Picture Books to Support Character Education Lessons

Picture books expand children’s experiences and provide opportunities for classroom discussion. The following picture books reflect positive character traits including the traits outlined in the popular Six Pillars of Character program. Students can see themselves or friends in storybook characters and wonder how the characters will solve their challenges. Classroom teachers have the opportunity to emphasize positive character traits by reading and discussing quality children’s picture books with their students.

The picture books are organized by character traits that are placed in alphabetical order starting with the Six Pillars of Character traits and followed by additional positive character traits. There is also a listing of videos available from the San Diego County Office of Education’s Media Services and a list of helpful websites that provide lesson plans, units, and other support material.

Six Pillars of Character

Trustworthiness—Be honest • Don’t deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable—do what you say you’ll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal—stand by your family, friends and country

Respect—Treat others with respect and follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don’t threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Responsibility—Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act—consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices

Fairness—Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded and listen to others • Don’t take advantage of others • Don’t blame others carelessly

Caring—Be kind • Be compassionate and show that you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

Citizenship—Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed and vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

—From http://www.charactercounts.org
Picture Books That Support the Six Pillars of Character Traits

Caring

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Little Match Girl*
Brimmer, Larry Dane. *The Sidewalk Patrol*
Bunting, Eve. *Night Tree*
Bruchac, Joseph. *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story*
Cohen, Barbara. *Molly’s Pilgrim*
Bang, Molly. *The Paper Crane*
Delton, Judy. *Two Good Friends*
dePaola, Tomie. *Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs*
dePaola, Tomie. *Now One Foot, Now the Other*
Fine, Edith Hope. *Under the Lemon Moon*
Freeman, Don. *Cordeyro*
Fox, Mem. *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
Fox, Mem. *Tough Boris*
Lionni, Leo. *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse*
Lionni, Leo. *Tico and the Golden Wings*
Martin, Bill Martin, Jr. *Knots on a Counting Rope*
McPhail, David. *The Teddy Bear*
Meddaugh, Susan. *Martha Walks the Dog*
Miller, William. *The Piano*
Ness, Evaline. *Sam, Bangs & Moonshine*
Nolen, Jerdine. *Raising Dragons*
Perrault, Cinderella
Polacco, Patricia. *Chicken Sunday*
Polacco, Patricia. *I Can Hear the Sun*
Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say*
Polacco, Patricia. *Rechenka’s Eggs*
Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You Mr. Falker*
Scherdtle, Alice. *Down the Road*
Saltzberg, Barney. *Crazy Hair Day*
Saltzberg, Barney. *Mrs. Morgan’s Lawn*
San Souci, Robert D. *The Talking Eggs*
Sharmat, Marjorie. *Gladys Told Me to Meet Her Here*
Sharmat, Marjorie. *Mooch the Messy*
Simont, Marc. *The Stray Dog*
Soto, Gary. *Chato and the Party Animals*
Stanley, Diane. *Raising Sweetness*
Steptoe, John. *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters*
Turner, Ann. *Katie’s Trunk*
Turner, Ann. *Nettie’s Trip South*
Viorst, Judith. *Tenth Good Thing About Barney*

Kindness

Cohen, Miriam. *Best Friends*
Cole, Joanna. *Bully Trouble*
Bang, Molly. *The Paper Crane*
Friedman, Ina R. *How My Parents Learned to Eat*
Hutchins, Pat. *My Best Friend*
Brown, Marcia. *Stone Soup*
dePaola, Tomie. *William’s Doll*
Henkes, Kevin. *Chrysanthemum*
Keats, Ezra Jack. *Goggles!*
Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*
Seuss, Dr. *Horton Hears a Who!*
Steptoe, John. *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters*
Woodson, Jacqueline. *The Other Side*

