecai and Esther and the deliverance which God worked through them is reviewed each year by Jews throughout the world during the celebration of the feast called Purim.

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section on the Canada Goose and Mordecai was obtained from:
Character Sketches: Volume 1, p. 40-51

Color Me!



Canada Goose

- 20 to 50 inches (55 to 122 cm) long.
- eat aquatic vegetation and grass.
- eggs are white. They lay 5 to 7 eggs at a time.
- common throughout North America.

<http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/birds/worksheets/canadagoose.htm>



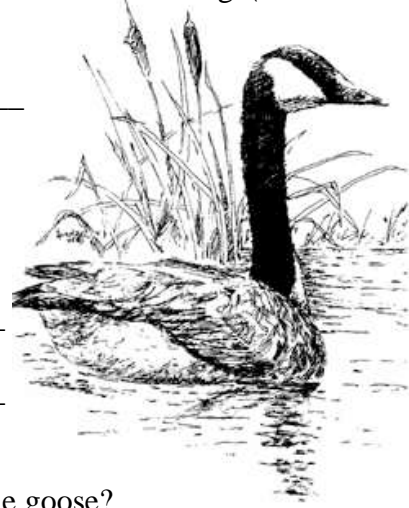
Quiz: The Canada Goose

1. Name two natural enemies of Canada Goose eggs and newly-hatched chicks.

2. T or F When a goose picks a mate it is only for that one season of nesting. (*Circle T or F*)

3. What is a male Canada Goose called? _____

4. What kind of contest do two male Canada Geese have if they both are trying to win the affections of a female?



5. How is an 'incubation patch' formed on the breast of a female goose?

6. What quality of goose down did the pioneers as well as people of today value?

7. How do parent geese 'clear the water' of danger?

8. T or F If a deep snow comes during nesting time, Canada Geese will
(*Circle T or F*) abandon the eggs and start over once the snow melts.

9. What is one way you can see that Canada Geese demonstrate loyalty?

Canada Goose Quiz Key

1. Raccoons, foxes, ravens, large fish, snapping turtles, bull frogs and bad weather. (two of these)
2. False
3. Gander
4. A contest of strength.
5. It is formed by the mother goose plucking her down breast feathers, creating a bear spot, and placing them around and under her eggs.
6. Its superb insulating quality.
7. The female signals her mate and he beats the water wildly with his wings and makes loud squawking noises which frightens enemies away.
8. False
9. Answers will vary but may include: By faithfully caring for their young and defending their young to the death; and also through their lifelong commitment to their mate.



Writing about Haman and Mordecai

Directions: Write about the event that this picture depicts first hand from either the eyes of Haman or Mordecai. (What do you think that he was thinking and feeling?)



Character Quotes Webquest

"The measure of a man's character is what he would do if he knew he never would be found out."

Thomas Babington Macaulay



Directions: Answer the following questions by exploring the Website connected with each question.

1. How does the dictionary define 'character'? (In relation to the *fiber* of a person)

<http://www.wordreference.com/definition/character>

2. What did President Calvin Coolidge say about character?

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/character/quotes/>

3. Who said, "Character is Power." <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/character/quotes/>

4. What did John Dryden have to say about how character is formed?

<http://quotations.about.com/cs/inspirationquotes/a/Character6.htm>

5. What president said... "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." <http://www.leadershipnow.com/characterquotes.html>

6. Who said, "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wing, and only character endures." <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/character/quotes/>

7. Write below your favorite quote about character that you found today.



Character Quotes Webquest Answer Key

1. Character, fiber, fibre
The inherent complex of attributes that determine a persons moral and ethical actions and reactions.
2. "Character is the only secure foundation of the state."
3. Booker T. Washington
4. "We first make our habits, and then our habits make us."
5. Abraham Lincoln
6. Horace Greeley
7. Answers will vary.

* An additional exercise to this webquest could be to have the students try and identify the individuals @ the top of the page. Adding this dynamic would give the students another way to hone their familiarity with and skill on the computer and internet. All of the pictures are connected to this worksheet and so shouldn't be too hard for the students to put names to. The students would have to type in the names of the individuals connected with this activity under 'images' in a search engine like 'Google.' Their names, from left to right, are as follows.

John Dryden Calvin Coolidge Booker T. Washington Abraham Lincoln
Thomas Macauley Horace Greeley



Character/Team-Building Activity

Magic Carpet: The Canada Goose

“Magic Carpet” focusing on teamwork and communication like Canada Geese do in their tireless migration south. They all need to chip in and do their part if they all are to succeed. (For a Lead-Up Activity go through “Lessons in Teamwork from Wild Geese” PowerPoint)

Previous Set-Up: *Secure a tarp for every 10 people or so. (Several sizes of tarps gives the option of making the activity successively more difficult.*

Activity: The group must flip a tarp (magic carpet) over without touching the ground surrounding the ‘magic carpet.’ If anyone steps off the tarp then the whole group has to start over.

Possible Presentation to Group:

“Your group is on a Magic Carpet ride, high above the fields of the surrounding countryside. You suddenly realize that you are going the wrong direction, because the carpet you are riding on is in fact, upside-down! Since you are no longer touching the ground, you must turn the carpet over, without stepping off the carpet.”

(Cain and Jolliff p. 125)

Debriefing:

-Ask if the group thinks that they worked well as a team. Ask them what was done to work together and if some of them ever felt as though they were left to work on the problem by themselves. Refer back to the “Lessons in Teamwork from Wild Geese” PowerPoint. Talk about the fact that geese demonstrate a huge amount of loyalty within their flock as they work together and that as humans we ought to be more loyal to those that we care about. Working together and encouraging each other is what it’s all about.

***This activity was adapted from the following resource:
Cain, Jim; Jolliff, Barry; Teamwork and Teampay...p. 125-127***



Loyalty...



**is adjusting my schedule
to meet the needs of those I am serving.**

**The Great Horned Owl
and
General Amasa**



Illustration Story **The Great Horned Owl and Loyalty**

A faint crunch sounded deep in the frozen Northwoods as a great horned owl fractured the glazed snow surface on a large oak limb. The chilling February wind played with the tufts of feathers on this crouched figure as she surveyed the nearby trees. She gave little attention to the snow or the wind. Her keen eyes were in search of something more important.

Suddenly, she spotted what she was looking for. Her large, powerful wings spread and lifted her to another tree for a closer investigation.

The reward of her search was an abandoned crow's nest. It passed her inspection. She began pecking away its frozen crust of snow and added a few branches and breast feathers. With the adaptation complete, it became her home and within a few days it contained three white eggs.

Now began the months of dedicated sacrifice which are carefully given by the Horned Owl in a remarkable way.

This early nesting was an unusual sight in the frozen forest. It was a full two months before other birds would do the same-and for good reason. The cold days and colder nights made the owl a prisoner of her nest. If she left the nest to find food for herself, she would run the risk of her eggs freezing. So she went without much food during the crucial incubation period.

But a new hardship revealed another disadvantage of early nesting. One afternoon the sky darkened, and heavy thick snow pelted the mother owl. It clung to her feathers as well as the protruding edges of the nest. The owl fought to shake off the deepening snow but never left her eggs.

After four weeks of keeping the eggs warm, three cream-colored, downy owlets hatched. Now the reason for the early nesting became apparent. The owlets opened their pleading mouths and the parents began their race to keep them filled. Their appetites were enormous. The task of feeding would be impossible were it not for the mother's early nesting. This gave her the advantage of being able to spot a passing meal on the floor of the forest. Leaves had not yet grown on the trees and the lingering snow provided a sharp contrast to the rodents for which the parents searched.

In three months, the owlets would grow from three inches to over two feet. Their tremendous and rapid growth makes it necessary for the parents to secure enormous quantities of food. And it is for this reason that the parent bird adjusts its schedule and remains stationary during the cold months of winter, depriving itself of food so that it can better meet the needs of its rapidly growing young.



Common Name: Great Horned Owl
Scientific Name: *Bubo Virginianus*

A deep-woods inhabitant, the Great Horned Owl ranges in size from 18 to 25 inches. The female is slightly larger than the male. This bird, also known as the Hoot Owl and the "tiger of the air," is considered the most powerful of the North American owls.



