



FEBRUARY 2017 VIRTUES



*Building Our Future Through
Education, History and Culture!*



Bringing Virtues to Life

Compliments of:
Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education

Learning More About the Virtues Project

What is The Virtues Project? The Virtues Project was founded in 1991 by Linda Kavelin Popov, Dr. Dan Popov, and the late John Kaveline. It is a global grass roots initiative to inspire the practice of virtues in all aspects of life; it has inspired and mobilized many thousands of families, educators, leaders, and employees to commit acts of service and generosity, to heal violence with virtues, and to create safe and caring communities.

What's the difference between virtues and values? Values are what we value and care about. They could be anything. We may value getting rich and famous, we may value power over others, but that doesn't mean we will have good character. Values are culture-specific because what some families or cultures value, others don't. Virtues are much more elemental than values. While values are culture-specific, virtues are universally valued to all cultures. Virtues are the essence of who we are; it's what's good about us. It's our inner quality of character, which sometimes is there waiting to be awakened. They are the content of our character and the basis of genuine happiness.

Why teach virtues? Many teachers and administrators are finding that applying the strategies of The Virtues Project is transforming the culture in their schools by helping them to create a total environment of caring and respect. They have replaced discouragement with empowerment, having discovered that words such as "lazy" "retarded" "stupid" "unacceptable" were literally demoralizing and discouraging their students. When they filled their classrooms with encouraging words, such as "helpful", "excellent", "compassionate", self-disciplined", "integrity", and "kind", they found that these behaviors flourished.

How are the virtues taught? The virtues are taught through the Five Strategies, the signature contribution of The Virtues Project. These strategies are important because they help us to live more reverent, purposeful lives, to raise children of compassion and idealism, and create a culture of character in our families, schools, and workplaces. Each strategy has been or will be explained thoroughly in the upcoming months:

1. Speak the Language of Virtues
2. Recognize Teachable Moments
3. Set Clear Boundaries
4. Honor the Spirit
5. Offer Companionship

What is Set Clear Boundaries? Setting clear boundaries is based on restorative justice. If there is a conflict in the classroom, workplace, and/or at home, the procedures on the adjacent page should be followed, for example all involved must want and be willing to partake in the restoration process (The Process of Restorative Justice). Each person should be given an opportunity to say what happened (Four steps to Restorative Justice). Based on what each said happened, resolving the conflict continues (Peace Talk Steps). The final steps, which is put in place to avoid reoccurrence, is setting rules (Effective Ground Rules). This process will govern how each will proceed in the restorative relationship. Further explanation with a specific example will be given next month.

The Process of Restorative Justice

In the ideal process of restorative justice, individuals:

- Take *responsibility* for what they do in order to ...
- Make *restitution*, which results in ...
- *Reconciliation*, which is to make friends again, which ...
- *Restores* the relationship and restores the offender to the community.

In this strategy, true forgiveness is first and foremost. In addition, justice requires there be some amends, an action or gesture to fix the problem, with the offender taking responsibility instead of merely being punished. In the ideal situation there is also reconciliation, restoring of friendship, and contentment on all sides with the outcomes. There are four steps to restorative justice.

Four Steps to Restorative Justice

1. Ask all involved what happened. Use how and what questions, NOT why.
2. Ask what virtues was missing to create the conflict.
3. Ask what it would look like if they had using the missing virtue.
4. Ask how they can make an amends.

Use Peace Talks in Your Home and Workplace to Resolving Conflict *Peace Talk Steps*

- Take turns *Truthfully* telling your experience of what happened.
- Listen *Respectfully* to the other person's point of view.
- Share how you *Honestly* felt.
- *Creatively* find a virtue you each need.
- Use *Justice* and *Forgiveness* to decide how to do it differently next time.
Congratulations! You have solved a problem *Peacefully*!

Ten Guidelines for Effective Ground Rules

1. *Be moderate*: Only have 4 or 5 rules
2. *Be specific*: Focus on the behaviors specific to your situation.
3. *Be positive*: Base rules on virtues and word them positively when you can.
4. *Establish specific, relevant consequences for bottom line behaviors*.
5. *Make consequences Educative, NOT Punitive*: Give an opportunity to make reparation.
6. *Be Consistent*: Be trustworthy—keep your boundaries.
7. *Communicate Rules Clearly*: Use visuals. Humor helps.
8. *Be sure everyone understand the virtues involved when receiving consequences*.
9. *Make Ground Rules Non-Negotiable*: Be sure that you can live with the rules and then keep them.
10. *Be Assertive*: Make your expectations clear.

If any additional information is needed and/or to request a presentation for your PTSA, PTA, staff meetings, church group, etc., who can be contacted? Kindly contact Virtues Project Facilitator, Arlene L. Pinney-Benjamin at alpbenjamin@doe.vi or 340-774-0100 x: 2804 at the Virgin Islands Department of Education Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education.

FEBRUARY 2017

VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

. Justice

I am thankful for the gift of Justice. It is the guardian of my integrity.

(January 29 - February 4, 2017)

. Idealism

I am thankful for the gift of Idealism. It helps me to realize my dreams.

(February 5 - February 11, 2017)

. Peacefulness

I am thankful for the gift of Peacefulness. It allows me to be an instrument of grace.