Respect

Adler, Carole S. *Get Lost, Little Brother*
Alik. *Two of Them*
Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Ugly Duckling*
Bartone, Elisa. *Pepe the Lamplighter*
Beaumont, Karen. *I Like Myself!*
Borden, Louise. *A. Lincoln and Me*
Brimmer, Larry Dane. *The Sidewalk Patrol*
Brimmer, Larry Dane. *School Rules*
Brown, Marc. *Arthur’s Eyes*
Brown, Marcia. *Once a Mouse: A Fable Cut in Wood*
Bruchac, Joseph. *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story*
Bunting, Eve. *The Wednesday Surprise*
Bunting, Eve. *On Call Back Mountain*
Bunting, Eve. *So Far From the Sea*
Bunting, Eve. *Smoky Night*
Burton, Virginia Lee. *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*
Cannon, Janell. *Stellaluna*
Carle, Eric. *Grouchy Ladybug*
Child, Lauren. *I Will Never, Not Ever, Eat a Tomato*
Cohen, Miriam. *Best Friends*
Coles, Babette. *Prince Cinders*
Curtis, Jamie Lee. *Tell Me Again About the Night I was Born*
dePaola, Tomie. *Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs*
dePaola, Tomie. *Now One Foot, Now the Other*
Ets, Marie. *Play with Me*
Fine, Edith Hope. *Under the Lemon Moon*
Fleischman, Paul. *Weslandia*
Fox, Mem. *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
Friedman, Ina R. *How My Parents Learned to Eat*
Freeman, Don. *Come Again, Pelican*
Garland, Sherry. *The Lotus Seed*
Greenfield, Eloise. *Daydreamers*
Grimm. *The Frog Prince*
Kellogg, Steven. *Johnny Appleseed*
Lester, Helen. *Tacky the Penguin*
Lester, Helen. *Howoway for Wodney Wat*
Lionni, Leo. *Inch by Inch*
Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad All Year*
Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Are Friends*
Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together*
Lovell, Patty. *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*
Marshall, James. *George and Martha*
Marshall, James. *George and Martha Encore*
Marshall, James. *George and Martha One Fine Day*
McPhail, David. *Sisters*
Miles, Miska. *Annie and the Old One*
Miller, William. *The Piano*
O’Neill, Alexix. *Recess Queen*
Polacco, Patricia. *Chicken Sunday*
Polacco, Patricia. *Mrs. Katz and Tush*
Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say*
Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*
Schertle, Alice. *Down the Road*
Schur, Maxine Rose. *The Peddler’s Gift*
Seuss, Dr. *Horton Hatches the Egg*
Shannon, David. *No, David!*
Steig, William. *Brave Irene*
Van Allsburg, Chris. *Two Bad Ants*
Van Allsburg, Chris. *Jumanji*
Viorst, Judith. *Alexander Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday*
Waber, Bernard. *Ira Sleeps Over*
Ward, Lynd. *The Biggest Bear*

**Citizenship**

Adler, David A. *The Babe & I*
Baylor, Byrd. *Hawk, I’m Your Brother*
Blos, Joan. *Old Henry*
Bunting, Eve. *Fly Away Home*
Carlson, Nancy. *How to Lose All Your Friends*
Cooney, Barbara. *Miss Rumphius*
Creech, Sharon. *A Fine, Fine School*
Cronin, Doreen. *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*
Cronin, Doreen. *Duck for President*
dePaola, Tomie. *The Legend of Bluebonnet*
Deedy, Carmen Agra. *The Yellow Star*
Guthrie, Donna. *A Rose for Abby*
Henkes, Kevin. *Chrysanthemum*
Johnson, D.B. *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg*
Keates, Ezra Jack. *Goggles!*
Lee, Milly. *Nim and the War Effort*
McPhail, David. *The Teddy Bear*
O’Neill, Alexia. *Recess Queen*
Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*
Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *The Flag We Love*
Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *One Hundred Is a Family*
Saltzberg, Barney. *Crazy Hair Day*
Schur, Maxine Rose. *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*
Wahl, Jan. *Candy Shop*
Yangsook, Choi. *The Name Jar*

**Responsibility**

Arnold, Tedd. *The Signmaker’s Assistant*
Bartone, Elisa. *Pepe the Lamplighter*
Berenstain, Stan and Jan. *Berenstain Bears and the Messy Room*
Brimmer, Larry. *The Promise*
Brown, Marc Tolon. *Arthur’s Computer Disaster*
Bruchac, Joseph. *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story*
Bunting, Eve. *Summer Wheels*
Burton, Virginia Lee. *Katy and the Big Snow*
dePaola, Tomie. *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush*
dePaola, Tomie. *Strega Nona*
Fox, Mem. *Harriet, You’ll Drive Me Wild*
Gramatky, Hardie. *Little Toot*
Grimm. *Little Red Riding Hood*
Havill, Juanita. *Jamaica’s Find*
Henkes, Kevin. *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse*
Heyward, Du Bose. *The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes*
Joose, Barbara. *Lewis & Papa: Adventure on the Santa Fe Trail*
Kay, Verla. *Gold Fever*
Kellogg, Steven. *Can I Keep Him?*
Krauss, Ruth. *The Carrot Seed*
Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Snowflake Bentley*
Mayer, Mercer. *Liza Lou and the Yeller Belly Swamp*
Nolen, Jerdine. *Raising Dragons*
Pilkey, Dav. *The Paperboy*
Peet, Bill. *The Wump World*
Perrine, Mary. *Salt Boy*