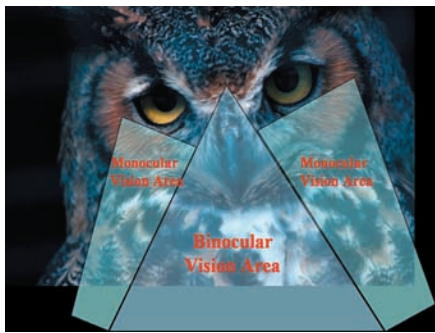
Facts and Information about the Great Horned Owl

Eating and Digestion

The mouth structure of the Great Horned Owl actually extends from ear to ear. It is much larger than just the beak. Its sharp, hooked bill is used to tear a larger catch in two, but usually it will stuff the entire catch into its mouth at once. Hair, bones and feathers are indigestible and are regurgitated in two to four-inch long "castings." Unlike a mammal, the owl does not have teeth with which to grind its food. It must use its beak for tearing large pieces of meat into manageable sizes and then rely on a muscular motion to shake the food into the gullet. There the powerful gastric juices of the owl's digestive system reduce the meat to liquid.



"Great Horned Owls prey on rabbits, wood rats, mice, birds, hares, domestic poultry, grouse, squirrels, smaller owls, foxes, skunks (this species' defensive spray apparently does not deter the Great Horned Owl), domestic cats, weasels, muskrats...in short, most animals other than the large mammals." *The Night Hunters: By Chuck Fergus*



Owl Vision

It is vital for the owl to see at night as well as during the day. The daylight hours are short during the time of the year when it needs to gather the greatest amount of food for its young, and much of what it hunts is more active during the night.

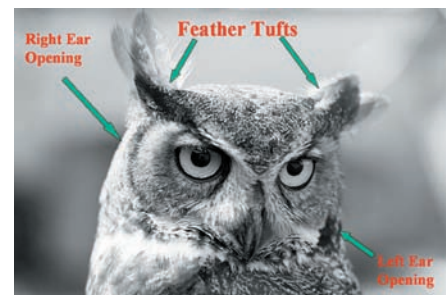
An owl has more rod cells in its retina than most other birds do. These gather whatever light is available and allow it to "see in the dark." Binocular vision-an overlapping of each

eye's field of vision-gives it a greater ability to judge distances.

The third eyelid regularly cleanses and moistens the eyes of the owl. It is like a built-in wiper system which prevents the owl's eye from becoming dry. This feature is necessary to preserve the keen vision and accuracy of the eye for hunting.

Owl Hearing

The feathery tufts we see on the owl have nothing to do with hearing. The real ears are precisely positioned in different locations on either side of the owl's head. This results in a sound reaching each ear at a different instant. The time interval between the same sound reaching each ear gives the owl the ability to accurately pinpoint the exact source of sound.



Owl Feet and Claws



The owl has four pairs of extremely sharp and powerful claws-two sets on each foot. They are arranged in such a way that they come down on their prey like sets of crossed ice hooks. The claws or talons are so sharp that they can quickly sink into even thick skin and flesh. This grip ensures a safe return of its catch to the nest.

The owl's foot is equipped with non-skid pads. These pads work the way tennis shoes do on a gymnasium floor and aid in retaining its grip on prey.

Owl Wings

The intricate feather structure of the leading edge of the wings enables the owl to fly noiselessly. As air passes over the feathers, it is broken up and the sound level of the flapping is reduced to almost nothing.

For its full-time job of satisfying the enormous appetites of its young, the Great Horned Owl must use every possible advantage in hunting. The feather structure of these "silent wings" gives an added advantage as it enables the owl to approach and surprise its prey without a sound.

How Does the Great Horned Owl Demonstrate Loyalty?

The Great Horned Owl demonstrates loyalty by building its schedule around the needs of its young. One indication of loyalty occurs when the owl builds its nest. Rather than choosing the warmer spring months, it nests during the cold months of late winter. Small prey are not afforded their usual ground cover during this time because of lack of foliage. This enables the parent owls to meet the tremendous food requirements of their young.

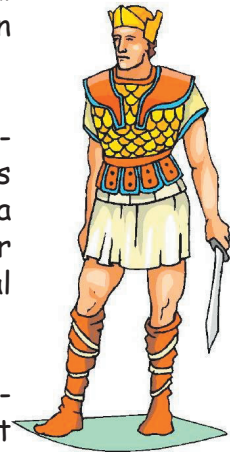
The Story of Amasa and Joab

Twice an ambitious general marched out to battle, and twice he was defeated. The cause of each defeat was his failure to learn a lesson in timing. Twenty thousand men were killed in the first battle, but the second confrontation was fatal to only one.

Three days before the second battle, the king called his newly-appointed general and gave him urgent instructions. "Assemble the fighting men of the nation within three days and report here with them."

The general left to assemble the army. The events of that moment were strikingly similar to those of the earlier battle. Prior to that first battle, two advisors had debated which was the better plan - to pursue the enemy immediately with a smaller army or to take a few extra days and mobilize a larger army. The latter course had been chosen and it proved to be disastrous. Little did the general realize how vital it was for him to learn from that experience.

Anxiously the king waited. Each hour that passed gave his enemy a further advantage. Finally, the appointed hour arrived on the third day. The king went out expecting to see the troops, but to his amazement, no troops were in sight - nor was the general.



In desperation, the king called a trusted warrior. He explained the growing danger to their kingdom and commanded him to pursue the enemy with the remaining troops that were stationed in the city. An air of panic swept over the city. Orders were shouted out by commanding officers. Soldiers grabbed their weapons as they rushed into formation and marched out to pursue the enemy.

News of what was happening reached the general. He immediately abandoned his efforts to mobilize the army and hurried to join the king's troops. Little did he realize that he was rushing to his own death. Among the king's troops was a demoted rival who despised and hated him.

As the troops reached a huge rock by the road, the latecomer aggressively assumed his appointed position of leadership, but his enemy saw his chance. The troops watched intently to see what would happen.

As the displaced rival walked up to greet the general, his sword slipped out of its sheath. With studied casualness, he grasped it with his left hand. In an effort to distract attention, he asked with interest, "Are you in good health, my brother?" As though he intended to give a kiss of greeting, he gently touched the man's beard in a gesture of respect. Then he quickly grasped the beard with his right hand and viciously stabbed him through with the unnoticed sword.

The stunned victim staggered back. A moment later he collapsed in his own blood in the middle of the highway. The troops stood in astonishment as they watched their leader die.

Had he followed the schedule given to him, his murderer would have remained in the capital city, and the new general could have continued and gained an easy victory. Amasa's failure to adjust his schedule to meet the needs of the king was one more example of the disloyalty which had characterized his life and ultimately caused his death.

From II Samuel 20:1-13



Scriptural Sketch

At the turning point of his career, General Amasa was given the opportunity to become commander-in-chief of his nation's army. He did not understand the true meaning and implications of loyalty and could not even obey his superior's first order. He paid a bitter price for his unwillingness to adjust his schedule to meet the needs of those he served.

What caused Amasa to be disloyal to his uncle, King David?

It is possible that Amasa's cousins, Joab and Abishai, as well as other members of David's family treated him with contempt. Amasa was the son of Abigail and Jether the Ishmaelite (I Chronicles 2:17). Abigail was King David's sister and was also the sister of Zeruah, the mother of Joab and Abishai (I Chronicles 2:16). II Samuel 17:25 indicates that Amasa was an illegitimate child. This stigma, and the fact that his father was an Ishmaelite, may have resulted in extra pressure or even ridicule as a boy.



By failing to respond properly to this pressure, he may have become resentful and disloyal to the God who created him as well as to the family in which he was placed. This is an explanation for his actions in siding with Absalom, another family outcast, and in becoming the rival of his cousins Joab and Abishai.

Why didn't Amasa learn his lesson the first time?

When given the chance by David to be his commander, he failed at his very first task because he knew no more about being loyal to the one he was serving than he knew years before. By choosing to follow Absalom instead of David, Amasa associated with disloyal men in a rebellious cause. His rebellious friends regarded loyalty as a weakness rather than an important strength (d. Psalm 1:1).

Why did Amasa fail to keep his appointment with David?

According to the Hebrew method of inclusive reckoning, "within three days" (II Samuel 20:4) meant that Amasa had only one full day to accomplish his task of mobilizing the army. David's command was not at all unreasonable, for many years later the scribe Ezra issued almost the exact same command and it was obeyed without difficulty (Ezra 10:7-9).

