



Valuable Books

(Using Children's Literature to Teach Values)

Familiar children's picture books can be used to teach and reinforce values that children are learning in the home and at school. Some of the values or character traits present in books for children include caring, citizenship, compassion, cooperation, courage, fairness, friendship, good judgment, kindness, love, loyalty, perseverance, politeness, respect, sharing, responsibility, trustworthiness, turn taking, and understanding.

Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse by Leo Lionni

(Values: Friendship, Happiness and Love)

1. Have children draw the story characters on paper (Alexander, Willy, lizard). Retell the story using the drawing and pointing to the characters as they are mentioned. Remind the children that Alexander had planned to ask the lizard to change him into a wind-up mouse. Ask them to imagine what might have happened if Alexander had changed into a wind-up mouse. How might the story have ended differently? Would Alexander and Willy find happiness?
2. Acquire a purple ball or paint a rock purple. Also, acquire a lizard or dinosaur stuffed animal or other toy figure to represent the lizard in the story. With the children sitting in a circle around the toy lizard, give the purple pebble to one child and have the child say, "Lizard, lizard in the bush." The rest of the children respond by chanting the lizard's words: "The moon is round, the pebble found, who or what do you wish to be?" Then tell the child holding the purple pebble to make a wish. Continue by passing the pebble to the next child, repeating the chanting, and asking the child to make a wish. Let everyone have a turn.
3. Ask the children to pretend that they are Alexander searching for the purple pebble, but instead of looking for the pebble, they are going to ask questions until they are able to guess where the pebble is. Hide the pebble in the room. Tell the children to ask questions about where the pebble might be hidden. The questions should be answered with either a yes or a no. After the children discover the pebble's location, continue the game by allowing a child to hide the pebble and answer yes or no questions about its location.
4. Leo Lionni used a collage technique to make the illustrations for this book. Have children use fabric scraps, wrapping paper, construction paper, and other collage materials with glue to make their own artistic creations.
5. Song: to the tune of "You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song" by Ella Jenkins

You'll be my friend, and I'll be your friend,
And we'll be friends together.
You'll be my friend, and I'll be your friend,
In every kind of weather.

Girls can be friends, and boys can be friends,
And both can be friends together,
Girls can be friends, and boys can be friends,
In every kind of weather.

The Art Lesson by Tomie dePaola

(Values: Understanding and Respect)

1. Poetry adapted from: *Sometimes I Wonder if Poodles Like Noodles* by Laura Numeroff

My cousin got a paint set,
Some paper and an easel.
He painted a giant picture
Of a polka-dotted weasel.

When he was done he signed his name
And began to paint again.
This time it was a classroom
And the teacher was a hen.

He painted red dogs and hot pink cats
And a pair of orange pigs.
Lime green bears and light blue cows
And turquoise monkeys wearing wigs.

He also painted purple frogs
And a red-and-white striped horse
But the one I like the most of all
Is the one of me, of course!

2. Song sung to: "London Bridge" from *Piggyback Songs* by Jean Warren

I am special, yes I am
Yes I am, yes I am
I am special, yes I am
I'm very special.

No one else has hair like mine
Just like mine, just like mine
No one else has hair like mine
I'm very special.

No one else has a face like mine
Just like mine, just like mine
No one else has a face like mine
I'm very special.

Frog and Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel

(Value: Friendship)

1. After reading the story, "A Lost Button," spread an assortment of buttons out on a table for everyone to see. Challenge the children to find the button in the collection that most closely resembles Toad's white, four-holed, big, round, thick button. Next, give clues about another button in the collection. Use similar phrasing as in the story. For example, "No, that is not my button. That button is square. My button is round." Continue the game by having the child who found the correct button take a turn giving clues about one of the buttons in the collection.
2. Have the children write letters (those who can't write words can draw a picture). Put the letters in envelopes and pretend to mail them to friends or to parents.

3. Poetry:

The other day	They come on land
I saw a frog,	And breathe the air.
A smooth green frog	They sing each night.
On a lily pad.	Hop, hop, everywhere.

He had a friend -	They sing together.
A bumpy toad.	Ribbit-ribbit
He was brown and rough	Ribbit-ribbit
And rather plump.	Ribbit-ribbit.

Now, here's some facts	Now you can write
About our friends.	A verse of your own -
They really are	Of frogs and toads
Amphibians.	C'mon, come on!

4. Have ready a handled basket that has been decorated with green and yellow yarn or ribbon. Also, have a sealed envelope addressed to "My Friend" ready. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Select one child to be "It." "It" walks around the outside of the circle (behind the other children) carrying the basket and envelope while everyone sings or chants:

A tisket, a tasket,
A green and yellow basket,
I wrote a letter to my friend
And on the way I dropped it, I dropped it,
And on the way I dropped it.