**Trustworthiness**

Aesop. *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*
Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Emperor’s New Clothes*
Beskow, Elsa. *Pelle’s New Suit*
Burton, Virginia Lee. *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*
Chorao, Kay. *Molly’s Lies*
Demi. *The Empty Pot*
Hayes, Joe. *Juan Verdades: The Man Who Couldn’t Tell a Lie*
Hoban, Russell. *Bargain for Frances*
Lionni, Leo. *Swimmy*
Marshall, James. *George and Martha*
Monjo, F. N. *The Drinking Gourd*
Ness, Evaline. *Sam, Bangs & Moonshine*
Peet, Bill. *Cowardly Clyde*
Piper, Watty. *The Little Engine That Could*
Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree*
Soto, Gary. *Too Many Tamales*
Turkle, Brinton. *Adventures of Obadiah*
Yashima, Taro. *Crow Boy*
Picture Books That Support Positive Character Traits

Although the following character traits aren’t adjectives used in Six Pillars of Character, they are traits that are important for students to read and learn about. Some of the traits could easily be folded into the Six Pillars of Character study, but it might also be helpful to use additional adjectives to describe positive characteristics. The following character traits were identified by Susan Hall in *Using Picture Storybooks to Teach Character Education* (Oryx Press). The listed books are available in schools that contract for School Library Service or are available for circulation from School Library Service. Hall’s outstanding, comprehensive resource is also available for loan from the San Diego County Office of Education’s Library Media Service.

**Cooperation**

Cooper, Helen. *Pumpkin Soup*
Ernst, Lisa Campbell. *Sam Johnson and the Blue Ribbon Quilt*
Nolen, Jerdine. *Raising Dragons*
Rathmann, Peggy. *Officer Buckle and Gloria*

**Forgiveness**

Bang, Molly. *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry*
Bunting, Eve. *Smoky Night*
Bunting, Eve. *So Far from the Sea*
Bunting, Eve. *Summer Wheels*
Cooper, Helen. *Pumpkin Soup*
Schertle, Alice. *Down the Road*
Schur, Maxine Rose. *The Peddler’s Gift*
Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*

**Courage**

Aardema, Verna. *Borreguita and the Coyote*
Such, Mary Jane. *Bantam of the Opera*
Bunting, Eve. *Summer Wheels*
Edwards, Pamela Duncan. *The Worrywarts*
Hest, Amy. *The Purple Coat*

**Fortitude**

Auch, Mary Jane. *Bantam of the Opera*
Fleming, Candace. *The Hatmaker’s Sign*
Joose, Barbara. *Lewis & Papa: Adventure on the Santa Fe Trail*
Lee, Milly. *Nick and the War Effort*
Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Snowflake Bentley*
McCully, Emily Arnold. *The Ballot Box Battle*
Provensen, Alice and Martin Provensen. *The Glorious Flight*
Shea, Pegi Deitz. *The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee’s Story*
Steig, William. *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*

**Diligence**

dePaola, Tomie. *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush*
Ernst, Lisa Campbell. *Sam Johnson and the Blue Ribbon Quilt*
Hopkinson, Deborah. *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*
London, Jonathan. *Hip Cat*
Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Snowflake Bentley*
McCully, Emily Arnold. *The Ballot Box Battle*
Nolen, Jerdine. *Raising Dragons*
Pilkey, Dav. *The Paperboy*
Robbins, Ruth. *Baboushka and the Three Kings*
Stewart, Sarah. *The Gardener*

**Generosity—Giving**

Bunting, Eve. *December*
Cooper, Helen. *Pumpkin Soup*
Leodhas, Sorche Nic. *Always Room for One More*
Miller, William. *The Piano*
Robbins, Ruth. *Baboushka and the Three Kings*
Say, Allen. *Alison*
Stewart, Sarah. *The Gardener*

**Discernment**

Bunting, Eve. *On Call Back Mountain*
Bunting, Eve. *Smoky Night*
Conrad, Pam. *The Rooster’s Gift*
McCully, Emily Arnold. *The Ballot Box Battle*
Rathmann, Peggy. *Officer Buckle and Gloria*
Say, Allen. *Alison*
Say, Allen. *Emma’s Rug*
Say, Allen. *Grandfather’s Journey*
Stewart, Sarah. *The Gardener*
Yorinks, Arthur. *Hey, Al*

**Helpfulness**

Auch, Mary Jane. *Bantam of the Opera*
Bruchac, Joseph. *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story*
Fleming, Candace. *The Hatmaker’s Sign*
Hopkinson, Deborah. *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*
Levitin, Sonia. *Nine for California*
McCully, Emily. *Mirette on the High Wire*
Miller, William. *The Piano*
Wiesniewski, David. *Golem*