It is likely, however, that the men of Judah were not as quick to follow Amasa as they had once been. His recent history as a general was poor, and he may have experienced considerable resistance. Instead of meeting David promptly on the third day with the soldiers he already had, he evidently decided to disregard David's order and take more time to recruit more men. It is ironic that Amasa was using the same strategy that Ahithophel had warned Absalom against.

Because he had not learned from another's mistake, he sacrificed the advantage of speed and surprise for the advantage of numbers. Amasa was doing things his way and in his time, never realizing that his act of disloyalty would cost him his life.

Courtesy of: *Character Sketches: Volume 1, p. 28-39*



Quiz: The Great Horned Owl

1. List one other name by which the Great Horned Owl is known by.

2. Why does the Great Horned Owl nest so much earlier in the year than other birds?

3. On what two continents is the great horned owl found?
(circle 2)

Missouri Europe N. America Africa
S. America Antarctica Asia Greenland



4. What are young owls called? _____

5. What happens to the hair, bones and feathers that the great horned owl swallows?

6. Why does a Great Horned Owl's diet change during the nesting period?

7. Why does an owl need silent wings?

8. What is an owl's third eyelid used for?

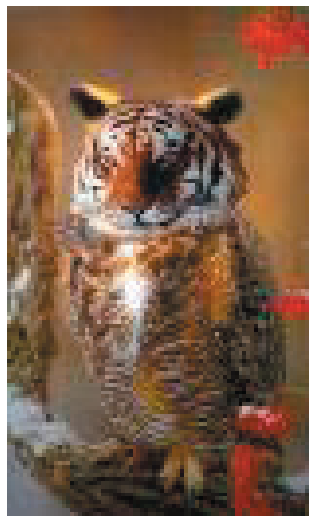
9. How does the Great Horned Owl demonstrate loyalty?



Great Horned Owl Quiz Key

1. Hoot Owl and 'tiger of the air.'
2. Because the leaves have not grown on the trees by the time the fast-growing owlets hatch, allowing the parent owls to easily spot rodents on the lingering snow.
3. North America and South America
4. Owlets
5. These items are indigestible and are regurgitated in two to four inch long 'castings.'
6. Because they are tireless in their search for food for their young and eat only what the owlets don't eat.
7. To give it an advantage in surprising its prey.
8. It is a built-in wiper system which cleans and moistens the eye, thus preserving its keen vision.
9. Answers will vary, but basically, the owl demonstrates loyalty by building its schedule around the needs of its young.

"Tiger of the air"



Word Power

Directions: Make up as many words as you can and write them below using the letters from the following words. (You will be given a time limit and likely will share your words with the rest of the class.)

Great Horned Owl





Character/Team-Building Activity

Numbers Maze: The Great Horned Owl

"Numbers Maze" involves non-blindfolded 'directors' instructing blindfolded 'owls' who are 'flying' in an absolutely pitch black night, and have to rely on their acute sense of hearing to locate 'prey'. Talk about the idea that even though owls have incredible eyesight at night that they have to have at least some light in order to see.

Previous Set-Up: *First, take 10 pieces of full-size paper and write a number from one to 10 on each one, ending up with a different number on each paper. Next, create a chaotic 'maze' with objects in the classroom/gym like chairs, desks, tables, etc... The 'maze' doesn't actually have to be a maze, but basically a much unorganized mess with areas that can be successfully navigated through. Finally, tape the 10 pieces of numbered paper randomly throughout the 'maze'. (Each student will need a pen, pencil or crayon.)*

Activity:

- Assign partners, one being the blindfolded 'owl' and the other the "director".
- The object is for the blindfolded individuals, without any physical contact from their directors, to as quickly as possible, initial and number pieces of paper (prey) in numerical order that are scattered throughout the maze.
- The directors job is to verbally direct their partner through this 'maze.' The directors must stay outside the maze area and the blindfolded individuals must stay inside. (As soon as each set of partners has completed the activity, have them switch roles and go through it again.)

Debriefing:

Discuss the fact that in order for each group to be successful that each person had to be, in a sense, loyal to their partner and that a certain amount of trust had to be there for the activity to be a success. Encourage them to be trustworthy and loyal to those who are depending upon them.



Joyfulness...



**is providing brightness in the lives of others
regardless of outward conditions.**

**The Chickadee
and
Paul and Silas**



Illustration Story The Chickadee and Loyalty

The woods were deathly quiet with a foreboding silence in the air. Only a few days before, the countryside had bustled with activity and the songs of excited birds preparing for their southern migration. Then a sense deep within triggered their inner timeclock and they were gone. Many of the animals, too, had retreated to various chambers and underground dens not to return for many months.

The temperature had dropped and biting, brisk winds ripped away what few leaves remained on the trees. Winter was fast approaching. Lakes had already frozen over, and it would not be long before heavy snows would blanket the northern forest. It was not unusual for the snow to accumulate six feet in depth. The winter would be cold and hard. The mercury would drop well below zero during many of the days ahead.

In preparation for the cold months, birds, animals, and reptiles had made special provision and had either left the area or fortified themselves to ensure survival. It appeared as though the forest was stripped of all life. Even the trees had taken on a stark appearance - a look of death.

As strong, northern winds continued to blow, gray clouds, filled with snow, began to gather. The skies grew darker and the temperature plummeted.

Then, faintly in the distance above the whistle of the wind came a soft, chattering noise. The noise grew louder. It was a bird. Not just one bird, but a flock of them were flitting from tree to tree. Could these birds have lost their way? Could it possibly be that they did not realize a blizzard would soon form and snow would cover the countryside?

The birds did not appear concerned as they sang their cheerful songs to one another. Even as the snow began to fall, they actively moved about in a confident search for dormant insects hidden in the crevices of tree bark.

The large snowflakes fell throughout the night. By morning the storm had passed; everything was still. Snow covered the forest. It was a beautiful sight to behold the bright sunlight sparkling on the glistening white.

Once again the air was filled with melody. The chickadees had not gone. They appeared happier than ever, seeming almost to welcome the snow. Some dipped into the powdery flakes to bathe. These hardy little birds would not leave as the others had, but would continue to make this their year-round home.

The countryside could look forward to their bright, cheerful song and joyful activities even though outward conditions tended to discourage such a spirit. It is for this reason that one well-known naturalist referred to the chickadee as the "bird of the merry heart."



Common Name: The Black-Capped Chickadee
Scientific Name: *Parus articapillus*

The migration of the Black-Capped Chickadee is one of the shortest of any bird. In fact, many do not migrate away from their birthplaces at all, and if they do, they travel only a short distance. These cheerful little birds commonly inhabit deciduous and mixed forests and are often seen near homes in residential areas. This little bird has an amazing longevity of up to nine years. The males and females are similar in appearance, growing to a length of five inches. The chickadee is gray all year long and undergoes a post-nuptial molt during which its plumage takes on a rich color to replace its worn and faded feathers. When they leave the nest, the young birds closely resemble their parents.



Facts and Information about the Black-Capped Chickadee

The Chickadee's Song

The chickadee is named after the melody which it most commonly sings-chickadee-dee-dee. When the days begin to warm and the first signs of spring appear, the chickadees change their song to phee-bee. During courtship, they serenade their mate with this whistle. In spring and fall, another call is heard which involves three notes. These latter calls are whistles, and the quality and sound are distinctly different from their characteristic chickadee--dee-dee. The chickadee is quite sociable and usually travels in flocks which range in size from four birds to 100. They spend the winter searching the woodlands for food. These birds scatter to such an extent as they search that they often lose sight of each other. By continually calling, the chickadees are able to keep track of one another and stay together. This also makes it easy for bird watchers to locate the birds and determine the direction in which the flock is moving.

The chickadee's song has another purpose. When one member of the flock finds a new source of food, it communicates this message to the rest and they, too, are able to share in the find.

Territory and 'Pecking Order'

There is a definite hierarchy in the chickadee flock. The dominant bird, usually a male, is referred to as the alpha bird. Its mate is second in command. The dominant bird and its mate are the first to feed. Once these birds have had their fill, other members of the flock are then permitted to eat. Dominancy is determined by the bird's age, size, sex, and learning ability.

During spring breeding, the chickadee spends as much as 40 percent of its day trying to protect its territory from intruders of its own species. During nesting, the bird spends about 30 percent of its day in defense. The average territory of the male is three or four acres.