(February 12 - February 18, 2017)

. Forgiveness

I am thankful for the gift of Forgiveness. It lightens my spirit.

(February 19 - February 25, 2017)

. Courtesy

I am thankful for the gift of Courtesy. It helps me to brighten people's lives.

(February 26 - March 4, 2017)

Upcoming

MARCH 2017

VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

• Courtesy

I am thankful for the gift of Courtesy. It helps me to brighten people's lives.

(February 26- March 4, 2017)

• Friendliness

I am thankful for the gift of Friendliness. It makes me a true companion.

(March 5- March 11, 2017)

• Consideration

I am thankful for the gift of Consideration. It helps me to be thoughtful of others.

(March 12 - March 18, 2016)

• Tact

I am thankful for the gift of Tact. It helps me to be considerate.

(March 19 - March 25, 2017)

• Honesty

I am thankful for the gift of Honesty. It allows me to be fully myself.

(March 26 - April 1, 2017)

JUSTICE

Justice is being fair in all that we do. We continually look for the truth, not bowing to others' judgments or perceptions. We do not backbite. We clear up problems face to face. We make agreements that benefit everyone equally. When we commit a wrong, we are honest in correcting it and making amends. If someone is hurting us, it is just to stop them. It is never just for strong people to hurt weaker people. With justice, we protect everyone's rights. Sometimes when we stand for justice, we stand alone.

“Thou shalt not be a victim.
Thou shalt not be a perpetrator.
Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander.”
Holocaust Museum, Washington, D.C.

The Practice of Justice

... I practice Justice when I ...

Think for myself
Do not engage in prejudice or backbiting
Make fair agreements
Make restitution for my mistakes
Honor people's right including my own
Have the courage to stand up for the truth

Affirmation

I act with justice. I stand up for the rights of others and myself.
I have no need to pretend or defend. I choose to make amends.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

Today foh yo tomorrow foh me.
De quiet bull de butcher kill.

Meanings

When you hurt others, it comes right back to you. The good you do comes right back to you.
Speak up for your rights.

FOLKTALE

“Why Nanny Goat's Children Have “Earrings””
Broo 'Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories
Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

This story tells of a man, his son and daughter who had fallen on hard times. The Father needed to work and had to travel a long way so he left the children in the care of a woman who lived just outside his village. This woman had strange powers, which the little girl learned to use. Read intently as you discover how and if justice was displayed!

Activities with Justice



Gossip Line

Play the game of "telephone" where something is whispered down the line from one person to another. See how the sentence changes when it comes out the other end. Discuss how this is like gossip and backbiting. Spreading rumors supports injustice.

Come up with tactful things to say when you don't wish to participate in gossip.

Make a Justice Plan

As a class, make a plan for justly resolving conflict, such as a Peace Corner. See activities under Chapter 3 Setting Clear Boundaries.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- What is it like to receive prejudice?
- Why do people judge one another like that?
- What would you do if you saw bullying? How would you stay safe while doing something to stand up for the rights of those being bullied?
- What are some times you have wished for justice?
- What are some times you have admitted a mistake and cleaned it up?
- How can you tell when you have made amends that fit the mistake?
- What are some boundaries or ground rules that keep us safe?



Drawing Justice

Draw a picture of people of different colors practicing justice together.



Poster Points

- No need to pretend or defend. Make amends!
- Color blind.
- One family.
- Play fair.
- Stand up for Justice.



Quotable Quotes

"A man who knows he has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake." Confucius

"What goes around comes around."
Anonymous

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension. It is the presence of justice."
Martin Luther King

"There is a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue." Edmond Burke

"Hear one side, and you will be in the dark; hear both sides, and all will be clear."
Haliburton

"One injustice cannot be redressed by another injustice." Sergio Vieira De Mello



WHY NANNY GOAT'S CHILDREN HAVE "EARRINGS"

Once, a long, long, time ago in a far village lived a man with his son and little daughter. Times were hard and he had to go a long way to work. Not wanting to take his children on this difficult journey, he left them in the care of a woman who lived just outside the village.

Now, this woman had magical powers and anytime somebody annoyed her she would sing a song which would change the person into whatever she desired. The song was:

*Diga laga
Ah smell Dutch
Diga laga oh!
Diga laga
Ah smell Dutch
Simi dimi
Ah quell Quashiebo!*

It so happened that the little girl had heard the old woman singing the song and had seen her changing an old man into a tree stump. She didn't say anything to her brother. One day, when the woman had gone into the village for groceries she and her brother fell into an argument. Finally, the little girl told her brother:

"I don't care what you say, I'm right and if you don't leave me alone I'll turn you into a jumbi umbrella!"

Her brother laughed and jeered. "Turn me into a jumbi umbrella? You must think you are a witch! You can't do anything of the sort!"



"Oh no?" answered his sister and immediately began to sing the song. No sooner had she sung the song than her brother changed into a jumbi umbrella!" The little girl said delightedly, "See? I told you I could do it! Now change back." To her horror, nothing happened. She tried everything she could think of, but to no avail. Terrified, not knowing what to do, she ran into the back yard and hid in the goat pen.

When the woman arrived home, she could find neither child. She called and called and finally heard a faint voice answering from the goat pen. She questioned the girl and the whole story came pouring out. The woman was furious.

