

3. Blowing the Whistle on "Bad"

At a Glance...

Parents will detail ways to enforce the rules of good behavior.



Time

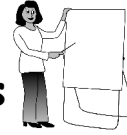
45 minutes



Core Concepts

- A parent's job includes teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling good character.
- Children clearly see how important rules and rule breaking are to the parent.
- Children push the limits and need parents who "hold the line."

Objectives



Parents will generate a list or rules related to each Pillar of Character and use the list at home.

Materials



- Pencils and paper
- Newsprint and markers
- Tape
- "Rules of the Game" Worksheet (E-3-a)
- "What to Teach About TRRFCC" handout (E-3-b)
- Inexpensive whistle on a string for each participant (optional)

Ice Breaker



Broken Rules

Some people say, "Rules are made to be broken." Really, they aren't. Rules are meant to be **followed**, and enforced.

Think of a time that someone broke a rule, or failed to enforce a rule, and that failure made you angry or put you or a family member at a disadvantage.

Form a small group of four people, and share the broken rule example with your three partners.

Groups share among themselves. Allow 4 minutes.

A good decision-making guide is, "If **everyone** did this, would it be a good thing?" If everyone broke the rules or failed to enforce the rules, our lives would be a mess. That's why we're working on rules today.

Facilitator's Script



One of our many parent roles is being referee for our children's behavior. And how are parents like referees in life? What is the role of a referee in sports?

Ask for ideas from the participants.

Starting and stopping action in a game is the easiest task for referees. Blowing the whistle for broken rules is probably the most difficult. It takes knowledge of the rules of the game, and it takes a watchful eye to observe what players are doing at all times. And it takes nerve to blow that whistle with everyone watching, ready to challenge (and even criticize!) your call.

Of the four steps in the character education process (teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling), **enforcing is the most difficult for most of us**. We usually like making rules more than enforcing them. As we think about good character, we usually think about good attitudes, intentions and especially good behavior. Our job, then, is to help our children use more (terrific) TRRFCC behavior, and to help them minimize behavior that isn't so (terrific)TRRFCC!

You will have a chance, now, to develop a set of house rules that are related to TRRFCC behavior. Make a list that is appropriate for the children in your family. Have at least one rule related each Pillar of Character. To give you some ideas, I've provided you with a handout that lists some "do's and don'ts" for the Six Pillars. Your job is to work with other parents whose children are the age yours are, and develop a list that could work for your age group.

Distribute handouts "Rules of the Game" (E-3-a) and "What to Teach About TRRFCC" (E-3-b). Divide participants into work groups according to the ages of their children. Use the handout (E-3-b) to come up with ideas for the "Rules of the Game" worksheet (E-3-a). Allow 5 minutes for participants to generate their rules.

Then ask participants to share which rules they think are right for their families.

Making rules is easy. Enforcing the rules will be the hard part! How can we enforce these rules at home in a constructive way? Go back to your work groups and list at least one way you will enforce each rule at home this week.

Have participants work for 10 minutes listing enforcement strategies on newsprint. Have them share the lists with the entire group, and add their ideas to their take-home handout, "Rules of the Game" (E-3-a).

Final Thoughts

As a reminder to use your handout this week in your TRRFCC referee role, here's a take-home whistle!

Notes...

What to Teach About TRRFCC

You never outgrow the need for good character. Our children need solid standards. As parents we must be very clear about the behavior we expect from our children. These are the bare-bones basics of character education for parents: Teach, enforce, advocate and model the Six Pillars of Character daily!

It's the Six Pillars of Character (plus ethical decision-making) that form the basis of honorable behavior. A person of character "thinks right" and "does right," according to core universal values that define the qualities of a good person: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Character is a moral strength. Remember the Six Pillars by thinking of the word "terrific" : TRRFCC!

