

Exploring Leadership

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP: VALUES AND ETHICS

Issues such as stealing, cheating, lying, bullying, or using drugs are ethical dilemmas teens may be tempted into for a number of reasons, the desire for peer acceptance being the most influential. An understanding of Values and Ethics can help teens prioritize what matters most to them and prevent others from influencing decisions they may later regret.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Today's activity will help you clarify your Values and Ethics, so when you are faced with such dilemmas you will know how to respond.

Values are fundamental beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong. We get our Values from family background, culture, religion, and the community in which we live. Ethics are behavioral standards.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5, and separate them enough that they can't hear other groups' discussions. Give each group a different ethical dilemma. (See Appendix). Each group is to read and discuss their situation for five minutes and determine three things:

FACILITATOR TIP:

- Watch for potential cheating with hands or mouths.
- Stick to these rules! This teaches participants what it feels like to take part in something with their full commitment.
- What would they do in that circumstance?
- Is that ethical?
- What Value does their behavior indicate is most important: grades, friendship, honesty, fairness, kindness, etc.?
- Bring the groups back together and have each share their responses to the different ethical dilemmas.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Differentiate Values and Ethics.
- Identify personal Values and the Ethical behaviors that follow from them.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Copies of Ethical Dilemmas pre-cut to accommodate the number of participants. (See Appendix).
- Pens/Pencils



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- When is it ethical to copy homework or share answers?
- Was there a particular part from the different stories that made your answers to the questions any different?
- Do one's actions vary depending on the situation? What does this say about our Values?
- Is it acceptable for one's values to change from situation to situation? Why or why not?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Have you ever faced any similar situations in real life? What did you do?
- Have you ever made a decision conflicting with your Values or Ethics? How did you feel about it?



CONCLUSION:

In order to be a person of integrity, you must practice ethical behavior that is aligned to your Values or the Values of the community (business, school, etc.) you are part of. Sometimes this is not as simple as it seems, and you must consider exactly what Values your system of Ethics supports. The next time you are faced with an ethical dilemma, remember this activity and make your decision accordingly.

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REFERENCES

- <https://coredifferences.com/difference-between-ethics-and-values/>
- <https://middleearthnj.org/2010/09/20/teaching-values-to-teens/>
- <https://www.schoolrubric.com/there-are-many-good-reasons-to-teach-ethics-to-children/>
- <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/16/03/tough-choices>



APPENDIX:

The term ends next week, and you have a big homework assignment due in Geography. It involved three hours of textbook work and coloring maps, and it is worth enough points to raise or drop your final grade. You need an A in the class to stay in the running for a scholarship, and you currently have a B+. You spent extra time and effort on the assignment to make sure it is your best work, and you expect it to raise your grade to an A. At lunch, your best friend sits down by you and asks to copy your work because they did not complete the assignment. They remind you that you once asked a similar favor (on a much smaller assignment), and they add, "If I don't get a good score on this, I'll get a D in the class, and then I won't be able to run for office. C'mon, you gotta help me out!" What do you do?

The term ends next week, and you have a big homework assignment due in Geography. It involved three hours of textbook work and coloring maps, and it is worth enough points to raise or drop your final grade. You need an A in the class to stay in the running for a scholarship, and you currently have a B+. Due to an unexpected family emergency, you had to leave town last weekend, so you didn't get the assignment finished, and it seems unlikely you will be able to raise your grade if you turn it in incomplete, and the Geography teacher has already said no late work and no excuses will be accepted. At lunch, your best friend sits down by you and, upon hearing your story, says, "Here! Just copy the last part of mine so you can get full credit. It's not your fault you had to go out of town, and people share homework all the time." What do you do?

The term ends next week, and you have a big homework assignment due in Geography. It involved three hours of textbook work and coloring maps, and it is worth enough points to raise or drop your final grade. You need an A in the class to stay in the running for a scholarship, and you currently have a B+. You procrastinated until the last minute and did not finish the assignment. It seems unlikely you will be able to raise your grade if you turn it in incomplete, and the Geography teacher has already said no late work and no excuses will be accepted. At lunch, you discover that your best friend did the same thing and suggests that you work together for the rest of the lunch period to get the assignment finished: "We'll each do half of what's left and then copy each other's answers. The teacher will never know. We're just sharing the work." What do you do?

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APPENDIX (CONTINUED):

The term ends next week, and you have a big homework assignment due in Geography. It is pointless busywork that involves three hours of textbook questions and coloring maps, and it really doesn't measure how well you understand the concepts even though it is worth enough points to raise or drop your final grade. You need an A in the class to stay in the running for a scholarship, and you currently have a B+. You misjudged how long the assignment would take and did not finish it, but you're sure you could pass a final exam if you had to. At your lunch table that day, you discover that someone has left their completed assignment. If you hurry, you'll have just enough time left to copy the remaining answers, which would get you the A that you probably deserve. You know that some people might say that is cheating, but you can't see how anyone would be hurt by it, and you are pretty sure that you could ace any final exam in place of the busywork. What do you do?

The term ends next week, and you have a big homework assignment due in Geography. The teacher is notoriously cruel and has already said that no late work will be accepted. This is the same teacher who plays favorites and who yelled at one of your friends harshly enough to make them cry. It is widely accepted that this is not a good teacher, and even your parents have told you that you can transfer to a different Geography class at the semester break. The homework involved three hours of textbook questions and coloring maps, and it is worth enough points to raise or drop your final grade. You need to maintain your A in the class to stay in the running for a scholarship, but you completely spaced off the assignment. You suddenly remember this because you see that someone else left their completed assignment on the table. There is no name on it, so if you leave it here, nobody will benefit from all this diligent work. If, however, you were to turn it in as your own, you would maintain your A and get the best of that teacher in the process. What do you do?

The term ends next week, and you have a big homework assignment due in Geography. It involved three hours of textbook work and coloring maps, and it is worth enough points to raise or drop your final grade. You need an A in the class to stay in the running for a scholarship, and you currently have a B+. You spent extra time and effort on the assignment to make sure it is your best work, and you expect it to raise your grade to an A. At lunch, your best friend tells you that due to an unexpected family emergency, they had to leave town last weekend, so they didn't get the assignment finished. This means that your friend will miss out on the scholarship opportunity unless you allow them to copy your answers and turn the assignment in on time. What do you do?

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