The child who is “It” drops the envelope behind another child, who then chases the child with the basket. The child who is “It” runs around the circle and sits in the empty spot left by the chasing child. The second child is then “It” and the game continues.

I Knew You Could by Craig Dorfman

The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper

(Value: Perseverance)

1. Game: “Stick With It”

Begin the game like “Tag,” with one child designated as “It.” “It” chases the other children until the first child is tagged. That child must link arms with “It.” The next child tagged links arms with the first and second child and so on, to make a chain. The children must remain linked as they chase the other children. The last child tagged becomes “It” for the next game.

2. Song: to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”

When you’re working, stick with it, stick with it, stick with it.
Keep on going, do your best. Don’t give up!

When you’re playing...

When you’re running...

When you’re learning...

3. Give each child a star shape cut out of heavy tag board or poster board. Ask the children to put their name on the star and decorate it using crayons, markers, glitter, stickers etc. Attach a piece of magnetic tape to the back of each star. Show the children how the star can stick to the refrigerator as a reminder that they should “stick” to their goals while they “reach for the stars!”

4. Fill some wagons with toys. Line up a number of children behind each wagon. As they push the wagons along, tell them to chant, "I think I can, I think I can," over and over as they go. For more of a challenge, have the children push the wagons through sand or gravel.
5. On a tray, place some objects that the little train was carrying (teddy bear, peppermint drop, toy airplane, orange, lollipop, etc.). Display the tray and tell the children to observe the objects on it. While the children close their eyes, take one object away. After they open their eyes, ask the children which of the items from the tray is missing. Repeat, taking away a different object each time.
6. Play with toy trains. Set up a track that has an incline. Have your children act out the story with different engines. They can make it up as they go along.
7. Song: "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain"

She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes.
(Toot! Toot!)
She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes,
(Toot! Toot!)
She'll be comin' round the mountain,
She'll be comin' round the mountain,
She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes.
(Toot! Toot!)

8. Song to the tune of: "The Wheels on the Bus"

The wheels of the train go round and round,
Clickety clack, clickety clack,
The wheels of the train go round and round,
Clickety, clickety, clack.
The engineer toots his horn, (toot)

The crossing gates come right down, (clang)

The people on the train get bumped around, (bump)

I Like Me! By Nancy Carlson

(Value: Respect)

1. Showing good manners is a way of showing respect to others. Have the children tell you what they think good manners are. Next, ask the children to think of some “good manners words” such as “please, thank you, excuse me, etc. Using a piece of chart paper, write down the children’s “good manners words.” Discuss situations when these words might be useful. Post the chart as a reminder for the children.
2. Make “Everyone Deserves Respect” collages. Have the children cut out pictures of people from old magazines and catalogs and glue them onto construction paper. When the collages are finished, display them during your discussion about respecting the differences in people.
3. Poetry from: *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers* by Mary Ann Hoberman

Sometimes I like to be alone
And look up at the sky
And think my thoughts inside my head –
Just me, myself, and I.

4. Have each child draw a self-portrait. On the back of each drawing, take dictation after asking each individual child to tell you some things that they like about themselves. Discuss the list with the child.

It's Mine! By Leo Lionni

(Values: Fairness and Sharing)

1. Poetry from: *A Frog Inside My Hat* by Fay Robinson

The frog, when he's alone and sad,
Writes poems on his lily pad:
Froggies are green
Bluefish are blue,
Guppies are sweet,
And so are you.

2. Song to the tune: "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush"

When we're at school, we share with others,
Share with others, share with others.
When we're at school, we share with others.
Fairness is the way!

When we're at home we do our chores...

When we're at play, we wait our turn...

3. Pick an area of the school or classroom such as the playground, parking lot, hallway, library center, science table, etc. Ask each child to draw a picture of him or herself being fair in that area. Discuss.
4. Put small pieces of candy or other treats in a see-through container. Ask the children to estimate how many pieces are in the container. Count the treats. Divide them fairly and eat.
5. Provide children with drawing paper and crayons. Ask them to draw Rainbow Pond and the island. Ask the children to re-tell the story using the picture that they've drawn.
6. Poetry: "Frog Song" by Liza Charlesworth from *Scholastic SuperScience Blue* magazine

On a lily-pad throne,
You float like a king.
Then when it gets dusky,
You start to sing:
Ribbity-ribbit,
croakity-croak,
Ribbity-ribbit,
croakity-croak—
I love every sandpaper note!