Chickadees and Other Birds

It is safe to assume that if chickadees are in the area, there are other birds traveling with them. Some of the common companion birds are the Tufted Titmouse, Nuthatch, Kinglet, Brown Creeper, and the Downy Woodpecker.

Like a woodpecker, the chickadee often lands on the side of a tree trunk or perpendicular limb and clings to it while feeding. It is very adept in finding insects and insect eggs between crevices in the bark. It differs from the woodpecker, however, in that it does not climb up and down the tree. It seems to enjoy even hanging upside down by its relatively long, thin legs and feet.

The chickadee often uses the deserted hole of a woodpecker for its home. It may excavate its own nest by removing the soft, rotten material from a tree such as a white birch. It must choose trees with rotten centers because its small bill cannot chip away sound wood as a woodpecker's does.

When constructing the nest, both parents actively dig, enlarging the cavity to nine or more inches in depth. The entrance hole itself is rarely larger than two inches. They visit the nest alternately, waiting for the other to leave before entering. Rather than throwing wood chips outside the hole, and leaving telltale evidence for predators, they carry the chips away and scatter them. The nest at the bottom of the cavity is made of moss, feathers, and grasses.



Diet and Feeding Habits

After the stomachs of many chickadees were examined, it was found that 68 percent of its food was insect material such as caterpillars, moths and their eggs, bees, ants, etc. It is interesting to note that this is true even in winter. Another 32 percent was vegetable matter. Two-thirds of this second figure consisted of buds, berries, and nuts. The chickadee is also very fond of sunflower seeds.

The chickadee has a small bill, but it has a long, sharp point. To crack a seed, the chickadee places the seed between its toes, and with a series of quick, hammerlike thrusts punctures the shell and continues to hammer until the hole is large enough for it to extract the nutmeat.

The chickadee seems to have no fear of bee stings and is quick, if opportunity permits, to eat the insect. It has a simple and effective means to catch them. It perches itself at the entrance of a hive. When a bee comes out, it snatches it up and flies away to a perch. Holding it in its foot, the bird tears the bee apart with its bill and eats it. It continues this procedure many times until it is full. It has been known to eat other potentially harmful creatures, such as spiders, without any apparent ill effect.

Nesting Habits and Behaviors

It is believed that chickadees mate for life. The female lays five to eight white eggs which are finely spot-ted with brown. Once the eggs are all laid, the female sits on them. Incubation usually lasts from 12 to 15 days. While the female sits on her eggs, the male feeds its mate with the choicest bits of food it can find. After the young have hatched, both parents feed them. The young have ravenous appetites and keep the parents continuously busy gathering food. One observer noted parent chickadees making as many as 42 trips in two hours in order to satisfy the appetites of their young. The young are fed insects almost exclusively.

The parent chickadee is even joyful and enthusiastic when it comes to keeping the surroundings of its nest clean. Darting back and forth, the little bird will carry a small sack away from the nest in its bill. These sacks are the result of the young depositing their waste in a membranous package. Rather than allowing these to remain in the nest or to be thrown out the entrance, the parents cart these miniature diapers some distance away from the nest.

While incubating her eggs, the female uses a unique strategy to discourage intruders. When an animal such as a squirrel pokes its head in the entrance, the little bird quickly sucks in its breath. Then, with a quick, explosive sound, it causes the air to escape. When the jet stream hits its mark, this amusing tactic is often all that is needed to turn away the intruder.

Enemies

Small hawks and shrikes are enemies of the chickadee, but this little bird has two effective defenses. The first is that it is always watchful for danger. The second is its ability to move quickly. Like magic, the chickadee disappears by launching into flight with both its wings and legs. This little bird is so quick that if it becomes frightened in flight, it can change its course of travel in three-tenths of a second.



Eyesight

The chickadee, like a man, is able to use both eyes together to focus on a single object. It can also use each eye independently. By using its eyes separately, it can actually be both nearsighted and farsighted at the same time. Like other birds, the chickadee protects itself with this ability. By cocking its head, it is able to sit on a branch, search for insects and focus up close while the other eye watches the sky for distant objects such as circling hawks. This ability helps the chickadee to be a predator rather than a prey.

How does the Black-Capped Chickadee Illustrate Joyfulness?

Even in the grim conditions of deepest winter, the joyful spirit of the chickadee persists. Regardless of weather, the chickadee sings its cheerful song, serenading the countryside with a variety of melodies. The chickadee is a small bird so its body cools quite rapidly. Yet this hearty little creature is able to withstand sub-zero weather because it has a highly effective layer of insulating feathers. With these feathers, the bird is protected from the cold and maintains optimum warmth by ruffling and puffing them up. By so doing it traps airspace for better insulation. This ruffling also gives the effect of a much larger appearance. During the winter, the little chickadee has many more feathers than it does in the summer.

The Story of Paul and Silas

Several men sprang out of their hiding places and rushed upon two surprised travelers. They caught hold of them and dragged them into the town court. First, the two men were falsely accused. Then they were brought before the village rulers and magistrates. Again, false statements and accusations were hurled against them.

The magistrates were easily swayed. The coats and shirts of the two men were ripped off. Guards were commanded to beat them. The two men knew that these magistrates were violating the law, because it was unlawful for any Roman citizen to be whipped before he was found guilty by trial.

The muscles tightened in the backs and arms of the guards as they lifted the leather thongs with their metal balls high into the air and then brought them down with great force upon the backs of these two men. The crowd grew. Shouting increased as the mob urged on the guards in their bloody ordeal. First the metal balls produced large welts. Then the strips of leather cut into the skin and tore the flesh away.

When the guards saw that the prisoners were nearing death, they stopped the whipping. Then the men were cast into prison. A startled jailer was given strict instructions not to let them escape. Having received such a charge, he thrust them into the inner prison and locked their feet into heavy, wooden stocks.

The two men had been falsely accused, denied a fair trial, illegally beaten, and unlawfully imprisoned. Their backs were bleeding; their ankles were in pain. They were tired and hungry, separated from their friends, and suffered the sting of public humiliation.

What did they do next? They rejoiced in the Lord with singing and prayer. The other prisoners marveled at what they heard. Such a response deeply impressed the jailer. He found



himself considering the possibility of becoming a Christian himself. Obviously these men had something he and his family needed.

Later that night an earthquake rocked the prison, springing open the doors and chains. The jailer thought his prisoners had escaped, and he was going to kill himself. But they cried out in a loud voice, "Do yourself no harm. We are all here." The jailer called for a light, ran in and fell down before these two prisoners. He brought them out of their cell and asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." That very night the jailer and his family believed and were baptized. They washed the wounds of the prisoners, set food before them, and rejoiced together at their new fellowship in Christ. Paul and Silas produced joy in the lives of others because they were able to rejoice in the cruelest possible circumstances.



From Acts 16:11-34

Scriptural Sketch

It is understandable that people who need the Gospel will expect those who bring it to pass their most rigid test - the ability to rejoice when everyone else would become discouraged. Paul and Silas brought a cynical bystander to salvation because they passed this kind of test.

Punished and Imprisoned, but Joyful

As Roman citizens, this represented a grave miscarriage of justice. Wounds untreated, Paul and Silas were thrown into the dark, inner prison and bound in stocks as though they were dangerous criminals. Their only companions were hungry rats and fellow prisoners who bitterly cursed their fates. But instead of filling the midnight hour with groans and justifiable complaints, "Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." (Acts 16:25)

God answered their prayers and honored their praises by sending a great earthquake to free them. The doors were opened, and chains and stocks became detached from the wall. The awakened jailer, helpless to prevent an escape, decided to commit suicide at once. He knew that after he lost his prisoners, he would face disgrace and execution (d. Acts 16:23, 27). When Paul assured him that no one had left, the jailer came in and fell down before these unusual men. He no doubt was familiar with the nature of their charges and cried out for an explanation of their message of salvation.

God Blessed Paul and Silas' Joyful Spirit

Before Paul and Silas left Philippi, they visited the home of Lydia, the first convert. Her home had become a meeting place for the small church which now included the household of the jailer. Whether or not the slave girl became a believer we are not told, but it is reasonable to suppose that she did. There is some indication that Luke, the physician, was also a member of this new fellowship. In spite of his brief time spent there, Philippi became one

of Paul's most loved churches. It brought him more joy than any other (d. Philippians 1:3, 8). He used the Philippians as an example of generosity to the church of Corinth (II Corinthians 8: 1-6). His epistle to the Philippians was written to a firmly established church which included "bishops and deacons," (Philippians 1:1). It is a tender letter to mature believers, and comparatively little is said about doctrinal error. The joy of the lord which Paul and Silas demonstrated to the first believers in Philippi may have been a major reason for their quick growth and maturity.

