Doing the Right Thing: Good, Better, Best!: Teacher’s Guide

Grade Level: 7-12  |  Curriculum Focus: Life Skills  |  Lesson Duration: One - two class periods

Program Description

Doing the Right Thing: Good, Better, Best – The most talented actress in school loses the lead in Romeo and Juliet to a humble, hard-working classmate. The dilemma of a student who prefers applause to preparation illustrates the value of hard work, a good attitude, and doing your best. Comments from real teens on the advantages of pushing yourself to achieve a goal point up this important theme.

Discussion Questions

• Has anyone ever told you, “You’re just not trying”? Was it true?
• How can you keep feelings of inadequacy and nervousness from spoiling your chances at reaching a goal?
• How might over-confidence and a negative attitude prevent you reaching a goal?
• What is a “work ethic”? When the groups reaches a consensus on this, write their definition on the board.

Onscreen Questions

• How does it make you feel to do your best?
• How does doing your best affect your attitude toward life in general?
• Why is a positive attitude more healthy than a negative one?

Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

• Recognize the advantages of a solid work ethic.
• Discover methods of overcoming negative attitudes and feelings to reach a goal.
• Present an oral report on steps necessary to accomplish a goal.
• Understand how our work ethic and attitude affects not only our own performance, but also impacts others with whom we work.
**Materials**

- *Doing the Right Thing: Good, Better, Best* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player, or access to the program in downloadable or streaming format online
- Computer with Internet access

**Procedures**

1. As a class write or discuss orally the onscreen questions that appear at the end of the program. You may choose to reproduce them as individual worksheets or write them on the board.
2. Go back to the students’ definition of “work ethic.” Ask the class if there is anything they would like to change about the definition.
3. As a class, list some specific situations in which a positive work ethic is important to young people – jobs the students might have (grocery packer, library assistant, restaurant worker, etc.), projects they might be involved in (fundraising, planning a school party, blood drive, etc.), and activities (a specific sport, a music group, a computer club, etc.).
4. Ask students to choose two situations from the list and describe in a one-page composition first, the effects of a poor work ethic and a negative attitude on the specific people and goals involved in those activities, then the effect of a good work ethic and a positive attitude. Use the class definition of “work ethic.”
5. Have students choose an individual, personal goal and list, in order, the actions (at least four) they feel are necessary to accomplish the goal. Request that they expand on their lists, transforming them into oral reports on the work and preparation needed to accomplish a goal.
6. Extension: As a class decide on a project that will help your school in some way, e.g. a health fair, an ethnic pot luck dinner where everyone brings a dish typical of their particular heritage, a clean-up day for the building and grounds, etc. You will, of course, need to supervise, but as much as possible let the students themselves plan, assign jobs, make lists, and check on their progress. Have the students keep journals of the experience. When the project is finished ask students to use their journal entries to write a personal commentary on the experience, how it did or did not change them, and what they learned about the work ethic.

**Assessment**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students’ work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; wrote compositions and reports that showed a mature understanding of the work ethic in practical situations and included four or more steps to achieving a goal; participated fully in completing their assignment for the class project and made good suggestions for carrying out and improving it.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions; wrote compositions and reports that showed some understanding of the work ethic and included three steps to achieving a goal; completed their assignment for the class project.
• 1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; wrote compositions and reports that showed little understanding of the work ethic and included two or fewer steps to achieving a goal; did not complete their assignment, or hindered others in completing the class project.

**Vocabulary**

**attitude**

*Definition:* A sustained reaction to a situation or idea, either positive or negative

*Context:* A negative attitude wastes time and energy and affects others adversely.

**isolate**

*Definition:* To cause to be alone or separate from a group

*Context:* A negative attitude isolates a person from those he/she works with.

**preparation**

*Definition:* Work done to get ready for a particular task

*Context:* Individuals who think that they don’t need preparation in order to succeed will be disappointed.

**reputation**

*Definition:* What a person is known for doing; what others think of a person

*Context:* A negative work ethic can lead to a bad reputation, even after a person has decided to change.

**“rest on your laurels”**

*Definition:* In ancient Greece, the prize for winning a contest was a wreath made of laurel leaves; individuals who rest on their laurels are relying on what they have done in the past, rather than working hard in the present

*Context:* Keri was sure she would get the part of Juliet because she had won the lead in the play the year before; she “rested on her laurels” instead of working toward the new goal.

**wake-up call**

*Definition:* In this context, a clear sign that someone needs to change their behavior

*Context:* When Keri had her “actor’s nightmare,” it served as a wake-up call to show her that her irresponsible attitude was hurting the other actors as well as herself.

**work ethic**

*Definition:* The belief that hard work is essential to life, supported by actions that prove that belief

*Context:* Living up to their work ethic involves individuals doing not only their own jobs, but also making it easier for others to do theirs.
Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit http://www.mcrel.org/

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Behavioral Studies: Understands the various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function
- Behavioral Studies: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions
- Language Arts: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- Life Skills: Life Work: Makes effective use of general life skills
- Life Skills: Life Work: Displays reliability and a basic work ethic
- Life Skills: Life Work: Operates effectively within organizations
- Life Skills: Self-Regulation: Sets and manages goals

National Council for the Social Studies
The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/

- Individual Development and Identity

Support Materials
Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html

Credit
Sylvia Alloway, education writer and former middle school teacher