

# VIRTUE REALITY

## Teacher Guide

Study guide  
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Written and Directed by Don Butler

Yowsa, Yowsa, Yowsa! Let's talk about the virtues! "What's that", you say? What are virtues and who needs them, anyway? Well, lads and lassies, step right up, spin the Wheel of Virtue and you're sure to find out! We'll do a little "character education" with our characters to see which virtues they have and which ones they might need to come by. And, get this: Your class will spin the wheel to decide what stories we will tell. You'll even get a chance to guess the *Secret Bonus Virtue*! So, step right up to meet the famous and not so famous, the real and not-so-real, the good and not-so-good, as we learn what Virtue Reality is all about. Everybody's guaranteed to win...or lose.

Cast:

Thomas Dunn ..... *Ensemble*  
Jack Lawson ..... *Carnival Barker/Ensemble*  
Leah Sessa ..... *Ensemble*  
Mary Stucchi ..... *Ensemble*

# The Stories in **VIRTUE REALITY**

## The Magic String (Virtue: Self-Discipline)

In this tale, we meet an impatient boy who's never satisfied. A mysterious woman gives him a magic ball containing a magic golden string. When the golden string is pulled, it advances time, allowing the boy to "fast forward" his life. The boy cannot resist pulling the string to avoid doing things he doesn't like and soon finds himself an old man. When he regrets the consequences to his family, the mysterious woman returns and gives him a chance to make amends.

## The Silent Couple (Virtue: Responsibility)

A newly-married couple gets into trouble when neither one will go out of their way to close their front door. The two vow that the first one of them to speak must close it. When robbers come that night, the stubborn pair maintain their silence even as they watch the thieves carry away all their worldly goods. Only when one of them is threatened does the other finally take action.

## Mammy Kate (Virtue: Loyalty)

In this true story, set during the Revolutionary War, a slave woman goes to the aid of her master after he is captured by the British. Very tall and exceptionally strong, the brave Mammy Kate goes to the prison and asks if she might be permitted to clean her condemned master's uniform. Once inside his cell, she persuades him to hide in her laundry basket. Covering him with clothes, she then puts the basket on her head, walks out past the guards and carries him away to freedom.

## Water, Water Nowhere (Virtue: Perseverance)

This tale, based on a Native American folktale, tells of a bird searching for water because of a terrible drought. When she meets a duck, a pig and a dog, the bird refuses to accept them for what they are and convinces them that they are different animals. Thirsty and desperate, they give in and follow her. She leads the other animals in circles until they take matters into their own hands and use their own natural abilities to solve the problem.

## The Frog Prince (Virtue: Honesty)

This well-known fairytale is about a spoiled princess who never tells the truth. When she accidentally loses her golden ball in a pond, a talking frog offers to retrieve it for her. In return, the frog asks that she make him her companion, feed him at her table and let him sleep in her bed. The princess promises him anything he wishes, but later denies this. When the king compels her to keep her promises she sees the frog transformed into a handsome prince.

## **ABOUT FOLKTALES**

A folktale is a story or legend handed down from generation to generation, usually by oral retelling. There are several types of folktales, including myths, legends and fairy tales. Folktales are often used to teach a moral or a lesson to children. These stories are similar all around the world.

Explain to your students that the following elements are commonly found in folktales:

- The story is short, with a simple plot
- The story is based in fantasy
- The story begins with "once upon a time..." or a similar phrase.
- Magic events, characters and objects are important parts of the story.
- Events are repeated, especially in threes.
- One character is of royal birth (a king, queen, prince, princess, etc.).
- One character is wicked.
- One character is good.
- Goodness is rewarded in the story.

Sunshine State Standard: 1.A.E.1.1



*“Virtues are dispositions cultivated within the individual that actually improve character and intelligence. Virtues - such as diligence, sincerity, personal accountability, courage and perseverance - enable us to develop better relationships and to do our work better. It is our virtues, not our views or our values, that enable us to become better students, parents, spouses, teachers, friends and citizens.*

*Whereas views are simply intellectual positions, and values evoke neither a moral commitment nor the promise of leading a good life, virtues enable us to shape and lead worthy lives. Education in virtues - those good dispositions of the heart and mind that are regularly put into action - is the foundation of solid character development.”*

Excerpted from Chapter 2 of the Building Character in Schools Resource Guide (Bohlin, Farmer & Ryan, 2001), “Frequently Asked Questions”, The Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University School of Education.  
<http://www.bu.edu/sed/caec/files/FAQ.htm>



## PRE & POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

**1. Writing Connection:** Use the following statement to initiate class discussion: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. Have students write down several ideas about how they would like to be treated at school. As a group, turn the ideas into “Rules for Treating Others”. Be sure the ideas are stated positively. (Examples: “Play fairly”, “Use kind words”, etc.). List them on chart paper for display and entitle it “Respecting Others”.

