



Teach Your Youth to Be Willing to Accept Blame

1. Discuss the following quote with your youth: "Avoiding responsibility for our actions is the single most effective way to 'get stuck'—or 'stay stuck'—in a life that doesn't work. It turns all the energy we might use for problem-solving into keeping us from the very experiences and information we need most to learn and grow."
2. Encourage your youth to answer the following questions openly: "Did you ever take the blame for something you didn't do? If so, why?" and "Have you ever been punished for something you didn't do? How did you feel about that?"
3. Discuss with your youth a time when each of you was too bossy. What happened? How did you feel? Did you admit your overreaction at the time? How would you handle a similar situation today?
4. Discuss how taking responsibility for our actions will make it possible to deal with, grow from, and heal after what we've done.
5. In the book *The One-Eyed Cat* by Paula Fox, an eleven-year-old boy shoots a stray cat with his new air rifle and later suffers from guilt and eventually takes responsibility for his deed. Emphasize that accepting the blame for a bad action does not make someone a bad person.

Recommended Book: *The One-Eyed Cat*, Paula Fox

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Cut and post this Positive Message in a visible place where your child can see it often.



We all make mistakes. When you make a mistake, you need to admit it and learn from it.



Be Willing to Accept Blame

**Admit it when you've
made a mistake. It
will help fix things.**





Teach Your Students to Be Willing to Accept Blame

Character–Building Activities are aligned with Common Core State Standards (www.corestandards.org).

Literature/Writing (Writing W.6.2b)

Have your students describe in writing two situations in which they accepted responsibility for their actions and what happened as a result. For example: quietly leaving a party because someone brought alcohol in gave them self-respect and parent trust. Also, have them write about two situations in which they were irresponsible, and what happened as a result.

Research (Speaking & Listening SL.6.2)

Assign students to interview three of their peers, asking them: “Do you ever blame others to avoid getting into trouble? Do you blame yourself for things that are not your fault? Do you admit when you’ve made a mistake? Do you say you’re sorry when you are wrong?” Tally the results as a class and use the results as a basis for discussing the importance of taking responsibility for our actions.

Media/Computer (History/Social Studies RH.6.7)

Set up a media watch for a week. Begin by discussing the difference between fact and opinion. Then, assign students to watch one news show each day to see how often they report the news objectively and how often they make people, the government, or businesses look bad by the way they describe them. Have students report the results and talk about how people play the “blame game” to get others to believe them.

Social Studies (Speaking & Listening SL.6.1c)

Politicians seem to always blame someone else. Sometimes it is because they are trying to get power for themselves. Sometimes it is because a wrong has been done. Discuss some examples in current events where people are blaming each other, whether the blame seems to be justified or not, and how helpful—or unhelpful—blaming is. Examples include: People who smoked cigarettes all their lives blaming the cigarette manufacturer when they get cancer; or people who blame fast food restaurants because they gain weight.

Math/Science (Writing WHST.6.7)

We need to accept blame when we have done something wrong, but we shouldn’t go around feeling guilty—it’s not good for our health. Have students research the effects of guilt, shame, and unforgiveness compared to an attitude of forgiveness. Discuss appropriate ways to handle the feelings that come along with doing something wrong—or when others do something wrong to us.

Arts (Science & Technical Subjects RST.6.7)

Former president Harry S. Truman was known to say, “The buck stops here.” After talking with your students about what this means, ask them to depict this saying in visual media, a drawing, collage, poster, etc.



Name: _____

Date Received: _____

Signature: _____

July

Willing to Accept Blame

Student Character–Building Trait Overview

Message

Accepting blame means you recognize that something you have done isn't right, you admit it, and you do something to fix it.

Be the Best You Can Be!

- Don't blame someone else to avoid getting into trouble for something you did.
- Admit when you've made a mistake.
- Forgive other people when they make mistakes.
- Don't take the blame for something you didn't do.
- Don't make fun of people when they make mistakes.
- Don't make excuses for yourself if you did something you shouldn't have done, or didn't do something that you were supposed to do.

What's It All About?

Do you know kids who are always blaming someone else? Sometimes this is to avoid getting into trouble or because they are afraid people won't like or approve of them any more. Other times it is because they're trying to look like the smartest, coolest kid in the group—the one who never makes a mistake. Sooner or later, these kids find themselves without friends.

When you are willing to accept the blame for something that you have done, it shows that you are not letting fear control you. It means you're not afraid to lose someone's friendship or love just because you made a mistake. It's a sign of someone who has healthy emotions.

When someone blames you for something you didn't do, try not to get upset. Just give them the facts that you know. If they still blame you, talk to someone you trust. Maybe they can help you work it out.



Name: _____

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Student Mastery Activity

What Do You Say?

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It's a good idea to practice taking responsibility for small things so that when the time comes that you need to take responsibility for big things, you will know what to do and say. Write out what you would do and say in each of the following situations. You can compare answers with your classmates at the end of the month.

1. You failed a test because you forgot to study.
2. A friend invited you to a party. You didn't know kids would be drinking and doing drugs, but they were. You knew it wasn't a good place to be, but you were too scared to speak up or leave. What would you say to your parent who found out where you'd been?
3. Without thinking about it, you gave personal information to a stranger over the internet and now that person plans to come and see you. You're afraid your parents will find out.
4. Your mom is mad because she asked you to watch your little brother and he snuck out of the house when you were on the phone with a friend.
5. Your teacher accused you of cheating because your answers were the same as the girl sitting next to you. She actually copied off of your paper and you didn't know anything about it.