"Wicked, stupid girl!" she shouted. "For turning your brother into a jumbi umbrella, I am going to turn you into a goat! See how *you* like that!" In spite of the girl's pleas, the old woman sang the song and turned her into a Nanny goat. When the old lady's anger cooled off, she thought about turning the girl back into her former self, but discovered that she couldn't do it! She did not know it, but the little girl had been wearing a pair of golden earrings which had turned into two tiny pendulums, one swinging from each ear. She was the only goat in the pen with these "earrings."

Soon, the children's father arrived to take them home, only to be met by the old woman with a preposterous story about his son having been turned into a jumbi umbrella and his daughter into a nanny goat!

"Old woman, are you crazy?" He demanded. "I want my children and I want them now!" Since the father wouldn't be convinced, she sang the song and turned a nearby pig into a turnip. Believing her at last, the father seized the woman and said,

"Because of you I have lost both of my children. Now, I am going to sing your song and turn you into a black bird and you will fly the world over and search and search until you find my daughter." He sang the song and the woman turned into a blackbird. Now she flies and circles all over the world looking for the little girl in order to change her back. So far, she has not succeeded. However, there is one circumstance to prove that this story may be true. If you look carefully at any flock of goats there are generally one or two who sport "earrings". These are the children of the little girl.



IDEALISM

Idealism is having a vision of what is possible and wanting to make a difference. It is caring passionately about what is meaningful in life. Idealists see things as they could be and have faith in the power of change. We put our principles into practice. We dare to have big dreams and then act as if they are possible. Idealism doesn't mean that we are idle dreamers. Idle dreamers just wish things were better. Idealists do something to make things better. We make the ideal real.

“You see things and you say, “Why?” But I dream things that never were and I say, “Why not?” ”
George Bernard Shaw

The Practice of Idealism

... I practice Idealism when I ...

Have a dream
Have a plan
Have faith in the highest possible outcome
Walk my talk
Persevere
Make a difference

Affirmation

I live by my ideals. I believe in my dreams. I have faith that anything is possible.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

Never hang yer hat higher dan yo kud reach.
Black Fowl kin lay white egg.

Meanings

Do not try to attain material things that you can't afford. Rather buy affordable things based on your resources.
Because one is unimportant doesn't mean that one is not capable of great things. With idealism, anything can be accomplished.

FOLKTALE

‘Broo Lion and Broo Goat’
Broo ‘Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories
Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

As you read, focus on how Broo Lion and Broo Goat both used their idealism to persevere.
Happy Reading!,

Activities with Idealism



Collage of Dreams

An excellent exercise to draw forth Idealism, to focus on goals and dreams. Use photos, words and pictures from old magazines, glue, paste, sparkles, etc. to have students make a collage of the core virtues they want in their lives, including those they want to develop more fully. You may wish to make up strips of paper with the names of the 52 virtues on them as well. When the collages are done, give plenty of time for each student to share and describe their collage to the group, and have two or three people in the group give the student a virtues acknowledgment when they are finished speaking. When students display these in their bedrooms or on classroom walls, they are reminded of their ideals.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- What is your ideal picture of how this school (or camp or troop, etc.) can be?
- What are some of your dreams for your future?
- What are some of the ideals or values of your family?
- What would you like to be when you grow up?
- What plan would help you to succeed?
- Name three people you know or in history who have made a difference in the world?
- What are three things we could do as a group to make a difference in our school or town?
- If you could do anything you wanted, what would you achieve?



Drawing Idealism

Draw an ideal picture of yourself doing something you would love to do.



Poster Points

- I have a dream.
- Daring to dream.
- Making a difference.
- A dream of one world.



Quotable Quotes

"I have a dream." Martin Luther King

"Humanity at last is divided into just three classes: those who DREAM, those who DO, and those who DO WHAT THEY DREAM. And in the end it is only these last that count."
Dr. H.C. Goddard

"The difference between a dream and the vision is the work plan." Stuart Schroeder

"Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."
Langston Hughes

"Leave everything a little better than you found it." Anonymous

"Adventure is risk with a purpose."
Robert McClure

"What gift and enduring achievement has the world ever accomplished that was not based on idealism." Sir Wilfred Laurier

"Shoulders back, head up, look the future in the eye." Maya Angelou

"You are never given a dream without also being given the power to make it true."
Richard Bach

BROO LION AND BROO GOAT

Broo Lion wanted to eat Broo Goat. Broo Dog and Broo Goat belonged to the same master. Broo Dog went to find Broo Goat and bring her home before Broo Lion could find her and eat her. On their way home, Goat walked in front and Dog followed after. Every once in a while, Goat would stop and ask Dog, "Do you want me to wait for you?"

And Dog would answer, "No, No. You run on. You go home. Broo Lion wants to eat you. It's you he wants to eat."

Finally, Goat realized the seriousness of the situation and headed for home as fast as she could bound. All this time, Lion was creeping along following Goat, waiting for a chance to pounce on her. But he was afraid to do so while Dog was around because he did not want Dog to bite him.

However, as Goat neared home, Lion saw his chance and took up the chase. Goat sprinted forward and dashed in under her master's gate. Just as she did so, Lion grabbed hold of her foot.