God Rewards a Right Spirit

The jailer became a believer in Jesus Christ, and his whole attitude was transformed. Instead of thinking of himself, he thought of the pain and hunger of Paul and Silas. He took them home, dressed their wounds, and fed them a good meal (Acts 16:33, 34). The following day the charges against Paul and Silas were dropped. The two men made one last visit to the home of Lydia to comfort and encourage the new believers and then departed from the city. Their example of joy in adversity remained to encourage the small band of believers in their newly found faith.

How could Paul and Silas sing under such circumstances?

Music in Scripture is not always associated with merriment and happiness. One purpose of music in the Old Testament was to calm a troubled heart. David played on his harp to refresh the heart of Saul (I Samuel 16:23). When Elisha saw the wicked king Jehoram, he was so disturbed that he called for the minstrel to calm him down. "And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the lord came upon him." (II Kings 3:15) Paul and Silas may have sung to prepare themselves for prayer. When they prayed and were assured of their deliverance, their singing would have changed to praise. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (Exodus 15:1; d. Judges 5:1,2) Paul later told all Christians to make singing an important part of their worship (Ephesians 5:19,20; Colossians 3:16).

Why didn't Paul and Silas escape when they had the opportunity?

It would have been simple for Paul and Silas to justify their escape. They could have easily slipped out of Philippi at night and headed on their way. Had not God miraculously opened the



jail door, loosed their chains, and provided this opportunity for that purpose? But Paul and Silas were more concerned about the reputation of the *Gospel* than their own safety. They were both Roman citizens (d. Acts 16:37) and were entitled to the protection of the law. If they ran, they would have been considered guilty. As a result, the believers who remained in Philippi would have been condemned as associates of criminals. Even after they were given official permission to leave the next morning, they demanded an honorable release in public view. This was not to pamper their hurt pride but rather to demonstrate the legitimacy of their message and to encourage these new believers to be bold in their faith. Paul and Silas assured the integrity of the *Gospel* before they departed.

Courtesy of:
Character Sketches: Volume 2, p. 228-239





Black-Capped Chickadees

The Bible Paraphrased The Story of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16-34)

Assignment

Start by dividing the 19 verses found in Acts 16:16-34 as evenly as possible between those in your group.

Each of you should then rewrite your verses using your own words. Replace the names of Paul and Silas with the names of two people you know that you think show what it means to be joyful in bad circumstances. Put some real thought into what your verses are saying and be prepared to read your paraphrase in combination with the other verses written by the rest of your group. Feel free to use additional paper if you need it. Enjoy and be creative!!



Verse Numbers: _____

A large, faded background image of Paul and Silas in prison, overlaid with horizontal lines for writing. The image shows Paul and Silas sitting on a mat, playing a lyre, with other prisoners and guards in the background.

What about Joy? Web/Bible Quest



1. How does the dictionary define joy?
<http://www.wordreference.com/definition/joy>

2. What are the nine 'fruits of the spirit?' Is joy one of them?
<http://www.allaboutgod.com/ministry.htm>

3. What are two texts in the Bible that talk about joy? Write one of them out.
<http://www.allaboutgod.com/fruit-of-the-spirit.htm>



4. Complete the following comment that Hubert Pryor makes about joy.
"Finding joy is like finding..."
<http://www.soulfulliving.com/findingjoy.htm>

5. What can we learn from the angels about what brings joy?
<http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/ds/q1003/point7.html>

6. Where in the Bible is the story of Paul and Silas recorded?
How did they display joy?
<http://www.spirittone.com/meditations/acts16-16.html>



What About Joy?

Web/Bible Quest Quiz Key

1. -'the emotion of great happiness'

- 'something or someone that provides pleasure; a source of happiness; "a joy to behold"; "the pleasure of his company"; "the new car is a delight"'

- 'feel happiness or joy'

- 'make glad or happy'
2. -The nine visible attributes of a true Christian life (fruits of the spirit): love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

-Yes: joy is one of them.
3. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).
4. "...finding that your missing eyeglasses were on your head all the time."
5. The right kind of service; or serving God, brings joy.
6. Acts 16:16-34 They displayed joy by singing and praising God while in prison and locked in stocks.



Character/Team-Building Activity

Human Knot: The Black-Capped Chickadee

The "Human Knot" is a very basic and easy to do group game that involves 'untangling' the whole group from a giant knot.



-Talk about tangled up relationships and what the key is to untangling them.
(Effective Communication)

Previous Set-Up: None

Activity: To start this activity, simply have 12 or fewer people get into a tight circle and grasp hands with two other people across from them. To determine whether or not the whole group is connected in a single, continuous circle have one person send a 'shock' by squeezing one of the hands that they are holding. Each person that receives a 'shock' will keep it going by squeezing their other hand. If the shock returns to the original person and everyone has been 'shocked' then you are ready to begin the unwinding process. If not everyone received a 'shock' then there should be some swapping of hands. Once the whole group is connected, then the goal is to untangle everyone without having anyone in the group letting go of hands.

Debriefing:

Brainstorm about things that sometimes make us feel like we're all tangled up in our lives and that there's just too much going on. Discuss the idea that all of us get tangled up in life and that our interwoven lives can often seem very confusing. Finally, talk about the fact that by being positive, persevering and joyful about life, it becomes much more bearable and God can then work in our lives much more effectively.

Courtesy of:
Teamwork and Teamplay...p. 107-108
Cain, Jim; Jolliff, Barry;



Responsibility...



is using all my energies to fulfill the expectations of those who are counting on me.

**The American Woodcock
and
Eli The Priest**



Illustration Story **The Woodcock** **And** **Responsibility**

The woodcock carefully led her family in search along the surface of the marshland. The ground was too dry for the probings of her bill to find the food she needed for her young.

Changing direction, she searched under the leaves of a nearby wooded area. This effort yielded some grub worms, but there weren't enough. The woodcock is used to eating its weight in food every twenty-four hours. How could she make the provision for her young?

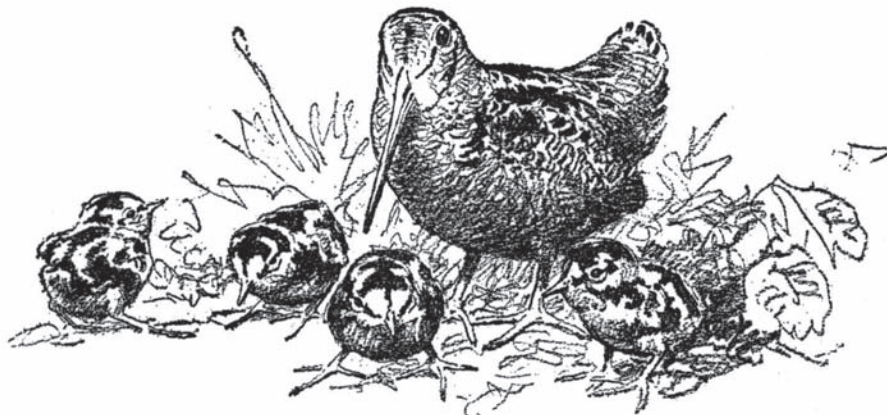
Several days earlier her four eggs had hatched. The slight depression in the hardwood leaves served as their home for only a few hours. Soon they were on their feet imitating their mother's movements, their fragile bills probing the ground for the earthworms near the surface. Worms are one major source of nourishment, but now the ground was parched. The worms had burrowed deep to find moist soil and were far beneath the surface.

It was time to demonstrate to her young the highly creative technique of getting worms when other means fail. In preparation for this unusual procedure, the woodcock deliberately flattened out on the ground. Next, she spread out her wings. In this position, she beat the ground by rapidly flapping them against the earth. Then she stopped for a moment, listening intently before resuming her unusual effort.

In a short time the woodcock family was enjoying its long-awaited meal. Each young chick was busily finding worms along the parched surface in the very place where their earlier efforts had been fruitless. What made the difference?