1. **Trustworthiness** -- Trustworthiness is being honest, telling the truth, keeping promises, and being loyal so people can trust you. Trustworthy people don't lie, cheat or steal. They have integrity and the moral courage to do the right thing and stand up for their beliefs even when it is hard to do.
 - a. **Honesty Do's**
 - Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth ... even when it costs more than you want to pay.
 - Be straightforward, open and direct.
 - Be sincere. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
 - If you find something that doesn't belong to you, return it.
 - Look for the truly best interests of the people who depend on you.
 - b. **Honesty Don'ts**
 - Don't lie (that is, don't misrepresent facts or opinions).
 - Don't deliberately deceive or mislead by any means (that means don't conceal, distort, twist or alter facts and don't tell half-truths).
 - Don't be devious, sneaky or tricky.
 - Don't withhold important information from people who trust you.
 - Don't steal anything from anyone.
 - Don't cheat, defraud or trick any person or group to get what you want, or to avoid trouble.
 - c. **Promise-keeping Do's**
 - Be reliable; keep your word.
 - Pay your debts. Watch out for credit cards!
 - Return what you borrow.
 - Only make promises that you firmly plan to keep and reasonably think you can keep.

d. Promise-keeping Don'ts

- Don't use loopholes, tricks, deceit or misleading language to get out of commitments.
- Don't break promises.
- Don't keep anything that isn't yours.
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep.

e. Loyalty Do's

- Be very careful with private information that could embarrass or hurt others.
- Support and protect the truly best interests of your family, friends, teachers, employers, community and country.

f. Loyalty Don'ts

- Don't talk behind people's backs, spread harmful rumors, or gossip.
- Don't lie, cheat, steal or harm others to keep or win a friendship or gain approval.
- Don't betray your loyalty by asking a friend to do something wrong just to keep your friendship.

g. Integrity Do's

- Share your values and beliefs with your children.
- Discuss people who have stood up for their convictions, even when it costs them money or position.
- Share stories, news articles or magazine articles about people (or even storybook characters) who show moral courage.
- Walk your talk.
- Talk your walk.
- Praise your children for doing what is right, even when it's difficult to do so.

h. Integrity Don'ts

- Say one thing and mean another.
- Say one thing and do another.
- Lie to avoid difficult situations.
- Give in to pressure. Make honorable decisions, and carry them out.

- 2. Respect** -- Respect is showing others that they are valued for who they are and for their character, not what they look like or what they have. It means treating others the way you want to be treated, and never insulting or making fun of others who are different in looks, ability, race or religion from you. A respectful person is polite, does not use bad language, and never uses violence.

a. Respect Do's

- Treat everyone with respect by being courteous and polite.
- Respect the independence and individuality of others. Considering the age and maturity of a person, respect his or her right to develop decision-making skills.
- Be tolerant, appreciative and accepting of individual differences.
- Judge people on their merits, not on their race, religion, nationality, gender, physical or mental condition, or social and economic status.

b. Respect Don'ts

- Don't insult, abuse, demean (put down), mistreat or harass others.
- Don't make inappropriate or unwanted comments about a person's race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- Don't use, manipulate, exploit or take advantage of other people.

3. Responsibility -- Responsibility is doing what you are supposed to do.

Responsible people think ahead, set reasonable goals, control their tempers, and always do their best. They don't give up easily, especially when others are counting on them. They are accountable for the consequences of their choices; they don't blame others for their mistakes.

a. Responsibility Do's

- Think before you act! Consider the consequences for yourself and others. Then decide whether the action is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and a mark of good citizenship for everyone affected by the decision.
- Be accountable! Take responsibility for the consequences of your actions or lack of action.
- Be reliable! Always perform your duties.
- Set a good example in what you say and do. Act as if someone whose respect you want is always watching.
- Take the initiative to make your school, organization, neighborhood or home better for yourself and others.
- Do your best! Make everything you do worthy of pride.
- Stick to it! Meet your responsibilities even when it is difficult to do so.
- Finish your work before you play.

b. Responsibility Don'ts

- Don't blame anyone else for your mistakes.
- Don't take credit for other people's work or accomplishments.
- Don't give up.
- Don't drop your duties.
- Don't give less than 100% on anything you do.