Goat looked back and laughed. "Ha, Ha, but why are you so smart, Broo Lion? Don't you know that you are holding my master's gatepost and not my foot?"

Lion, not wanting to appear stupid, let go of Goat's foot and Goat bounded inside. Safe inside Goat jeered at Lion who was so ashamed of being tricked that he slunk off into the tall grasses and remains there to this day.

PEACEFULNESS

Peacefulness is inner calm and tranquility. It is a sense of harmony with all creation. Inner peace comes from harmony with all creation. Inner peace comes from quiet reflection and prayer. We release the past and let anxiety go. We keep a graceful pace, not allowing ourselves to be rushed or overwhelmed. We do not give in to anger. We resolve conflict in a just and gentle way. Peace is giving up the love of power for the power of love. We choose the unity of peace over the fragmentation of fear. Peace in the world begins with peace in our lives.

“Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
Where there is injury pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope ...”
St. Francis of Assisi

The Practice of Peacefulness

... I Practice Peacefulness when I ...

Have a tranquil spirit
Enter the peace of reflection
Release my fears
Move calmly without rush or hurry
Choose justice instead of anger
Choose unity over discord

Affirmation

I am peaceful. I use peaceful words and find fair solutions when differences arise.
I find my inner peace and let it carry me gently through the day.

CULTURAL PROVERB

Lizard noh plant corn but ‘e ga’ plenty

Meaning

The Lord takes care of all his creation, big or small.

FOLKTALE

“Anansi and the Box of Stories”

Broo ‘Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Formally Anansi was a human with a wife named Aso, a son named Ntjuma, and with an extraordinary sense of humor that got him into trouble. He was a practical joker that never knew when to stop. One of his victims was angry at him and punched him so hard that he broke into lots of little pieces. Amidst this, find out how he developed peacefulness, at least for a moment.

Activities with Peacefulness



Quiet Time

Have a quiet time in which you close your eyes and imagine being in a place of peacefulness and beauty such as a beach, a mountain top, a forest – a place to find inner peace.

Peace & Gratitude Journal

- Write a poem about peace.
- List five things you feel grateful for.
- Notice how peaceful you feel afterward.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- What can people like you and me do to create peace in the world?
- What gives you a sense of peace?
- When do you find yourself feeling most angry?
- How can you handle your anger peacefully?
- Name three things you can do if you see a fight starting?
- How would things change at home for you if you became a peacemaker?
- How can you become peaceful when you are worried?



Drawing Peacefulness

Imagine a beautiful, peaceful place to go in your imagination when you need to become peaceful. Draw it.

Draw a picture of the world at peace.



Poster Points

- Giving up the love of power for the power of love.
- Peacemaker.
- Let's try peace for a while.



Quotable Quotes

"Contention does not profit a people."
Brigham Young

"Conflict, when it is not resolved with violence, spurs growth and keeps life interesting."
Starhawk

"Have calm thoughts. Picture calm scenes. Recall calm sounds. And guess what you'll be feeling...." Paul Wilson

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."
Carl Jung

"Peace is more important than all justice: and peace was not made for the sake of justice, but justice for the sake of peace." Martin Luther

"We should have more peace if we would not busy ourselves with the sayings and doings of others." Thomas a' Kempis

Anansi and the Box of Stories

A WEST AFRICAN MYTH

RETOLD BY PAT PERRIN

Once he got used to the whole thing, Anansi found it quite convenient to be a spider-man. He hadn't started life out that way. Anansi had once been a fairly ordinary human being with a wife named Aso, a son named Ntikuma, and an extraordinary sense of humor. It was the humor that got him into trouble. Anansi was a practical joker, and he never knew when to stop.

The victim of one of Anansi's jokes got so mad that he punched Anansi. In fact, the injured party struck so hard that the joker broke into lots of little pieces. When Anansi got all his parts back together again he discovered that he'd become something else altogether. He had a flat body, eight legs and some strange new appendages and abilities.

"How odd," observed Anansi.

"Ug-g-g-h!" screamed Aso.

"Awesome!" commented Ntikuma.

When he looked into the mirror, Anansi was inclined to agree with Aso. A giant spider was pretty ugly. But then he discovered that he could change back into a man at will, and he decided that being a spider-man was all right.

These events took place very early in time—one might say before there was such a thing as time—and the world was rather different then. The deities lived in the clouds, humans and animals lived on Earth, and sometimes they visited back and forth. There wasn't much to do, though most animals and humans and deities seemed perfectly contented with the way things were. Except Anansi.

The joker soon discovered that being a spider-man didn't make the world any more interesting. Animals and people and deities still got mad at him when he played jokes on them, and sometimes nobody would talk to him at all.

One day Anansi got too bored to stay on Earth. He slung a long, strong strand of spiderweb silk into the sky and climbed up to the clouds to see what the gods were up to. Not much was going on there, either, but that was when Anansi first noticed the box. It wasn't gold or silver, and it didn't glow with magic. It was just a wooden box, and although beautifully carved and highly polished, it didn't look especially valuable. So why did the sky-god Nyame always keep it at his side?

The question bothered Anansi so much that he asked a minor deity about it.

"What's in that box, anyhow?"

