



Dear Parents,

We are so excited to share with you our Character Strong Newsletter. There are many ideas and parenting tips embedded within this monthly document. The Bemis staff believes that you will find this resource to be helpful and that it will provide you with a connection to our school. We look forward to partnering with you throughout the school year by locking arms together, loving on your kiddos together and living out the belief that together we will help our students make a difference in this world by being great kids of character.

October Trait: Respect



Sincerely,

Jeremey Whan

Jeremey Whan
Principal
Bemis Elementary School



Respect (Grades K-2)

For PurposeFull Families



EXPLANATION:

This month we're talking about the character trait of Respect. The dictionary defines it as the value of admiring another person for who they are and what they do. The definition we are using in class is:

Respect: seeing good in people and things (and treating them with care).

We are also talking about Respect in the context of using good manners, not using inappropriate or offensive language, being courteous to one another, resolving conflicts peacefully, and treating one another as we would want to be treated (and how they want to be treated!).

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Talk with your child about what it means to be respectful, to be courteous and to use their manners, to solve conflict peacefully, and what it means to treat others the way they want to be treated.
- Talk about a time you felt disrespected and what you did about it in a way that demonstrated Respect.
- The core value of Respect invites us to celebrate differences, offering us a beautiful opportunity to work with our children to break down stereotypes. Ask what they think of when they think about grandparents, for example. Expect answers like "they're old, they're slow, they're forgetful, they're nice, they're understanding, they're generous." Let them share without judgement, to get all of their thoughts out. Then have a conversation about how these are stereotypes that may or may not be accurate for all grandparents and why thinking about people as individuals instead of in groups can be an exercise in Respect.
- If Respect means making others see good in people and making people feel cared for, how do we already show Respect at home? How can we do a better job showing Respect as both kids and adults?

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- What do "good manners" look like in our family? How does using good manners show Respect?
- How does it feel to be respected? How does it feel to be disrespected? Who are the most respectful people you know?
- Is it easier or harder to Respect someone who is very different from us? Why?
- What do I do that makes you feel respected? How else does that make you feel?

APPLICATION:

Books:

- [*Hey, Little Ant*](#) by Phillip and Hannah Hoose
- [*A Bad Case of Stripes*](#) by David Shannon
- [*The Colors of Us*](#) by Karen Katz
- [*One*](#) by Kathryn Otoshi
- [*Something Else*](#) by Kathryn Cave
- [*Shhh!*](#) by Jeanne Willis
- [*Chrysanthemum*](#) by Kevin Henkes
- [*Giraffes Can't Dance*](#) by Giles Andreae
- [*The Juice Box Bully*](#) by Maria Dismondy
- [*What if Everybody Did That?*](#) by Ellen Javernick
- [*Have You Filled a Bucket Today?*](#) by Carol McCloud
- [*Do Unto Otters*](#) by Laurie Keller
- [*Whoever You Are*](#) by Mem Fox

FOR YOUR READING:

- [*Parenting Magazine: The Return Of Respect*](#)
- [*The Respectful Child: How To Teach Respect*](#)

Respect (Grades K-2)

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ACTIVITY:

Hang a ruler somewhere in the house or make one out of a piece of paper and call it the "Respect Ruler." Talk with your child about what each end of the ruler means - on one end is "disrespectful" and on the other is "respectful." Anytime your child makes a choice that is disrespectful or respectful towards themselves or others, walk them to the "Respect Ruler" and have them self-identify where they think that choice was on the scale and why. Anytime your answer is different than theirs, talk about why!

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

Family Field Trip

Research other cultures with a real or virtual family field trip. Maybe there's a Native Indian Museum close by? Or an exhibit on the Royals in England coming to a museum near you? It could even just be a field trip to eat dinner at a German restaurant. Notice similarities and differences in the culture(s) that you experience and talk about them after the trip is over!

Toughness: 2

Time: 3

Type: Group

Cell Towers

Challenge yourself to not use a cell phone after your child comes home from school until they go to bed. Invite your child to build a tower together out of blocks or other supplies around the house. As you build together, talk about what it means to Respect each other's ideas. When creating things as a team, what are ways that we can show each other Respect? Share how you are committed to spending the evening away from technology and giving them your attention and why you believe that shows Respect.

Toughness: 2

Time: 3

Type: Partner

Honoring Humanity

Collect some toiletries or socks for people in your community who are in need and drop them off with your student explaining what you are doing and why you are doing it. If possible, make your respectful service more personable by talking with those who work at the shelter, food bank, or organization that you have chosen to support.

