

# SAMPLE LESSON 1

## THE VIRTUES OF AN EGALITARIAN IN *CLEMENTINE*

- Literature/ Book Resource:** *Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker
- Produced by:** LaWan “Dia” Rhoden
- Objective:** An introduction to the virtues of an egalitarian
- Materials:**
  - Multiple copies of *Clementine*
  - Discussion guides adapted from Sara Pennypacker’s “Clementine Activity Kit.”  
[www.sarapennypacker.com/pdf/activitykit2011.pdf](http://www.sarapennypacker.com/pdf/activitykit2011.pdf)
  - Clementine look-alike costumes/ funky shoes
- Length of Lesson**
  - 45 to 90 minutes
- Intended Audience:**
  - Second through fourth graders
- Guided Discussion**
  - A guided discussion will be used to analyze the traits of an egalitarian by exploring specific characters from the book *Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker.
  - *Wear your most creative Clementine sneakers for a chance to win a Tales of Virtue Gift Card.*
  - Clementine often demands to be treated equally, especially when her younger brother gets to eat Gummi Worms or she needs to overcome her fear of pointy things to get bracelets like her best friend, Margaret. Clementine’s actions are consistent with the virtues of an egalitarian: the idea that all people are equal in value.
- Activities**
  - Infants through fourth graders attended the Mother and Daughter Tales of Virtue Book Talk. Surprisingly, mothers also brought their sons to the event—a prime example of the virtue of egalitarianism, the idea that all people are equal in value. As the S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Traits coordinator for the Book Talk, I welcomed the children with a rhyme element and provided Q & A handouts. I also gave each attendee a paperback copy of *Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker to use as a guided reading resource. As a program incentive, the child wearing the most creative Clementine-inspired sneakers was to win a gift card.

- Since all of the children wore such cute sandals and sneakers, I decided to model the egalitarianism by placing their names into an empty fish bowl for an equal chance of winning the grand prize. While writing down their names, I opened the discussion with the meaning of Clementine’s name, an orange-like fruit, while pointing to her beautiful orange hair. Using context clues helped with our first topic.
- The next challenge was defining egalitarian. We began with a multiple choice question:
  - *Egalitarian means:*
    - A. equal
    - B. same
    - C. advocacy
    - D. unfair
    - E. just
- The elementary age participants selected “equal” and “same.” The younger children agreed with their answers. When I added “advocacy” and “just” to the list of correct answers, the children seemed very impressed. They were further enlightened when I complimented their observational skills, because no one selected “unfair” (D) to describe the virtue of an egalitarian.
- The next discussion topics touched on topics they had been learning in the Character Counts program at school, including: Telling the truth (Chapter 2, pages 16-18), Not keeping secrets from parents (Chapter 3, pages 31-38) and Being creative (Chapter 3, page 42). Truth, honesty and creativity were familiar virtues to the school-age participants.
  - ❑ **Telling the truth** (*Chapter 2, page 18*): What did Clementine say to keep her mom from worrying? Did Clementine tell the truth? Why or why not? Should you always tell your mom the truth? Why or why not?
  - ❑ **Not keeping secrets from parents** (*Chapter 3, page 38*): Clementine shares a secret with her mom. What was the secret? Should you keep secrets from your mom? Why or why not?

- ❑ **Being creative** (*Chapter 3, page 42*): Clementine asked her mom to prepare lentils for dinner. How did Clementine eat the lentils? Did Clementine’s mom criticize her for eating lentils this way? Why or why not?
  - A. with her fingers
  - B. with a fork
  - C. with a toothbrush
  - D. with a spoon.
- ❑ **Equal or guilty?** (*Chapter 4, page 45*): Clementine is an advocate for fairness, so why does she cover her head with a quilt? Was Clementine trying to be equal or to get even with her best friend, Margaret?
- ❑ **Facing music** (*Chapter 4, page 48*): Clementine mom’s says, “You have to go and face the music.” What does face the music mean?
  - A. taking piano lessons
  - B. going to yoga with her mom
  - C. going to music class
  - D. none of the above. (If you answered none of the above, please explain why)
- ❑ **Creativity or carelessness?** (*Chapter 9, page 116*): What did Clementine make with her mom’s favorite hat? How do you think Clementine’s mom felt about the decorations on her favorite hat?
- ❑ **Exquisite words** (*Chapter 10, page 132*): Clementine is great at finding exquisite words. Find an exquisite word to describe your mom. Why did you choose this word?