"They say it's full of stories," the deity replied.

"What are stories?" Anansi wondered.

"I don't know. I never saw one." And the deity wandered off to nap on a cloud.

Anansi couldn't get his mind off the wooden box and whatever was inside it. *Maybe stories are something to eat, he thought. Maybe they're something to wear. But Nyame never opens that box. Could there be something dangerous inside?*

Trying not to seem *too* interested, Anansi casually asked the sky-god if he would sell the wooden box. All he got in return was a glare that sent Anansi scurrying for a hole in a cloud. But once the spider-man got set on something, he'd never give up. Every day, Anansi asked Nyame to sell him the box. Every day Nyame refused ... until one day, finally ...

"All right!" Nyame shouted. "I'll sell you the box!" Then the sky-god chuckled. "But the price will be high."

Nyame demanded just four items in exchange for the box—but all those four items were ill-tempered creatures with teeth or fangs or other unpleasant qualities. The sky-god demanded that Anansi bring him Python (known to swallow people whole), Lion (whose big teeth were often bloody), the Hornets (wasps with poisonous stings), and Mmoatia.

"M-M-Mmoatia?" stammered Anansi, taken aback.

"Mmoatia," said the sky-god firmly.

"I'll do it," declared Anansi. But he was downhearted as he swung back to Earth on his web. How was he to capture those creatures without being badly damaged himself, or even killed? He discussed the problem with his wife and son.

"And I even have to catch Mmoatia," Anansi sighed.

"Well, you can't just mope around here," Aso said. "You might as well start with Python. Here's what you should do ..."

So the next day, Anansi and his son Ntikuma went for a walk in the woods.

"She's wrong," Anansi proclaimed loudly, waving a big wooden stick in the air. "This is longer."

"Aw, you know Mom's always right," said Ntikuma. "That stick is shorter."

As they argued, a large, large sleek head rose from a tree branch overhead. It was Python (who surely could swallow even a giant spider whole).

"What are you two quarreling about?" demanded Python.

"My mom claims you're longer than that stick," said Ntikuma.

"And I say that no snake is that long," protested Anansi.

"That's easy enough to prove," hissed Python.

The great snake slid off the tree branch and stretched out alongside the stick, which was, indeed, a bit shorter than Python.

Quickly, Anansi spun his strongest web and bound the thrashing Python to the stick. When the snake could no longer move, they picked up the stick and carried it, with Python attached, to the sky-god.

Nyame merely said, "You aren't finished yet."

Anansi and Ntikuma went back to Earth to talk with Aso.

"That was easy," bragged Ntikuma.

"But I still have to catch Mmoatia," groaned Anansi.

"Save Mmoatia for last," said Aso. "That 'How big are you?' trick worked fine on Python. Lion's not too bright either, so here's what you should do ..."

The next day Anansi and Ntikuma carried a large sack to the rock where Lion lay sleeping in the sun. They pretended to argue again.

"Of course he won't fit in there," proclaimed Anansi. "That's a really big lion."

"Mom's always right ..." Ntikuma began, but Lion (whose teeth could surely pierce spider skin) yawned and sat up before they even got through their act. Of course, Lion let them try the bag on him for size, they quickly tied the bag shut, and they took Lion to Nyame in the sack.

Nyame grinned and said, "You aren't finished yet."

Anansi and Ntikuma went back to Earth to talk with Aso.

"We'll never catch Mmoatia that way," grumbled Anansi.

"Catch the Hornets next," Aso said. "Here's what you should do ..."

So the next day Anansi and Ntikuma went into the woods, carrying two buckets of water, a big empty gourd, and a rope. They found the Hornets' nest hanging in a tree, buzzing ominously. Very quietly, Ntikuma climbed an adjoining tree. He lowered the rope and lifted up both buckets of water. Then he began pouring water right onto the Hornets' nest.

The Hornets (whose poison was surely more deadly than any spider's) came swarming out. They looked mad enough to sting anything they saw—which was Anansi.

"Hello friends," called Anansi. "It isn't the rainy season so I know you weren't prepared for this storm. But look," he raised the empty gourd, "you can keep dry in here until the downpour ends."

So the Hornets flew into the gourd, Anansi quickly sealed the opening with spider web, and they took the Hornets to the sky-god.

Laughing, Nyame said, "You aren't finished yet."

Anansi and Ntikuma went back to Earth to talk with Aso.

"Well, now you have to catch Mmoatia," she said.

"But Mmoatia is *invisible*," Anansi groaned. "Even I can't catch something I can't see."

"And Mmoatia is magic," Ntikuma protested. "The touch of her hand can kill whoever annoys her."

"And she's said to be easily annoyed," added Anansi.

"I've given this a lot of thought," Aso said. "Here's what you should do ..."

So Anansi and Ntikuma carved a wooden doll and covered it with a thick layer of sticky sap from a gum tree. They put the doll in a lovely clearing and hid themselves in nearby bushes. Anansi was very nervous. For all he knew, Mmoatia had been watching them the whole time. For all he knew, Mmoatia would touch him at any moment now, and he'd surely be a dead giant spider.

But they waited a long time. Finally, Ntikuma nudged Anansi. "Listen!" he whispered.