Earthworms instinctively know that if they are deep within the ground when a hard rain falls, they will drown unless they can quickly get to the surface for air. Because of this danger, the body of the worm is very sensitive to the vibrations from the surface. When the woodcock rapidly flutters its wings from above, the beating sounds like raindrops to the worms and they burrow upward toward the surface. As the worms come within reach, the woodcock pierces the ground with its bill and pulls them out.

The young woodcocks observed an important aspect of responsibility by the example of their mother using all her energies to fulfill the needs of her young.

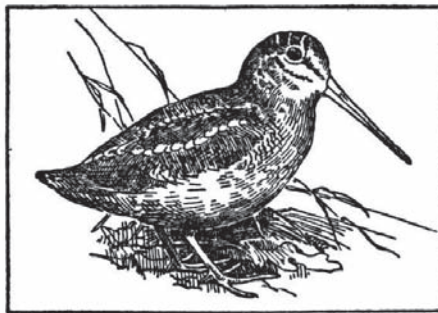


Common Name: The American Woodcock

Scientific Name: *Philohela minor*

The American Woodcock is known by many names including the timber doodle, owl snipe, big mud snipe, Labrador twister, brush snipe, woods snipe, night partridge, big-eye, and bog sucker. As is suggested by its many names, "habitat requirements for woodcock change throughout the year." Their habitat ranges from moist forests to thickets and finally to open clearings where their courtship takes place. (Fergus, Chuck; Woodcock) "The American Woodcock is one of the first birds back in the spring, performing its elaborate courtship display as early as late February. Around dusk, the male woodcocks will come to their display sites in open areas near their normal wooded habitat. The male struts and turns on the ground while "peent-ing", then after a while, takes to the air for a long circular flight while making "twirling" sounds with its flight feathers. At the end of the flight, it becomes silent and flies back to the original ground display site or an alternate site."

www.dlia.org/.../american_woodcock.html



Facts and Information about the American Woodcock

Woodcock Vision

A woodcock's eyes are set far back on top of its head. This means that as it probes the ground in search of food, it can still be alert to various enemies which might otherwise be able to surprise it from the rear. With the eyes in this position, the range of a woodcock's vision is 360°.

The woodcock has the unique feature of binocular vision both ahead of it and behind it. Binocular vision occurs when the field of vision of both eyes overlaps.

Food



The woodcock's chief source of food is the night crawler, a worm which makes its way up to the ground surface during the cool hours of darkness in the summer months. For this reason the woodcock migrates at night and happens to be one of the first birds to return to its breeding grounds.

"Earthworms, high in fat and protein, make up about 60 percent of a woodcock's diet. An additional 30 percent is insects (ants, flies, beetles, crickets, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and various larvae), crustaceans, millipedes, centipedes, and spiders. About 10 percent is plant food, mostly seeds from bristlegrass, panicgrass, sedge, ragweed, knotweed, and blackberry. Timberdoodles do most of their feeding just before dawn. Digestion is rapid; an adult may eat its weight in worms each day."

(Fergus, Chuck; Woodcock)



Specially Equipped Bill and Feet



The woodcock's bill has a feature which is unique to some species. It has a flexible upper mandible which enables only the tip to move in a tweezer fashion. It is able to push its closed bill three inches into the ground and then open only the flexible tip to pick up the worm.

The flexible end of the bill has many delicate nerve endings. These highly developed sense organs feel the worm and signal the woodcock to pull it out of the ground.



The woodcock can also sense with its feet the slight motion caused by a worm propelling itself underground. Because the woodcock's feet are sensitive to vibrations beneath them, they assist in detecting the position of a worm.

Location of Ears and Hearing



The ears of the woodcock have an unusual location. Rather than lying at the side of the head as is customary in most birds, they are found between the eyes and the bill.

Because the ears of the woodcock are located close to the bill, they are able to guide it in searching for worms. These ears detect the slightest movement beneath the surface and allow the bird to accurately grasp a worm with its three-inch bill. So highly developed are the ears that they are the equivalent of a woodcock being able to "see" underground.

Flight

Within two weeks of birth the tiny woodcock can fly short distances. In twenty-five days the woodcocks are almost fully grown.

Even after reaching adulthood however, woodcock flights tend to be short and erratic. Its agility in maneuvering between trees and brush does enable it to fly through dense underbrush and thickets.



Defenses Against Predators



Usually when a woodcock is approached by an enemy it remains motionless. When danger threatens most birds flush, but many times the woodcock remains still. You could be within inches of the bird, but it might not break its frozen position. One photographer, after spotting a woodcock, actually moved branches and twigs away from the bird in order to achieve a better picture. The woodcock did not stir.

The coloration of the woodcock blends perfectly with its surroundings. Unless the bird moved, one would be unable to recognize it against the marshland foliage of its home. The moist countryside in which it lives provides a background against which the bird can easily blend.

The female woodcock trains her young to be alert. With their specially positioned eyes, they can detect the approach of a predator enemy such as a coyote or fox. Because of the woodcock's 360° vision, it is unlikely that many animals could surprise it.

It is probably not surprising then that the woodcock's most deadly enemy is not a four-footed one. Electric light or telephone wires lying at the flight level of the bird kill more woodcocks than any living predator. Flying at power-line level, the unsuspecting bird many times collides with the thin, out-stretched wire.

Whistling Wings

By using its wings. The outermost primaries, three feathers on the end of each wing, enable the bird to make an unexpected whistling sound in flight. When the woodcock senses that it is in danger of being discovered or trampled, it flies quickly away, and the sound from these three feathers startles its enemy as it escapes to safety.



Courtship Displays



During the mating season the male makes special use of its three whistling feathers. It uses them to create a melodious courtship song. After twilight it will fly high in the air until it is hardly visible. Then, with fixed wings, it will plummet toward the earth. The wind passing through outstretched feathers creates a melodic sound. The male may continue the strange exercise and music throughout the night.

As is true in most other species of birds, the female woodcock is slightly larger than the male.



How Does the American Woodcock Illustrate Responsibility?

The woodcock illustrates the quality of responsibility by using its unique eyes, bill, ears, feet and wings to their full potential. Its energetic use of these unusual features equips the shorebird for survival.

The Story of Eli the Priest

The high priest's heart pounded as he grasped the gate post and eased his heavy body onto a seat. His failing eyes stared intently down the winding road. Beyond the horizon a desperate battle was being fought, but he was concerned about something of far greater importance.

He recalled the bitter rebuke that a man of God had given him. He was accused of utterly failing in the discipline of his sons. Others had also warned him concerning this. He had tried to do something about it, but he knew it had been a feeble effort.

But now an even greater danger alarmed him. The men in that battle were in a desperate situation. Their lives and futures depended on victory, and they needed to know that God was on their side.

The priest knew that the nation was looking to him and to his two sons for spiritual leadership, but he was old and he knew that his sons were in no condition to assume such an important responsibility. Because of these crucial circumstances, he had consented to a very dangerous plan. He allowed his sons to take their nation's most sacred treasure, the Ark of the Covenant, into battle. The Ark would reassure the people of God's presence and urge them on to victory.

But the consequences of its loss were grave to consider. If the battle were lost, the treasure would be captured and the nation would grieve over that even more than losing the battle.

In the distance he heard a commotion. A runner had returned from the battle. The old priest leaned forward on his seat and searched his face for an expression. He saw grief and despair in the messenger and listened to the details.

Horrified, he learned that the battle had been lost, 30,000 men had been killed, his two sons were dead and their nation's most sacred treasure had been captured. At this last news he jerked and trembled. His huge body fell backward. He hit the ground with a heavy thud and lay lifeless. His neck was broken.

The consequences of that day were more far-reaching than he imagined. The nation that conquered them scorned their God, and His own nation decided to have a king rule over them like other nations. Thus, they rejected God's direct leadership.

But why had the priest failed? Why had his sons become gluttonous and immoral? The answer is found in a failure—a lack of discipline in his life. He had a problem of self-control in the area of eating. As his sons grew up, they were very aware of this weakness.

Eli's lack of self-control in this area opened the way for Satan to defeat his sons in related areas of self-control. The discipline and training for leadership which could have saved their lives and the nation's future were never given.