Their responses were both humorous and informative. For example, a fourth grader talked about telling the teacher if someone were to hit him, instead of taking matters into his own hands. He also mentioned telling his parents about incidents at school, “Especially if you have to go to the principal’s office!” I made eye contact with his mom, who was smiling and beaming with joy. When I asked if the person who started the dispute should receive the same discipline, everyone wanted the bully to be sent to In-School Suspension (ISS) or to be expelled from school. Keeping the focus on the virtue of an egalitarian, we read Chapter 4, page 48 and discussed the meaning of, “face the music.” A nine (9) year old said, “It means you’ll have to go to school anyway, so everyone can laugh at you.”

Controlling my own laughter, I explained “Face the music means recognizing your mistake and accepting the consequences.” The participants identified being

laughed at as a consequence for Clementine's decision to cut off her beautiful orange hair, even though her action was a sign of empathy for her best friend, Margaret. We noted that orange is the color of fairness for the Character Counts program at their school.

The students shared their reading interests, which included books written by Jeff Kinney, Beverly Cleary, Roald Dahl, Judy Blume, Rick Riordan, Eion Colfer and of course, Sara Pennypacker. Since they said they were familiar with the notion of "character circle" (i.e., Venn diagram) from their reading classes at school, we developed a "character circle" for Clementine, generating a connection between *egalitarian* and other familiar words: *equality*, *fairness* and *generosity*.

- *Equality* - A second grader has a soccer game next week. She wants to win the final game for her team, but her best friend is on the opposite team. Both girls agreed to remain friends, regardless of the game's outcome. As an equal opportunist, the third grader really wants to win the game and says, "I will not help my best friend's team win!"
- *Fairness* - A third grader has a younger brother who receives preferential treatment from his parents. He says, "It's because he's the youngest child and I have to lead by example."
- *Generosity* - I complimented one of the 4th graders for being a good listener. He said, "I would have won the good listener award in my class this week, but the award was given to another student. The other student has problems paying attention, but I always pay attention." In addition to being independent thinkers, these children seemed to be great problem solvers.

## 9. Related Activities

- *Word Search*: How many words can you create using "egalitarian"? For example: Eagle, Train, Rain, Leg, Gelatin...
- *Craft Ideas*: Make a Clementine hat out of construction paper and decorate it. Please, be careful with the scissors and markers. Note how hats can be different yet equal in value.
- *Vocabulary Game*: Create a list of fruits and/or vegetables from A to Z. For example: A is for Apple and Z is for Zucchini.
- *Language Arts*: Use a simile to describe what kind of flower Clementine looks like after she cuts off her beautiful orange hair. Similes are usually formed with "like" or "as."
- *Math*: Add the total number of pigeons on page 77 with the total number pigeons on page 88. How many pigeons are there altogether?

- *Science*: How long does it take lentils to sprout? Develop a hypothesis and record your observations in a journal. Soak a half cup of dried lentils in a container of water for 8-12 hours. Remember, smaller lentils need less time to soak. After soaking the lentils, drain the water from the lentils and then rinse the lentils off with more water and drain them again. Place the drained lentils in a glass jar and cover the jar with a cloth. Repeat the rinsing and draining process everyday until your lentils produce sprouts.

#### 10. In summary

- In summary, I was honored to introduce the virtue of an egalitarian to this group of inspiring children, who used exquisite words like outrageous, kind, beautiful, nice, generous, resourceful, intelligent and lovely to describe their moms. The use of discussion points, writing prompts and activities were the ideal combination for the Tales of Virtue Book Talk. Most of the participants were able to express their ideas verbally.
- The younger participants used their creativity to draw pictures (see p. 562) which required flexibility and attention to detail. We concluded the discussion by sharing our plans for the future: in addition to athletes, firefighters and authors, we had an aspiring artist in the group. I finalized the Tales of Virtue Book Talk with the words of Clementine's mom, "You may end up being something else, too—whatever you want to be." (page 38)
- Clementine is an independent thinking third-grader who sees things from a different angle and often feels she's being treated unfairly. Whenever there's a dilemma, Clementine takes it upon herself to resolve the matter, even if she's exposed to ridicule.
- Her creative thought process causes her to challenge her mom's decision to work from home, instead of working at the bank like her best friend's mom—who also wears dresses rather than overalls (see Chapter 3, page 38). She displays the virtue of an egalitarian by deciding her mom is the best person to help her achieve her goals without compromising her individuality.

Clementine drawings