Anansi heard a high-pitched sound. He listened harder, and he heard words.

"Why won't you answer me?" a voice demanded. "I'm warning you, rudeness *really* annoys me."

Then the gum doll's head jerked.

"Mmoatia touched the doll," whispered Ntikuma.

The doll's head shook hard.

"And Mmoatia's stuck," whispered Anansi, stifling a giggle.

The doll's head jerked the other way, then its body jerked twice. The high-pitched sound got so shrill it was impossible to understand any words. Clearly, Mmoatia's hands and feet were stuck to the gum doll.

Standing a little distance away, Anansi wrapped the gum doll and Mmoatia in a cocoon of spider silk. They dragged the whole wad back to the sky-god.

Nyame was not at all happy, but lots of other deities had heard the bargain he'd made with Anansi. So Anansi got the carved wooden box and took it back to Earth.

Day after day, Anansi polished the box and admired it, but he still didn't know whether there were actually any stories inside—or even what stories were. Of course, one day the spider-man cracked the box lid open just a little and peeked inside the box.

Stories came pouring out ... true stories ... fictional stories ... scary stories ... love stories ... all kinds of stories flew out of that box. Anansi heard bits of sentences as they fluttered by him and scattered all over the world. The people and animals heard the stories, too. Jumping and laughing, they caught some of those stories, and began to tell them to their children and their friends.

That's where this story came from too.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is overlooking mistakes and letting go of resentments. Forgiveness frees us from the needless pain of reliving a hurt over and over. Forgiveness doesn't make a wrong choice right; it brings the generosity of spirit to release it. Forgiveness can heal even the most grievous offense. It brings a blessed opportunity for a clean start. Accepting Divine forgiveness transforms our hopeless guilt into resolve. Self-forgiveness moves us forward, ready to do things differently, with compassion for ourselves and faith that we can change. Forgiveness opens the door of hope.

Resolve to be tender with the young,
compassionate with the aged,
sympathetic with the striving, and
tolerant with the weak and wrong.
Sometime in your life, you will have been all of these.
Robert H. Goddard

The Practice of Forgiveness

... I practice Forgiveness when I ...

Overlook mistakes
Free myself from pain and resentment
Am willing to heal the past
Find it in my heart to give others another chance
Use guilt only as a signal for change
Accept Divine redemption
Have the power to change for the better

Affirmation

I am forgiving. It lightens my spirit. Forgiveness keeps my spirit free.

CULTURAL PROVERB

Lang deat' betta dan ole grudge.

Meaning

Holding a grudge only hurts the holder.

FOLKTALE

“Ground-Dove and Blackbird”

Broo 'Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

The price of not forgiving always has an awful price.
Read on and learn what price both Blackbird and his Mother paid!

Activities with Forgiveness



Forgiveness Fire Circle

This powerful ceremony has been done with all ages, from pre-school through adult. There are alternatives without fire. If fire is not available, have each person shred their paper and release it into a basket. Have someone agree to take them and burn them.

1. Read from this Guide about the virtue of Forgiveness and say that all of us have done things we regret or are sorry for.
2. Set a boundary that silence will be kept throughout this exercise. There will be no sharing. It is to be done privately and individually. No one else will look at what we are putting on paper.
3. Pass out slips of paper and invite individuals to write or draw something they feel very guilty about. Do one yourself.
4. In a safe, outside area, have a small fire. With older children, you can invite some to be the fire makers, and some to be responsible for dousing the fire with water afterward. All is to be done in complete silence. Have wood, paper, kindling, matches available. Form a circle and say "When you are ready, release your mistake to the fire of forgiveness. If it is appropriate in your setting, say a prayer for forgiveness. "Forgive us these mistakes. Make them our teachers. Help us to replace them with new ways of being and acting."
5. Come back in and invite each person to write or draw a commitment. "I commit to..." involving a virtue and an action which will replace the mistake. It could be a form of making amends. Close with a closure and integration question "What did you appreciate about this exercise?"



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ When do you find it most difficult to forgive? What blocks you from being forgiving? What would help you to replace those habits with true forgiveness?
- ❷ What virtues help you to keep from retaliating when someone hurts you?
- ❸ Name three things you could do to make amends if you break a promise to your mother?
- ❹ When a friend hurts you, what amends do you need them to make?



Drawing Forgiveness

Draw two scenes: (1) friends not being forgiving, (2) friends being forgiving.



Poster Points

- ❶ Starting over.
- ❷ A clean slate.
- ❸ Turning the other cheek.
- ❹ To err is human, to forgive, divine.



Quotable Quotes

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a permanent attitude." Martin Luther King

"It is by forgiving that one is forgiven."
Mother Teresa

"To err is human, to forgive, divine."
Alexander Pope

"One of the most important trips a man can make is in meeting the other fellow halfway."
Anonymous

"If you haven't forgiven yourself something, how can you forgive others?" Dolores Huerte

GROUND-DOVE AND BLACKBIRD

One time Ground-Dove and Pigeon decided to have a fasting contest. Each one said that he could out-fast the other. Now Ground-Dove is one smart fellow. While Pigeon held true to his word and ate nothing, Ground-Dove was stuffing himself at night. Finally, Pigeon could hold out no longer and fell down dead. Ground-Dove looked at him and said, "Stupid Pigeon, did you think that you could outsmart me?" With that he took one of Pigeon's legs and made a flute out of it. He blew sweetly upon it and all the other birds and animals danced. Now, Blackbird heard the music, and he wanted the flute badly. He went to Ground-Dove and offered to buy it. But Ground-Dove refused to sell. So Blackbird decided to steal the flute. Ground-Dove suspected this and set a trap for Blackbird. When Blackbird stole the flute, he left his tail feathers in the trap. He took the flute home to his mother and told her not to give it to anyone except the young man he would send for his meal the next day.

