



Exploring Leadership

PROBLEM SOLVING: PERSISTENCE

NASA faced 20 failures out of 28 attempts to send rockets to space. Thomas Edison made 1,000 attempts before inventing the light bulb. Dr. Seuss's first book was rejected 27 times before being published. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team, only to later prove his determination and skill. And J.K. Rowling transformed her life in five years, going from financial hardship to becoming one of the richest women in the world by writing the Harry Potter series. What do all these stories have in common? Persistence!

CONVERSATION STARTER:

Think of a time when you gave up on a challenging task or goal. What made you stop, and how did it feel afterward?

Persistence is the ability to stick with something, even when it's hard. Practicing the violin for over a year just to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" perfectly? That's persistence! It's also known as perseverance, determination, resilience, or having a "can-do attitude." Success in life often depends on your willingness to keep going, even when the task feels impossible or the reward seems far away.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize examples where persistence led to success.
- Participate in an activity that requires and demonstrates persistence.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Mason jars with tight lids
- Heavy whipping cream
- Bread, rolls, crackers, biscuits, muffins, or pancakes
- Optional: jam or honey
- Utensils for spreading
- Paper towels for cleanup

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

This activity puts your persistence to the test as you work as a team to transform cream into delicious homemade butter.

FACILITATOR TIPS:

- Before the lesson, read this [homemade butter](#) website to learn the process.
- Divide participants into small teams to share the effort of shaking for ten minutes.
- Be mindful of food allergies or dietary restrictions, and provide alternative options.
- Divide participants into small groups of 2-3.
- Give each group a mason jar filled halfway with heavy cream, making sure the lid is sealed tightly.
- Shake the jar vigorously for ten minutes, taking turns with teammates when your arms get tired to keep going.
- As you shake, observe the transformation of the cream. Discuss how persistence is making it happen.
- After ten minutes, check the jar to see if butter has formed. Enjoy your creation with bread, crackers, or another option, and consider adding jam or honey for extra flavor.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What did you learn about persistence during this activity?
- Was your team able to stay persistent enough to complete the task? Why or why not?
- If you had to do it alone, how long would it take you?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What tasks in your daily life require persistence?
- What makes persistence difficult, and how can you overcome those challenges?
- How is making butter by hand like these tasks, and what strategies could help you stay motivated?



CONCLUSION:

Persistence is a cornerstone of success and personal growth. Each failure is a chance to learn and grow, teaching lessons you cannot learn any other way. The path to success is full of setbacks, but persistence ensures you keep moving forward. The only factor separating success from failure is the determination to keep going. With persistence, no goal is out of reach—so don't give up!

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REFERENCES

- 12 Examples of Persistence Paying Off: <https://www.glidedesign.com/12-examples-of-persistence-paying-off/>
- Schools: <https://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/>
- How to Make Homemade Butter: <https://thestayathomechef.com/how-to-make-homemade-butter-in-a-mason-jar/>
- Sia - Never Give Up: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2lAyahouk8> (3:42 minutes)