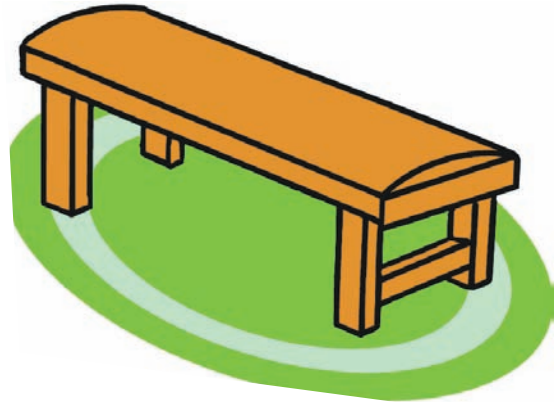


HIGH PRIEST IN ROBES AND BREASTPLATE.
—Lev. viii, 8.

From I Samuel 4:1-18
Scriptural Sketch



The high priest Eli took office during a period in history which has come to be known as "Israel's Dark Ages." The nation's leaders were disorganized and even the institution of the priesthood seems to have been confused. God's presence left Israel because Eli failed to fulfill the expectations of those who were counting on him.



A Few Questions to Ponder about Eli and his Sons

Why did Eli lose the respect of his sons?

Because Eli did not learn to control his weight, he lost the respect of his sons and was unable to teach them self-control. I Samuel 4:18 states that he was old and heavy. As young men, Hophni and Phinehas never learned to control their appetites. They were gluttonous and sensual (I Samuel 2:12-17, 22). The Mosaic Law taught that children of the third and fourth generations would be influenced by the iniquity of their fathers (d. Exodus 20:5; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9).

Why didn't Eli discipline his sons?

It is likely that Eli's awareness of his own problem caused him to be weak and unwilling to deal with a similar problem in his sons' lives. The Law of God specifically explained the disciplinary action which Eli, as priest and judge, should have known. In Deuteronomy 21:18-21, clear steps of action are given. First, the father is instructed to confront his stubborn and rebellious son with his wrongdoings. After refusing to obey, the son was to be brought before the elders of the city. The Lord's judgment on Aaron's two sons when they rebelled against their father in performing the tabernacle ceremonies was a sobering example from which Eli should have learned (Leviticus 10:1,2).

What were the consequences of Eli's negligence?

The immediate consequences of Eli's negligence were the death of his sons, disrespect for the priesthood, and the departure of the glory of the Lord from Israel. There were other long-range consequences. A man of God predicted that none of Eli's descendants would live past their prime and that they would be replaced by a more faithful priest (I Samuel 2:31-32). The prediction was partially fulfilled when Solomon deposed Eli's descendant, Abiathar, from the high priesthood. The complete fulfillment is mentioned in the prophecy of Ezekiel where descendants of Zadok rather than Eli are to be honored in the future kingdom of God (Ezekiel 44:15,16). Because he refused to discipline his own sons, Eli died with a broken and grieved spirit, realizing that he was personally responsible for the spiritual decline of the nation he had judged for forty years.

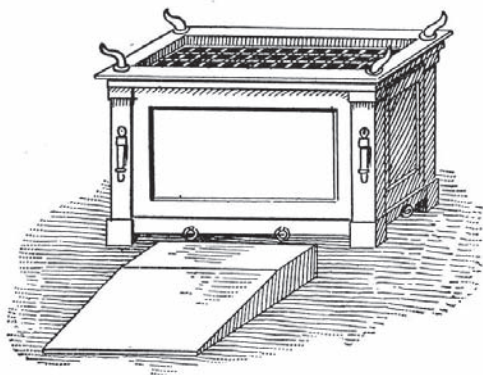
Additional Background Information

Eli was a descendant of Aaron's younger son Ithamar and not of the chosen priesthood line of Eleazar. It appears that the line of Eleazar could produce no qualified man for the position of priest. As a result, Eli was chosen as high priest and received the responsibility of judge as well. Because of these circumstances it is safe to assume that at age fifty-eight he was an extremely capable man and no doubt impressed the leaders with his zeal for the Lord.

It must have been a great honor to have been chosen by the Lord to stand before Him as the representative of the people. But with honor comes responsibility. Eli's chief responsibility would have been to train his sons to succeed him as high priest, a duty that he failed to perform. Years later, the ninety-eight year old Eli, almost totally blind with cataracts in both eyes and unable to perform his duties, could not allow either of his sons, Hophni or Phinehas, to replace him.

Eli had failed as a father. He was grieved daily with reports of his sons' irreverent activity as priests. The sacrificial system—designed to teach God's character of righteousness, justice, grace and mercy—was being grossly distorted by Eli's sons. In the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 7:29-34) the Lord had provided for the priest in a practical way. Whenever a man came to sacrifice an animal to the Lord as a peace offering, the right thigh and breast were to nourish the officiating priest. The sons of Eli were not content with what the Lord had provided and refused to limit their tastes to the portion God allowed. They even demanded the fat on the meat which belonged to the Lord and was forbidden for any Israelite to eat (Leviticus 3:16). This gluttony was literally stealing from the Lord Himself. In addition, they introduced to tabernacle worship the shocking "sacred" prostitution common at the surrounding Canaanite shrines.

Since the priests did not correctly teach the Law of God and the history of Israel, the nation was unable to benefit from their past failures. When they lost four thousand men in battle against the Philistines, they should have immediately realized the significance of the defeat. With an understanding of their nation's history they would have interpreted this as God's reproof. Rather than crying out to God in repentance, they increased their wickedness by treating the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord in the manner of a pagan idol and marching it into battle. Their ignorance cost them the very presence of the glory of God and the lives of thirty thousand additional men.



The brazen altar in the courtyard of the Tabernacle was used for various sacrifices offered to the Lord. Eli's sons used large forks called "flesh hooks" to pull their favorite cuts out of the fire. The Lord allowed the priests to eat the thigh of the right leg and the breast. Although these were excellent cuts of meat, they did not satisfy Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

As high priest, Eli wore the garb of the official mediator between a holy God and His sinful people. The beautiful breastplate with its twelve precious stones represented each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Courtesy of:
Character Sketches: Volume 1, p. 78-89

Quiz: The American Woodcock

1. What type of habitat does the American Woodcock live in? (Circle One)

A. Swamps and Wet Woods

B. High Desert Plateaus

C. Rocky Coastal Areas

D. High Alpine and Tundra

2. T or F The American Woodcock does not migrate due to its bulky
(Circle T or F) body composition.

3. Describe why the mother woodcock in our story beat the ground with her wings?

4. How long does it take before a Woodcock can learn to fly? _____

5. What is the Woodcock's most deadly enemy? _____

6. Where are the ears of a Woodcock located?

7. What 2 things does the Woodcock use the 3 outermost 'whistling' feathers for?
_____ and _____

8. Which of the following names is the American Woodcock not known by?
(Circle One)

A. Owl Snipe

B. Big Mud Snipe

C. Timber Doodle

D. Long Island Long-Bill

9. What vision range, in degrees, does the Woodcock have?





(Example: 20%) _____%



American Woodcock Quiz Key:

1. A- The woodcock inhabits swamps, wet woods and thickets.
2. False- The Woodcock is a migratory bird.
3. She beat the ground to draw worms deep in the soil to the surface so that her and her chicks could dine on them. The wing beats of the mother woodcock sounded like rain to the worms who know that they will drown from the rain unless they come to the surface to get air. Thus, the worms were deceived and became an easy snack for the woodcocks.
4. Within only 2 weeks the baby woodcocks can fly short distances.
5. Electric light or telephone wires. (These wires, lying at the flight level of the bird, kill more woodcocks than any living predator.)
6. The ears of a woodcock are located between the eyes and the bill.
7. It uses them to startle enemies, giving them the needed time to escape, and to create a melodious courtship song.
8. D- Long Island Long-Bill
9. 360%

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON

-  **Be reliable and dependable; when you agree to do something, do it.**
-  **Take care of your own business. Don't make others do what you are supposed to do.**
-  **Take responsibility for your actions; don't make excuses or blame others.**
-  **Use your head; think before you act; imagine the consequences.**



Are You a Responsible Person?

(Take this self-evaluation and find out.)

True False

- I do what needs to be done.
- I am reliable and dependable.
- I am accountable for my actions; I don't make excuses or blame others.
- I fulfill my moral obligations.
- I use good judgment and think through the consequences of my actions.
- I exercise self-control.