All this time, Ground-Dove was listening. Next day he presented himself to Mrs. Blackbird. "Mr. Blackbird has sent me for his noon-day meal. He says to send the flute too," Mrs. Blackbird, no more the wiser, gave him the meal and the flute.

When the young man that Blackbird sent arrived, the flute and the meal were already gone. Blackbird saw red. He said to his mother, "Mother, don't you have any sense? That was Ground-Dove, the man from whom I stole the flute. Now, you have given it back to him. I shall punish you for this." He lighted a fire in the tree where his mother was nesting and she was obliged to fly out of the nest to save herself.

As she flew out she cried, "You are no son of mine. I put a curse on you. You will steal for the rest of your life. You will be known as Blackbird the Thief." And so it is to this day. Blackbird cannot see anything without stealing it.

COURTESY

Courtesy is being polite and having good manners. When you speak and act courteously, you give others a feeling of being valued and respected. Greet people pleasantly.

Bring courtesy home. Your family needs it most of all. Courtesy helps life to go smoothly.

“See ye not, Courtesy is the true Alchemy,
turning to gold all it touches and tries?”

George Meredith “The Song of Courtesy”

The Practice of Courtesy

... I practice courtesy when I ...

Remember my manners.

Treat elders, parents, teachers, and children politely.

Think about how my actions affect others.

Eat, speak, and move graciously.

Make requests instead of demands.

Greet people with a smile.

Affirmation:

I am courteous. I speak and act in a mannerly way.

I show others that I value and respect them.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

Sof’ tong, sof’ bed, sof’ grave, sof’ judgment.

Howdee an’ t’ankee noh bruk noh bones

Howdee nebba kill nobody

Meanings:

It pays to have good manners

ISLAND STORY

“Broo Nansi and Sister Candlefly”

Broo ‘Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories
collected and transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Broo Nansi was his lazy greedy self again.

Discover how he misused the kind courtesy extended to him by Sister Candlefly!

Activities with *Courtesy*



Phone Courtesy

1) Have a phone-answering role play. Show discourteous ways to answer the phone first, then courteous ways (a) at home (b) at a friend's house (c) at an office.

Have students practice with a partner until they come up with expressions with which they feel comfortable, then do it for the class. (e.g., "Jones residence, Chris speaking.")

2) If you answer the phone and someone wants to speak to the adult in the house, and she has said she does not want to talk to anyone, what is a courteous and honest way to tell that to the caller. (Avoid lying and saying "She's not home". Could be an expression such as "She's not available right now." or "She can't come to the phone at the moment. May I take a message?")



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ How do you and your friends show courtesy when you greet each other?
- ❷ How does it feel to you when someone is not courteous? When someone is courteous?
- ❸ How does it feel to you when you are not courteous? When you are courteous?
- ❹ How do people tend to react if you disrespect them by forgetting courtesy?
- ❺ What can you do if you have "slipped" and forgotten to be courteous?
- ❻ Who in your family needs more courtesy from you?
- ❼ What is the difference between making a demand and making a request? (You may want to role play the "before" and "after", first without courtesy, then with courtesy.)



Drawing Courtesy

Draw a picture of two animals greeting each other without courtesy, then greeting each other with courtesy.



Poster Points

- ❶ Remember your manners.
- ❷ Courtesy smooths the way.
- ❸ Smile! It's easy.
- ❹ Take courtesy home.
- ❺ Just say, "please".



Quotable Quotes

"Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy." Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world." Francis Bacon

"Use a sweet tongue, courtesy, and gentleness and thou mayest manage to guide an elephant by a hair." Sa'di