**Empathy**

Ackerman, Karen. *Song and Dance Man*
Borden, Louise. *A. Lincoln and Me*
Bruchac, Joseph. *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story*
Bunting, Eve. *Summer Wheels*
Fleming, Candace. *The Hatmaker’s Sign*
Hest, Amy. *The Purple Coat*
Say, Allen. *Grandfather’s Journey*

**Honesty**

Ernst, Lisa Campbell. *When Bluebell Sang*
Joose, Barbara. *Lewis & Papa: Adventure on the Santa Fe Trail*
Meddaugh, Susan. *Martha Blah Blah*
Ness, Evaline. *Sam, Bangs & Moonshine*
Schertle, Alice. *Down the Road*
Schur, Maxine Rose. *The Peddler’s Gift*
Soto, Gary. *Too Many Tamales*
Hope
Auch, Mary Jane. Bantam of the Opera
dePaola, Tomie. The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush
Edwards, Pamela Duncan. Honk!
Garland, Sherry. The Lotus Seed
Kay, Verla. Gold Fever
McCully, Emily Arnold. The Ballot Box Battle
Provensen, Alice and Martin Provensen. The Glorious Flight
Shea, Pegi Deitz. The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee’s Story
Shulevitz, Uri. Snow
Steig, William. Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
Van Allsburg, Chris. The Polar Express
Yolen, Jane. Owl Moon

Justice
Bunting, Eve. So Far From the Sea
Bunting, Eve. Summer Wheels
Lester, Helen. Hooway for Wodney Wat
Lester, Helen. Princess Penelope’s Parrot
Meddaugh, Susan. Martha Blah Blah
Mosel, Arlene. The Funny Little Woman
Potter, Beatrix. The Tale of Peter Rabbit
Turner, Ann. Katie’s Trunk
Van Allsburg, Chris. The Sweetest Fig
Wiesniewski, David. Golem

Loyalty
Bang, Molly. Goose
Bemelmans, Ludwig. Madeline’s Rescue
Conrad, Pam. The Rooster’s Gift
dePaola, Tomie. The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush
Garland, Sherry. The Lotus Seed
Lee, Milly. Nim and the War Effort
Nolen, Jerline. Raising Dragons
Stanley, Diane. Raising Sweetness
Wiesniewski, David. Golem

Patience
Bruchac, Joseph. The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story
dePaola, Tomie. The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush
Henkes, Kevin. Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse
Stewart, Sarah. The Gardener
Uchida, Yoshiko. The Bracelet

Perseverance
Auch, Mary Jane. Bantam of the Opera
Cole, Babette. Bad Habits (or The Taming of Lucretzia Crum)
dePaola, Tomie. The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush
Edwards, Pamela Duncan. Honk!

Lee, Milly. Nim and the War Effort
London, Jonathan. Hip Cat
McCully, Emily Arnold. Mirette on the High Wire
McCully, Emily Arnold. Mouse Practice
Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. Snowflake Bentley
Provensen, Alice and Martin Provensen. The Glorious Flight
Tunnell, Michael. Mailing May

Justice
Loyalty
Patience
Perseverance

Videos Available from Audiovisual Services
Audiovisual Services has recently purchased two video series that focus on character traits. They are available for circulation from schools that contract for Audiovisual Services by contacting us via e-mail at AVInfo@avsrv2.sdcoe.k12.ca.us, by phone (619) 718-4986, or fax (619) 291-5995.

Popcorn Park Puppets in Six Pillars of Character—Help your students explore six essential character virtues (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship) with the Popcorn Park Puppets. Each video in this series features the puppets entangled in problems that require them to sort out right from wrong. Complete with inspiring songs and humor, these videos provide a fun way to engage students in thinking, talking, and writing about the kinds of people they want to be. (Grades K–5)
Integrity Matters—A collection of entertaining, attention-capturing character education videos created for elementary school children, Integrity Matters™ teaches students how to become people of integrity through learning and practicing basic values. (Grades 1-6)

Websites

Looking for additional resources on character education? Here are a few helpful websites.

www.charactercounts.org
Information about the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship is available on this website.

www.CharacterEd.Net
This website is a place for students, teachers, schools, and communities to facilitate character education. It provides ready-to-use curriculum, activities, and resources.

www.bu.edu/education/caec
This resource is from the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character—Boston University. It provides helpful information for teachers including sample lesson plans on a variety of character traits.

www.goodcharacter.com
An excellent source for free resources, materials, lessons plans, and a host of other information to support character education for teachers is found on this website.

www.giraffe.org
The Giraffe Project moves people to “stick their necks out for the common good.” They are the creators of the K–12 “Giraffe Heroes Program.”

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