The Little Red Hen by Lucinda McQueen

(Values: Industriousness and Responsibility)

1. Act out the story letting the children pretend to be the animal characters as the teacher rereads the book. If there aren't enough roles for all of the children, let groups of children act out one animal. Let the children chime in with the words, "Not I," when appropriate. After repeated readings, children will be able to act out and retell the story without it being read for them.
2. Bake bread, cookies, muffins or cupcakes with the children's assistance. Divide the finished product evenly so that each child has an equal share.
3. Poetry from: *Sometimes I Wonder if Poodles Like Noodles* by Laura Numeroff

Every so often my dad and I bake.
We make chocolate chip cookies
Or three-layer cake.

We sing silly songs while we measure and pour
And Sydney, our dog, sleeps nearby on the floor.

When everything's finished
And ready to eat,
The two of us sit down
(Sydney sits by our feet.)

We enjoy the warm cookies
Or huge slices of cake,
Never rushing to clean up
The big messes we make.

4. Song to the tune of: "Sing a Song of Sixpence" from *Piggyback Songs* by Jean Warren

Being a good helper is very fun to do.
It makes someone happy and makes me happy too.
When the job is finished, they will say, "Thank you."
And I will say, "You're welcome," I am glad I could help you.

5. Nursery rhymes from *Hey Diddle Diddle and Other Mother Goose Rhymes* by Tomie dePaola

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can;
Pat it and prick it, and mark it with T,
Put it in the oven for Tommy and me.

Come butter, come,
Come butter, come;
Peter stands at the gate
Waiting for a butter cake.
Come butter, come.

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

(Value: Sharing)

1. Poetry adapted from: *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers* by Mary Ann Hoberman

My baby sister's beautiful.
So perfect and so tiny.
Her skin is soft and velvet brown;
Her eyes are dark and shiny.

Her hair is black and curled up tight:
Her two new teeth are sharp and white.
I like it when she chews her toes;
And when she laughs, her dimple shows.

2. Ask parents to bring in baby pictures of their children. Make a group poster by gluing the photos onto one piece of poster board. When the poster is dry, hang it at the children's eye level and have the children try and identify their classmates.
3. Song sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" from *Piggyback Songs* by Jean Warren

Sometimes when I'm feeling sad,
I think of Mom and I think of Dad,
I think of all the things they do,
To try and help me not be blue.
So when you're sad and all alone
Think of all you have at home.

4. Nursery rhyme from *Hey Diddle Diddle and Other Mother Goose Rhymes* by Tomie dePaola

Bye, baby bunting
Daddy's gone a-hunting,
Gone to get a rabbit skin
To wrap the baby bunting in.

Swimmy by Leo Lionni

(Values: Courage and Cooperation)

1. Make paper plate dioramas. Using tempera paint, allow each child to paint one goldfish cracker black and several goldfish crackers red. Give each child a paper plate. Using torn tissue paper pieces, and pieces of paper doilies, let each child glue underwater plants, rocks, caves, etc. onto the plate. After the painted goldfish have dried, glue them onto the paper plate dioramas. The next day, cover each diorama with blue plastic wrap and tape it down to the back of each plate. Admire, and discuss the courage of Swimmy and the cooperation of the little red fish.
2. On a concrete surface such as a sidewalk or driveway, use chalk to draw a large outline of a fish. Make it large enough so that all of the children can stand inside. Show the children the picture (from *Swimmy*) of the little fish swimming together to form a big fish. Have each child find a place to stand (or sit) inside of the fish outline. Give one child a piece of black paper and ask him or her to be Swimmy and to stand in the eye position. Have the children act like one big fish and sway or move together as one unit. Challenge them to move out of the fish outline and move together as one unit around the yard or playground. At a signal from the teacher, have the students disperse and move around on their own. After a few minutes, have the children move together again as one big fish.
3. Make a game board featuring an outline of a fish. Using a numbered die or spinner, ask each child in turn to throw the die or spin the spinner. The child must then count out the correct number of goldfish to match the number on the die or spinner. After the goldfish are counted, the child then places his or her goldfish on the game board. The game is concluded when every child has had at least one turn and the goldfish have filled in the outline of the fish on the game board. The little fish are now safe from the big tuna!
4. Using a simple recipe, work together (either with a small group or the class) to make tuna salad for spreading on fish-shaped crackers.

5. Song: "The More We Get Together"

The more we get together, together, together,
The more we get together,
The happier we'll be.

For your friend is my friend,
And my friend is your friend,
The more we get together,
The happier we'll be.