"Politeness is to do and say the kindest things in the kindest way." Anonymous

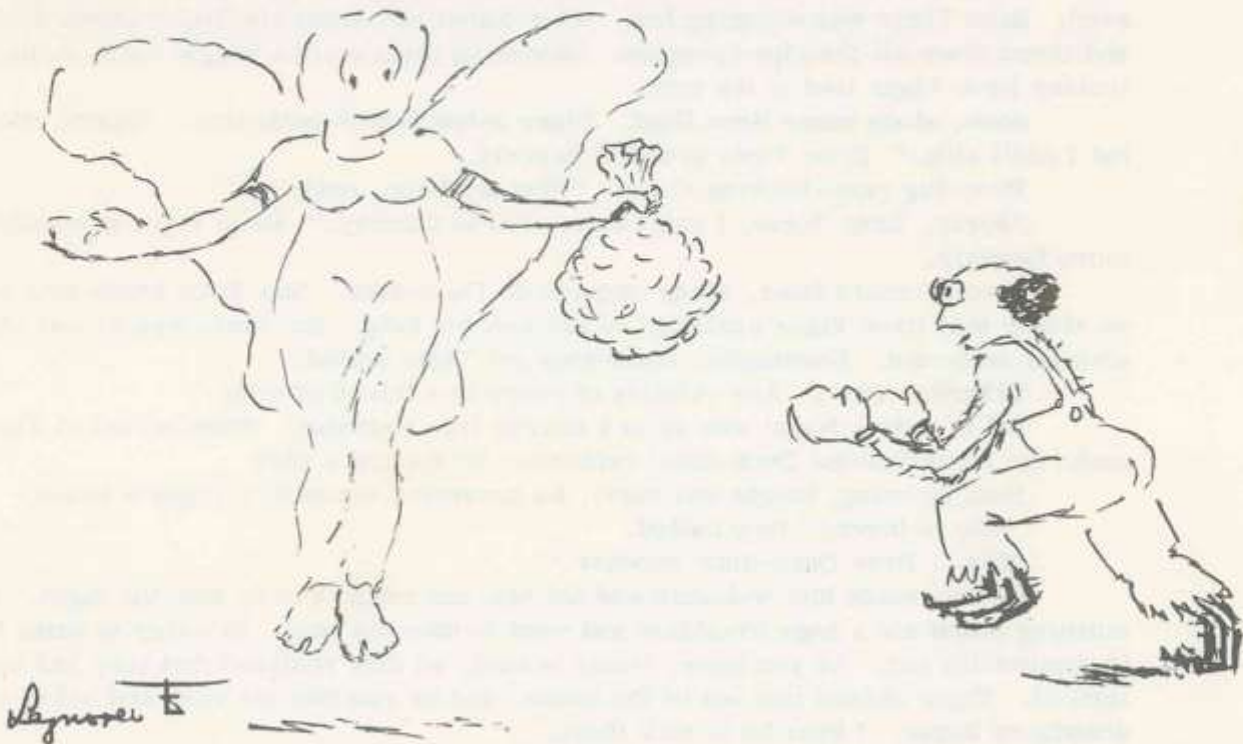
"Most smiles are started by another smile." Anonymous

"Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important." Janet Lane

BROO NANSI AND SISTER CANDLEFLY

Sister Candlefly was lucky. She carried with her a beam of light with which she could light up the darkest night. So powerful was her beam that the other animals often paid her money to light their way when they knew they would be out late at night. Now, of all the animals, Broo Nansi was the laziest. He would sit outside his gate nodding and greeting passerbys instead of working. He was always asking for something to borrow. One time he wanted a cup of sugar, another time a hand of bananas, and still another some sweet cassava.

One day Broo Nansi's fire went out. Since Candlefly was his nearest neighbor, Nansi decided to go to her and borrow some fire. When he arrived, Candlefly was busy with her housework, but she was kind enough to stop and catch a brand for Broo Nansi. Not only did she give him some fire, but she also gave him some eggs. She said, "Broo Nansi, I know how much you like eggs. Here, take a few with you."



"Thank you, Sister Candlefly, thank you," Nansi beamed. He was delighted. The eggs were so delicious that next day Broo Nansi went back for some more fire. Candlefly gave him some fire and four more eggs. Next day, the same story. Candlefly gave him fire and one egg. Nansi was so greedy, he put the fire out, ate the egg, and returned to Sister Candlefly.

"See," he said, "the fire you gave me was no good. It went out." Candlefly gave him some more fire but no eggs. Nansi hung around hoping that she would offer him at least one egg, but to no avail. Finally he could stand it no longer.

"Sister Candlefly, couldn't you give me just one more egg?"

"Alright, Broo Nansi, I will give you one more egg, and since you like them so much I will show you where you can get as many eggs as you please. Come by tonight and I will show you."

Broo Nansi was overjoyed. All the eggs he wanted. He went home, found a very large sack and sat around waiting for evening. Evening was never so long in coming. At last, at three o'clock he took his sack and went to Candlefly's house.

She saw him and called out, "Broo Nansi, that is a very large sack! Anyway, I cannot guide you to the place until nightfall. You are too early!"

Nansi sat and waited, complaining all the while. He fussed with the Cricket, Crapaud, and Breeze, because they didn't start heralding night an hour earlier than usual. Eventually it was time to go. Candlefly guided him through the night to a place with nothing but eggs. Large eggs, small eggs, brown eggs, white eggs, all kinds of eggs. When Broo Nansi saw so many eggs, his greediness got the better of him. Every egg Candlefly saw and shone her light on, he cried, "It's mine, it's mine. I saw it first." Soon he had fifty eggs, then one hundred, and still he cried, "It's mine, it's mine. I saw it first!"

Since Candlefly was weaker than Broo Nansi, she was unable to take the eggs away from him. She finally grew tired of his greediness and told him, "Broo Nansi, you are much too greedy. I will leave you here to find your way home." And she flew off. Nansi stumbled and stumbled and finally found himself on a familiar road, but without his bag of eggs. He had to leave that behind in the dark. He cannot find his way back to Egg Valley and Candlefly refuses to guide him. This is why you find Broo Nansi spinning web after web in the fields on the roads, anywhere at all. He is trying to find his way back to Egg Valley.



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Bringing Virtues to Life

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