



Parent Page

The Trait of the Month is: **Excellence**

We are what we reportedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. --Aristotle

Excellence – The quality of excelling; possessing good qualities in high degree.

When children try to do their best in everything they do, it affects their attitude, confidence, self-esteem, self-worth, and pride. When excellence is praised, children develop the habit.

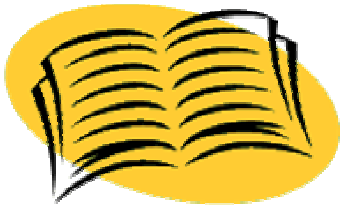


As parents/guardians, we should set aside time to teach our children character traits that will make them outstanding, admired citizens. Every day is filled with opportunities for helping them to learn about the character traits we value and want to encourage.

This character trait package provides suggestions of good activities for excellence. But you, as the child's most important teacher, are the best judge of which activities are the most appropriate.

To Do List

1. Go over the **Excellence Poster** together and put it on the refrigerator.
2. Read the attached **Story** with your child and discuss the **Questions** at the end.
3. Do at least one **Additional Activity** to reinforce the excellence character trait.
4. Write a short comment on the **Puzzle Piece** about what your child has learned about excellence, cut out the puzzle piece, and have your child return it to school.



Excellence

By Isaac A. Bond & Katherine Grace Bond

Kahil strolled onto the playground. This new school year felt like a visit to another planet. He was a sixth-grader—a glorious sixth-grader. Last year's bullies were gone to junior high.

All last year they had harassed him by calling him "short stuff" and making faces at him in the hallways. Well, he wasn't "short stuff" anymore!

Kahil had grown 6 inches in three months.

New bullies took the place of the old ones. Some things never change. Just this morning on the bus Kahil had seen Marty stumble, and Kahil was pretty sure it was over Edgar's foot. Marty was the shortest kid in the fifth grade. Boy, did Kahil remember what that was like!

As he neared the cluster of trees, he heard shouting. Screened from the view of the playground supervisor was a circle of boys—a fifth-grader cowered in the center.

Kahil wasn't surprised to see it was Marty.

"Hey, Mini-Mart!" the boys shouted.
"Hey, loser!"

Marty looked scared. Kahil felt sick to his stomach.

I can't let another kid go through the same thing I did, he thought. Evil men do not understand justice. Well, I sure do!

At lunchtime, Marty brought Kahil to a far table where two other fifth-graders sat.

"Teagan and Luke," he said, "meet Kahil."

The two looked at Kahil uneasily.

"We're used to getting grief from sixth-graders," Marty explained.

"Relax," Kahil said. "Nobody's going to mess with you while I'm here."

As if on cue, Edgar and six of his crew sidled up to the table.

Teagan looked worriedly at Kahil. A picture of knocking Edgar to the next table formed in Kahil's mind.

Kahil stood to his full height. "Blessed are the peacemakers," he said calmly.

"What a weirdo," Edgar mumbled. "C'mon, let's get out of here."

They left. Teagan and Luke looked at Kahil with unconcealed admiration. Kahil straightened his shoulders and sat down.

"Welcome to the club," he said.

"What club?" Luke asked.

"The Losers' Club," Kahil said.

"These bullies just don't get it," Kahil said. "But we don't have to let them bother us."



Excellence (continued)

"You stop them in their tracks, Kahil," Luke said. "They're afraid to come near you."

Afraid of me? Kahil found the thought a little startling. But maybe fear was what it took to make bullies understand justice.

As the weeks went by, Kahil tried not to notice the way most kids crossed to the other side of the hall when he passed. But these "little nasties" were getting to him more than he wanted to admit.

One Friday, Kahil felt different, jumpy. Edgar and his gang sniggered by the boys' bathroom. Something was going to happen, and it wasn't going to be good.

The Losers' Club only had to wait a day to find out what. Three minutes into their Saturday meeting, they heard a *SPLAT!* Marty poked his head out of the stump and quickly pulled it back . . . covered in raw egg!

"Come on out, Losers!" Edgar jeered. "It's time for breakfast!"

Kahil had a sour taste in his mouth. No way were they going to get away with this. This was war!

"Yaaah!" Kahil shouted.

He tore out of the stump, straight into a flank of boys and a barrage of flying eggs. Edgar stood with his army jacket tied around his waist, egging on the eggers. Edgar darted for the egg carton, and his jacket fell to the ground. Kahil snatched it up. Then Edgar saw his jacket. "You better give that back," he said.

Edgar's face fell. "I want it back," he said. There was a note of pleading in his voice. Ed's buddies shifted from foot to foot, but nobody went after the jacket.

Kahil smiled. He noticed a jagged branch, sharp enough to shred cloth. Now he had this bully where he wanted him.

Kahil whipped the jacket onto the branch.

"Don't!" Edgar yelled again. "It's my brother's."

Kahil stopped.

"My brother's overseas," Edgar choked out. "He's been gone seven months." He took a breath. "If you wreck his jacket, I'll make you pay."

"So make me pay," he said and reached to give the jacket a yank.

"Kahil," Marty said, " 'blessed are the peacemakers.' That's what you said."

Kahil's energy drained. *Peacemakers? What about justice? Evil men do not understand justice.* He looked at his hands. *Who was the bully now?*

Carefully, Kahil removed the jacket from the branch.

"That must be tough," he said quietly. "You must miss him."

Edgar snatched his jacket and shrugged.

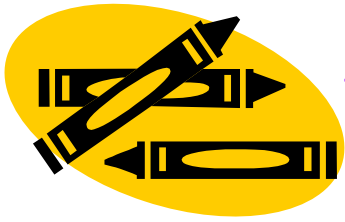
"At the gate, Edgar turned and looked back—not a mean look this time, just unsettled.

"You know," Teagan said, "I don't think we're the Losers' Club anymore."

Kahil nodded. "I think you're right."

Story Questions

1. When does Kahil show excellence?
2. When doesn't Kahil show excellence?
3. What causes Kahil to choose excellence in the end?



Additional Activities

1. Go to a library or art museum & discuss why certain books or artworks are excellent. Excellence is constantly improving in quality.
2. Go to <http://www.rolemodel.net> and read about the role model of the month with your child. Discuss how this role model has demonstrated excellence.
3. Discuss what excellence looks like when cleaning the house. Compare what excellence in cleaning is and is not. Create a checklist with your child that will help him/her practice excellence when cleaning an area for which they are responsible.
4. Fill in the crossword with the following words:

excellence quality gold medal exceed goodness worth