**2. Literature Connection:** Share with the class some classic folk tale that contains characters who are not trustworthy. (Example: the wolf in “Little Red Riding Hood”). After reviewing the tale, have students rewrite the story to show the untrustworthy characters as trustworthy.

**3. Newspaper Connection:** Ask students to bring in newspaper articles and/or photos that show good citizenship. (Examples: a community litter pick-up, charity walk, election, etc.). Provide a picture album. After students share their articles, place the articles in the album. Students may want to write next to their article to summarize the content or create titles.

**4. School Connection:** Discuss the responsibilities of people in your school community: principal, assistant principal, secretary, custodian, guidance counselor, cafeteria staff, teachers, students, etc. Photograph each of the workers. Make a chart that includes each worker’s title, their job responsibilities and the consequences if the responsibilities are not met. Discuss the results.

**5. Community Connection:** Organize a school-wide food drive for a needy family or a homeless shelter. Contact the organization to learn what donations are needed. Set a date for distribution and create posters to promote the drive. Designate a “drop-off” location. Sort and deliver donated items. Discuss how students’ caring and compassion helped the community.

Sunshine State Standards: I.A.B.1.2; I.A.B.2.2;  
 I.A.E.2.1; HE.B.3.2; HE.C.2.2

## CHARACTER EDUCATION =

### “Top Ten” Suggestions for Schools:

1. Model the traits you want your students to exhibit.
2. Affirm the practice of good character with specific words and actions.
3. Integrate character education into all areas of the curriculum:
  - Identify where it already exists.
  - Determine new character connections.
  - Utilize the teachable moment.
4. Permeate the school climate with the elements of character.
5. Include every member of the school community in the character education initiative.
6. Enlist the home and community at large as active partners in the process of character development.
7. Involve students in designing your program and in planning character-related activities.
8. Emphasize the application of character traits in life situations and teach decision-making skills.
9. Establish a character education team to lead the charge.
10. Develop resources—speakers, videos, quotes, books—which focus on elements of character.

From “CHARACTER COUNTS! In Palm Beach County”, Curriculum/Program Resources  
<http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/pbepreventioncenter/CCClassResources.html>

## Suggested Reading

Custom Title List for the Six Character Pillars  
(Adopted by Palm Beach County Schools):

### I. Trustworthiness (Honesty)

- Jamaica's Find, by Juanita Hanvill
- Too Many Tamales, by Gary Soto
- The Honest to Goodness Truth, by Patricia McKissack
- Empty Pot, by Demi

### II. Respect (Attentiveness, Tolerance)

- The Summer My Father Was Ten, by Pat Brisson
- Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse, by Kevin Henkes
- Whoever You Are, by Mem Fox
- Don't Laugh at Me, by Steve Seskin

### III. Responsibility (Initiative, Patience, Self Discipline)

- Pig Pig Gets a Job, by David McPhail
- Paperboy, by Dav Pilkey
- Babushka's Doll, by Patricia Polacco
- Peppe the Lamplighter, by Elisa Bartone

### IV. Caring (Kindness)

- Somewhere Today, by Shelley Moore Thomas
- The Three Questions, by Jon J. Muth
- Now One Foot, by Tomie de Paola
- Rainbow Fish, by Marcus Pfister

### V. Fairness

- Judge Judy: You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover, by Judge Judy
- How to Lose All Your Friends, by Nancy Carlson
- Martin's Big Words, by Doreen Rappaport
- Recess Queen, by Alexis O'Neill

### VI. Citizenship (Cooperation, Patriotism)

- I Pledge Allegiance, by Bill Martin Jr.
- I Am America, by Charles R. Smith
- We the Kids, by David Catrow
- Stone Soup, by Jon J. Muth

(Prepared by Bookworm Kids for the Prevention Center in the Department of Safe Schools, School District of Palm Beach County)  
<http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/pbcpreventioncenter/bookwormelementary.pdf>

## Resources & Reference Materials

The Book of Virtues, by William J. Bennett, Simon & Schuster, 1996

Lessons Learned Teacher Guide, written by Claire Blanchard, adapted by Cece Daratany, Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, 2004.

Dallas Children's Theater's BEHIND THE CURTAIN: A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers for Mufaro's

Beautiful Daughters, Resource Guide Editor: Marty Sherman, Produced by Dallas Children's Theatre, 2008.