- 4. Fairness** -- Fairness is playing by the rules, taking turns, sharing and listening. Fair people do not take advantage of others, consider all sides before they decide, and don't blame others unjustly.
- a. Fairness Do's**
- Treat all people fairly.
 - Listen to others and try to understand what they are feeling and saying.
 - Consider all the facts, including opposing views, before making a decision.
 - Make impartial decisions, using the same criteria or standards for everyone.
 - Correct your mistakes.
- b. Fairness Don'ts**
- Don't take advantage of other people's mistakes or ignorance.
 - Don't take more than your fair share.
 - Don't let personal preferences, prejudices or other feelings improperly interfere with decisions that should be based on merit.
- 5. Caring** -- Caring is being kind, helpful and generous to everyone. Caring people are not selfish; they are considerate and always think about how their conduct affects others. They have compassion and empathy; they care how others feel, and they are charitable and forgiving. They do good deeds without thought of reward.
- a. Caring Do's**
- Show you care about others through kindness, caring, generosity and compassion.
 - Live by the Golden Rule ... treating others the way you want them to treat you.
 - Think how every decision, word or action will impact every stakeholder.
- b. Caring Don'ts** A caring person lives with these reminders:
- Don't be selfish.
 - Don't be mean.
 - Don't be cruel.
 - Don't be insensitive to the feelings of others.
- 6. Citizenship** -- Citizenship is doing your share to help your family and make your community a better place. Good citizens are good neighbors. They cooperate with others, obey laws and rules, respect the authority of parents, teachers and others, and they protect the environment.

a. Citizenship Do's

- Obey the rules.
- Obey laws. If you can't obey them, work to change them.
- Make your school a better place for students and faculty.
- Make your neighborhood a safer, happier place for adults and kids.
- Vote and encourage others to vote.
- Learn about the various educational, social, economic, service and decision-making systems in the community and caring enough to put our knowledge, talents and energy to use to make them work more effectively.
- Be a good team player. The good citizen has many positions to play on the nation's team.

b. Citizenship Don'ts

- Don't bend the rules.
- Don't break laws.
- Don't be a citizen in name only.

Citizenship Means Responsibility - - **Good citizenship** in practice is understanding, appreciating and doing things that make life better for yourself and for other people. **Responsibility** means that the person thinks of the results of what he or she does. Citizenship is not just doing the thing that "looks good." It's doing the thing that will really result in helping people. The good citizen thinks of the situation and the person, and tries to do what will help most.

Citizenship is a two-way relationship. It includes both rights and duties. My rights depend on you fulfilling your responsibilities. My responsibility includes the duty to see that you are free to exercise your rights.

Good Citizenship is Learned -- Good citizenship requires understanding the various educational, social, economic, service and decision-making systems in the community and caring enough to put our knowledge, talents and energy to use to make them work more effectively.

A community is built by close relations among citizens. The individual good of every citizen depends on the harmony of the whole. Community members see themselves as responsible citizens as well as free individuals. They use organized action to improve the living environment for everyone.

The essence of good citizenship, then, is the acceptance of social responsibility to others and to future generations. Every citizen is bound to care for himself or herself, for family, and for society.

Rules of the Game

A Worksheet for Parents Willing to Call the Shots on Character

Every game has rules. And so do parents who care about their kids' behavior. For each Pillar of Character, list at least one rule that will help your children understand what behaviors are in bounds.

Family Rules for Trustworthiness (honest words, honest actions; don't be two-faced; loyalty to the true best interests of the people who count on you; promise-keeping; courage to do the right thing)

Family Rules for Respect (courtesy, decency, nonviolence, privacy, no humiliation, maintaining one's dignity, accepting differences)

Family Rules for Responsibility (doing your part, doing your best, trying again, admitting mistakes)

Family Rules for Fairness (playing by the rules, giving everyone a chance, listening to other points or view)

Family Rules for Caring (kindness, active concern, empathy, helpfulness)

Family Rules for Citizenship (obeying rules and laws; making home, school and neighborhood better for everyone)