I think I am/am not a responsible person because: _____

Being responsible puts you in charge of your life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean when someone is described as being a "responsible" person?
2. Do you consider yourself to be a responsible person? Why? In what ways?
3. Does it matter to you whether or not people think of you as responsible?
Why, or why not?
4. How do you feel about people who are irresponsible?
 - How do you feel about people who are responsible?
 - What difference does it make to you whether or not your friends are responsible people?
5. What is good about being a responsible person?



Higher Level Discussion Questions

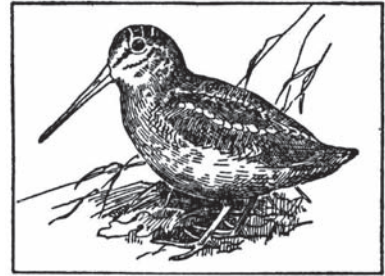
1. Do you consider yourself to be a responsible person? Why? In what ways?
2. Do you consider it important for your friends and family members to be responsible? Why?
3. Think about somebody you know who is very responsible. How does that person demonstrate responsibility? Does that make you respect him/her more?
4. What does the golden rule have to do with responsibility?
5. What is the relationship between blaming and responsibility? Think about what some of your biggest problems are in school. Do you blame anyone for those problems?
6. What is meant by the phrase 'responsibility is power.' Do you agree?
7. Say to yourself: "My future is up to me." Do you agree with that idea? Explain.
8. It's been said that "There are no rights without responsibility, and there is no responsibility without rights." What does that mean? Do you agree? What is the relationship between rights and responsibilities?
9. Think of separating your problems into three categories: ones we have no control over, ones we have some influence over, and ones we have total control over. How would it help resolve our problems to look at them in this way?
10. Someone once said, "You can't control what life puts at your doorstep, but you have complete control over how you respond to it." What does that mean? How can you apply this principle to your daily life?
11. What does being responsible have to do with the quality of your character?
12. What are the benefits of being a responsible person? How do you benefit from the responsibility of others?

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American Woodcock Web Quest



1. In what type of habitat are woodcocks found?

<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/i2280id.html>

2. When do woodcocks perform their courtship flight?

http://www.enature.com/flashcard/show_flash_card.asp?recordNumber=BD0234

3. Where does the woodcock live in the spring and summer?

<http://www.scsc.k12.ar.us/2000backeast/ENatHist/Members/BryanM/page%205.htm>

4. What do woodcocks mostly eat?

http://www.enature.com/flashcard/show_flash_card.asp?recordNumber=BD0234

5. When do woodcocks usually nest?

<http://www.scsc.k12.ar.us/2000backeast/ENatHist/Members/BryanM/page%205.htm>

6. How many eggs does the woodcock lay?

<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife/resources/wildnotes/pub313.htm>

7. How long are woodcock chicks dependent on their mothers for food ?

http://birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/American_Woodcock_dtl.html#sound

Key American Woodcock Web Quest

1. In what type of habitat are woodcocks found?
<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/i2280id.html>

woodlands and shrubby fields

2. When do woodcocks perform their courtship flight?
http://www.enature.com/flashcard/show_flash_card.asp?recordNumber=BD0234

early spring

3. Where does the woodcock live in the spring and summer?
<http://www.scsc.k12.ar.us/2000backeast/ENatHist/Members/BryanM/page%205.htm>

southern Canada, Maine, and the Great Lakes Region

4. What do woodcocks mostly eat?
http://www.enature.com/flashcard/show_flash_card.asp?recordNumber=BD0234

earthworms

5. When do woodcocks usually nest?
<http://www.scsc.k12.ar.us/2000backeast/ENatHist/Members/BryanM/page%205.htm>

March into June

6. How many eggs does the woodcock lay?
<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife/resources/wildnotes/pub313.htm>

2-6 eggs; 4 average

7. How long are woodcock chicks dependent on their mothers for food ?
http://birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/American_Woodcock_dtl.html#sound

the first week



Character/Team-Building Activity

Trust-Fall Sequence: **The American Woodcock**

These classic activities are meant to build not only trust within the group, but also a sense of responsibility towards the well being and safety of the others in the group.

Previous Set-Up: Objects of varying heights from which to fall from are needed. (A sturdy ladder works well for this.)



Activity:

These activities are meant to build trust among the group gradually and should all be done with equal seriousness and focus so as to instill within the participants a feeling of safety within the group. First of all, the group members should be divided into pairs. These pairs should then practice falling backwards with eyes closed onto the outstretched hands of their partner. In all of these activities it is very important that the 'faller' remain 'stiff as a board' and that they announce their intentions first by saying 'falling.' Before they fall, however, they should receive a verbalized 'fall on' from the catcher/s. The catcher should not let the faller fall very far backwards before catching them just below the shoulder blades.

Once all partners have successfully done this exercise several times successfully then have participants get into groups of 8-12 and form a tight circle. They will then each, if they feel comfortable, take a turn 'falling' in the circle. To do this the 'faller' stands in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed, feet planted in one spot and arms crossed over their chest. They then will fall in whatever direction they choose and the rest of the group will carefully pass them around the circle as they tip in the direction of every person in the circle. The key with this activity is to work together to catch the faller no matter where he/she is tipped and to gently push him/her in a new direction.

Finally, once this activity has been safely and successfully executed the trust-fall is embarked upon. This is where the 'faller' falls backward off of something and into the arms of the rest of the group. It is important that the faller keep their hands crossed over their chests or grasping their pants hem to avoid flailing them. The group should line up with half facing the other half, shoulder to shoulder and with arms outstretched towards the person across from them. When catching they should bend at the knees and not at the waist to avoid 'kissing' the person across from them. This activity should be closely monitored and should not progress unless the group is operating in a physically and emotionally safe way.

Debriefing:

There is absolutely a wealth of different issues that can be discussed during and after these activities. The obvious ones include trust, trustworthiness and the team-ness of the group. A good thing to discuss, however, is also the importance of taking on the responsibility of making sure that each person that falls feels and remains safe. Many people have a hard time trusting others because they have been hurt by those close to them throughout their lives. It is partially the responsibility of other people to rebuild in others the ability to trust. This is a big responsibility and hopefully one that the group has been willing to take on.



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Graphic Links

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<http://www.nature.ca/notebooks/english/cdngoose.htm>

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Bible

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www.wildflorida.org/bba/amwo.htm (flying in front of big moon)
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www.gerardfuehrer.com/American%20Woodcock%2000... (photo of chicks)
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Miscellaneous Additional Material

Are You a Trustworthy Person?

(Take this self-evaluation and find out.)

False

- I keep my promises; I am a person of my word.
- I am reliable; I follow through on commitments.
- I am honest.
- I keep secrets; I never betray a confidence or a trust.
- I have integrity; I don't cave in to temptation.
- I am loyal when loyalty is appropriate.

I think I am/am not a trustworthy person because: _____

Elementary Questions

1. How do you feel when someone tells you a lie?
2. Do you think that lying can ruin a friendship? Explain. Has that ever happened to you?
3. If you tell just one lie, does that make you a liar? How many lies do you get to tell before you are a liar?
4. Would you trust somebody who lies? Who cheats? Who steals? Why, or why not?
5. How do you know if you can trust someone?
6. Do you consider yourself to be an honest person? Why?
7. What does trustworthiness mean to you? What is a trustworthy person?
8. Do you consider yourself a trustworthy person? In what way are you a trustworthy person?
9. Do your parents trust you? What could you do that would make your parents stop trusting you? What would be bad about that?
10. It's been said that cheating is just another form of lying. Do you agree?
11. Describe a time when you lied, cheated, or stole something. What happened? How did you feel? What were the consequences?



12. How can simply being honest make life a lot easier. Have you ever experienced this in your own life?
13. How important is trust in your relationships with friends and family? How would these relationships be affected if you found out someone was lying to you?
14. What does trust have to do with honesty?

Higher Level Discussion Questions

1. Some adults say that your generation cannot be trusted, that you've lost the values from past generations. Do you agree or disagree?
2. How important is trust in your relationship with friends, family, and others in your life? How would these relationships be affected if you found out someone was lying to you?
3. What is meant by the phrase; 'your trustworthiness may be questioned but your choices will never lie.' What does that mean? Do you agree?
4. What does trustworthiness have to do with the quality of your character? What does trustworthiness have to do with being a higher quality person?
5. In the area of trustworthiness, what kind of reputation do you want for yourself as an individual?

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