"CHARACTER COUNTS! In Palm Beach County", Curriculum/Program Resources  
<http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/pbcpreventioncenter/CCCclassResources.html>

Paul Sill's Wisconsin Theater Game Center  
<http://www.paulsills.com/story.htm>

South Carolina Department of Education  
[www.myschools.com/reports/mtoc.htm](http://www.myschools.com/reports/mtoc.htm)

LeadershipNow  
[www.leadershipnow.com](http://www.leadershipnow.com)

Characterworks  
[www.characterworks.com](http://www.characterworks.com)

The Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character  
[www.bu.edu/education/caec/](http://www.bu.edu/education/caec/)

Eduscapes.com's "42explore"  
[www.annettelamb.com/42explore/character.htm](http://www.annettelamb.com/42explore/character.htm)

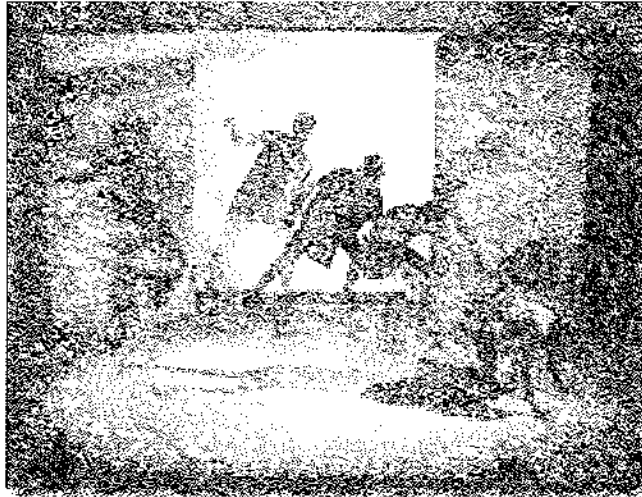
A to Z Teacher Stuff  
[www.atozteacherstuff.com/themes/character\\_education/](http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/themes/character_education/)

Good Character.com  
[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)

Our sincere gratitude to the DeMaffis Family Foundation for its sponsorship of the S\*T\*A\*R Series.



Raymond F. Kravis Center  
for the Performing Arts  
701 Okeechobee Blvd.  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401



<http://www.paulsills.com/story.htm>

## THE STORY ON STORY THEATER

So, what's the story on Story Theater? What is it and where did it come from? Story Theater was the idea of a man named Paul Sills whose mother was a famous acting teacher named Viola Spolin. She is called the mother of improvisation. Improvisation is when actors work without a script and usually take suggestions from the audience and then make up a play or scene right on the spot without using sets, costumes or props.

Paul Sills took this idea and developed it into what we call Story Theater. Although what you see on stage has been rehearsed and the actors have used a script, a lot of what they do comes through playing theater games and improvising on fairy tales, folk tales or just about any good story. The magic of Story Theater happens when the actors use what we call "space objects". They simply "find" an object in the air and make you see it. When the actors believe that what they are doing is real, and that the things they are using are real, then suddenly, they are. When the actors can "see" the invisible and "touch" the invisible, like magic, it becomes visible and you can see it too. But they have to believe so that you can believe.

The best thing about this kind of theater is that you are limited only by your own imagination. So, if you want to be in a castle, well then, go there! If you want to ride a horse, then saddle up! Fly that plane! Grab a ball! Sail that ship! There's nothing to stop you. And if you really see it—really believe it—others will too. Go ahead. Give it a try! It's fun. It's magic. It's Story Theater.

Sunshine State Standards: TH.A.1.2, TH.B.1.2



# WHAT IS GOOD CHARACTER?

**Trustworthiness** - Some people say that a trustworthy person can be counted on. This means that you can be sure a trustworthy person will keep his word and do what he says. By keeping promises and being a good friend, you can be a trustworthy person.

**Caring/Compassion** - Your kind and caring actions can not only help others and make them feel better, but will make you feel proud of your good deeds. Compassion is a character trait that can benefit everyone.

**Responsibility** - A responsible person knows that he or she has many jobs to do and often others are counting on him or her to get this job done. When you try your best and work hard to do what you are supposed to do, you show responsibility.

**Respect** - Respect means caring and treating others with kindness. Showing respect for others, property, the environment and yourself, you will, in turn, earn the respect that you deserve!

**Fairness** - Fairness is playing by the rules, sharing, taking turns and listening to what others say; it is giving every person the amount of time, energy and respect that he or she deserves. The fair person knows that the best and most important reward he or she can receive is the feeling he or she gets inside when he or she does his or her best to treat others fairly.

**Citizenship** - You belong to many different groups - your family, class, school, clubs, teams and community. As a part of each of these groups, you should keep in mind what makes a good citizen. Through your actions, you will demonstrate that you know what it takes to be a good citizen.

Source: Character Education, Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company, Inc.