Toughness: 3

Time: 2

Type: Group

Respect the Planet

Talk about how you can Respect our planet by keeping it clean. Visit a place in your community where your family enjoys spending time - it could be a park, the library, a playground, or even your neighborhood. Take gloves and a trash bag with you and look for litter to pick up. Talk about how picking up litter helps our environment.

Toughness: 1

Time: 2

Type: Group

Respect (Grades 3-5)

For PurposeFull Families



EXPLANATION:

This month we're talking about the character trait of Respect. The dictionary defines it as the value of admiring another person for who they are and what they do. The definition we are using in class is:

Respect: seeing good in people and things (and treating them with care).

Respect is both a perspective and a practice. What does it mean to "see good" in people? Oftentimes this requires us to learn more about who they are, where they come from, and why they believe and act the way they do. Respect is about understanding people! Respect is also about action; how we speak to and treat one another (and ourselves) respectfully is a constant practice.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Respect is about resolving conflicts peacefully, without violence. It requires listening to each other. How do you make sure that you're really listening when you're talking to someone. Is that harder to do when you don't agree with them? Why? How can you get past not agreeing with their opinion, but still respecting who they are?
- Share about a time when you felt that someone was being disrespectful to you. Talk about how you wish the other person would have shown Respect to you. Can you think of a time in which YOU were disrespectful to someone? What do YOU wish you would have done differently?
- What are specific ways your home culture shows Respect when breaking bread, going to someone's home, resolving conflicts, etc.? How might these specific customs be different than other cultures?
- Respect can look and sound different depending on one's culture, but it feels consistent across communities. Discuss with your child what it feels like to be respected. How does your community show Respect? Be sure to be specific! You can reinforce respectful behaviors by naming them explicitly such as, "I see your Respect when you wait your turn to speak" or, "I feel respected when you ask me how I'm doing."
- Do you have to like a person in order to be respectful? Or, can you be respectful to someone even if you don't particularly care for or agree with them?
- Who is someone that you have a hard time with? What would help you model Respect for that person? How might that change your relationship?

APPLICATION:

Books:

- [*A Taste of Colored Water*](#) by Matt Falkner
- [*Good-bye Bully Machine*](#) by Debbie Fox and Allan Beane
- [*Sit In*](#) by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- [*The Golden Rule*](#) by Ilene Cooper
- [*Draw The Line*](#) by Kathryn Otoshi
- [*The Name Jar*](#) by Yangsook Choi
- [*My Name Is Sangoel*](#) by Karen Williams
- [*The Orange Shoes*](#) by Trinka Hakes Noble

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- How does Respect look, sound, and feel at school? How about at a sporting event? In a group or organization? At home? How about when you're angry? When you're frustrated? Struggling?

FOR YOUR READING:

- [*Teaching Kids Respect*](#) Parenting For Brain Online Magazine
- [*Do Your Kids Respect You?*](#) By Janet Lehman, MSW

Respect (Grades 3-5)

For PurposeFull Families



ACTIVITY:

Stage a family sit-in to respectfully request more family dinners around the table. Negotiate for two additional home-cooked meals. Be prepared to give up something to get something.

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

Unplug and Plug In

Agree as a family to set aside a certain time frame each day this week to unplug from devices and plug into family time. It shows Respect, for example, to not bring those phones to the dinner table. How does it feel to experience proximity and practice our manners face-to-face? When else can you unplug to show Respect?

Toughness: 1

Time: 2

Type: Individual

A Recipe For Respect

To show Respect for diversity and to celebrate other cultures and their customs, research a traditional recipe for your family to try from your own culture or from another culture that you know exists in your community. Make that dish and share with your family about its background and its significance.

Toughness: 4

Time: 2

Type: Group

Building Bridges of Respect

Invite neighbors, families from school, or other community members over to share your culture with them. This may be sharing a meal, celebration, or activity that shares a piece of who you are and what is important to you. During the event, ask those you invited to share something about their culture that is important to them!

Toughness: 3

Time: 3

Type: Group

A Delivery of Respect

Talk with your family about ways you can show Respect to your neighbors. Choose a way to “deliver” Respect to a family who lives nearby. As an added challenge, include a respectful note and challenge your neighbor to “pass it on” by spreading Respect to another neighbor.

Respectful delivery ideas:

- Deliver cookies
- Shovel snow
- Rake leaves
- Deliver flowers
- Take up the trash cans

Toughness: 2

Time: 2

Type: Group