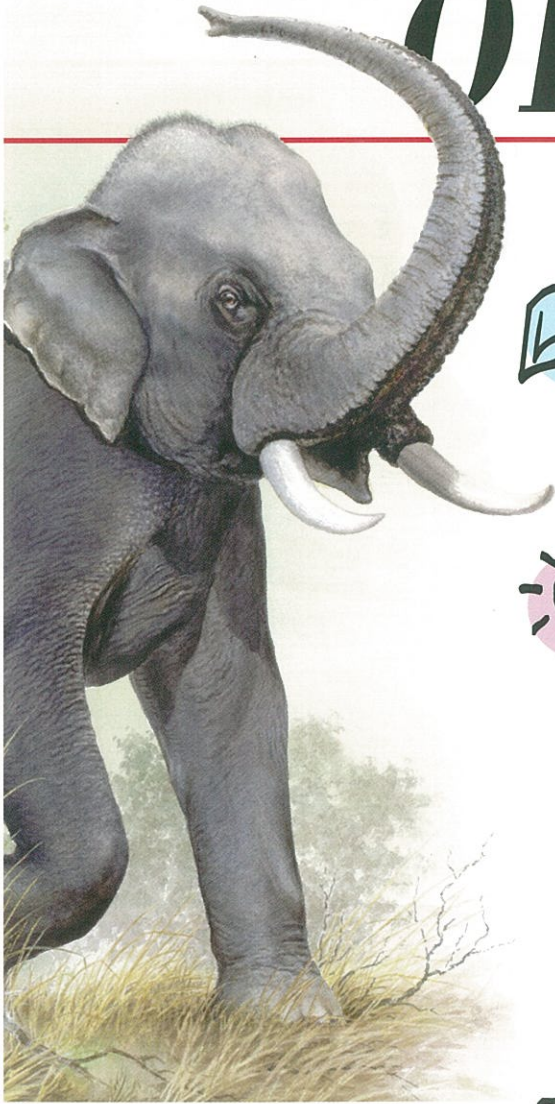


OBEDIENCE

Character First!® Education Series 1, Booklet 2



Definition

Cheerfully carrying out the directions and wishes of those who are responsible for me.



Illustration

Indian workers domesticated elephants as long as 5,500 years ago. The elephants' obedient nature and gentle power suits them perfectly for a life of service. Typically, a young boy of 10 begins training an elephant his same age, and the two work together for a lifetime. During these years together, the two become inseparable. The boy feeds his elephant, bathes him, tends his wounds, and trains him. In return, the elephant demonstrates remarkable obedience and loyalty. See these exceptional traits illustrated in the nature story on page 4.



Application

Taking responsibility for one's actions is a preliminary step in character development. The five "I Wills" used throughout the Character First!® Education curriculum represent decisions vital for children to make in order to establish a foundation of character in their lives. These statements are the basis for the stories, activities, lessons, and crafts found on pages 8 through 14.

I Will:

- obey my authorities immediately.
- have a cheerful attitude.
- complete all that I am expected to do.
- not complain.
- go the "extra mile."



Praise

So much attention is given to disobedience that many children accept condemnation, thinking they can do no better. Show that character is worthwhile by praising obedience in the lives of children. The praise they receive will motivate them to continue being obedient. Look on pages 14 and 15 for more ways to praise children.



What Is Obedience?

Cheerfully
carrying out
the directions
and wishes
of those
who
are
responsible
for me.

OBEDIENCE

vs. Willfulness

O•be•di•ence *n.* **1:** the quality or state of being submissive to the restraint or command of authority. **2:** an act or instance of following commands or guidance.

Obedience comes from the Latin words *ob* and *audio* and means literally "to hear." Obedience contrasts with willfulness in that a willful person doesn't listen. A willful person follows after his or her own will without regard for what authorities have to say.

Mistakes vs. Disobedience

It is important to understand the difference between *mistakes*, *errors*, and *failures*.

- A *mistake* is the result of a miscalculation, inability, or accidental oversight.
- An *error* is the result of wrong information, wrong processes, or a wrong understanding.
- A *failure* is the result of a lack of character.

If a student makes an occasional *mistake*, do not discipline for disobedience. If, however, the mistake is frequent, investigate for some *error* in his or her thought process or understanding of the task.

If a student demonstrates irresponsibility by staying up late at night and then working lethargically, thus making mistakes, do not deal with the mistakes primarily, but address the character flaw of *irresponsibility*.



The Concept of Authority

Authorities are those who are responsible for us. For instance, parents are responsible for their children, teachers for their students, employers for their employees, government officials for their citizens, and coaches for their teams. Obedience to an authority results in protection by being under that authority's jurisdiction.

When an authority gives instruction that conflicts with one's personal schedule, style, or enjoyment, it is all too common to rationalize disobedience. Symptoms of a disobedient attitude are thoughts such as, "that doesn't apply to me," "she doesn't know what she is doing," or "I don't understand why I should...." In contrast, true obedience involves a willingness to sacrifice personal comfort in response to the call of duty.

However, obedience is not the mere completion of a task. It is possible to comply with directions *outwardly* and still be disobedient *inwardly* by grumbling or complaining, even if the complaint is unspoken. Full obedience involves *cheerful* completion of the task.

The Role of Leadership

A person in leadership makes decisions that affect many people under him or her. Therefore, it is vital for authorities to do everything possible to meet their responsibility as a good leader. Authorities are to look after the best interests of those under them. That is a high calling, but doing so will promote obedience and cooperation among the group. The responsibility then rests on those under authority to choose obedience rather than willfulness.

Being a good leader requires maintaining a higher standard than what others are expected to follow. People naturally expect more of teachers than of themselves. By being submissive and obedient to your *own* authorities, those under you will more naturally obey.

The *attitudes* conveyed by a leader speak volumes as well. Inward feelings of discontent or frustration will set a negative tone for everyone. However, if those attitudes are replaced with genuine humility and obedience, that will be seen and followed as the standard. A student's character development begins with the example of his or her teachers.

Honor Your Word

As a teacher, your word carries authority. Students depend on you. When you make a commitment, or anything which students may interpret as a *possible* commitment, remember that you cannot expect others to obey your words if you do not keep your *own* word.

If you find it impossible to carry out a previous commitment, go back to those to whom you promised, explain your situation, and ask for their release. This assures them that you honor your word.

Demonstrate your own personal obedience by keeping your actions consistent with your words.

Obey First, Then You Will Be Obeyed

Obedience is perhaps the most critical character quality for anyone in leadership. The military has a saying:

*"A senior must never regard his rank.
The junior must never forget it."*

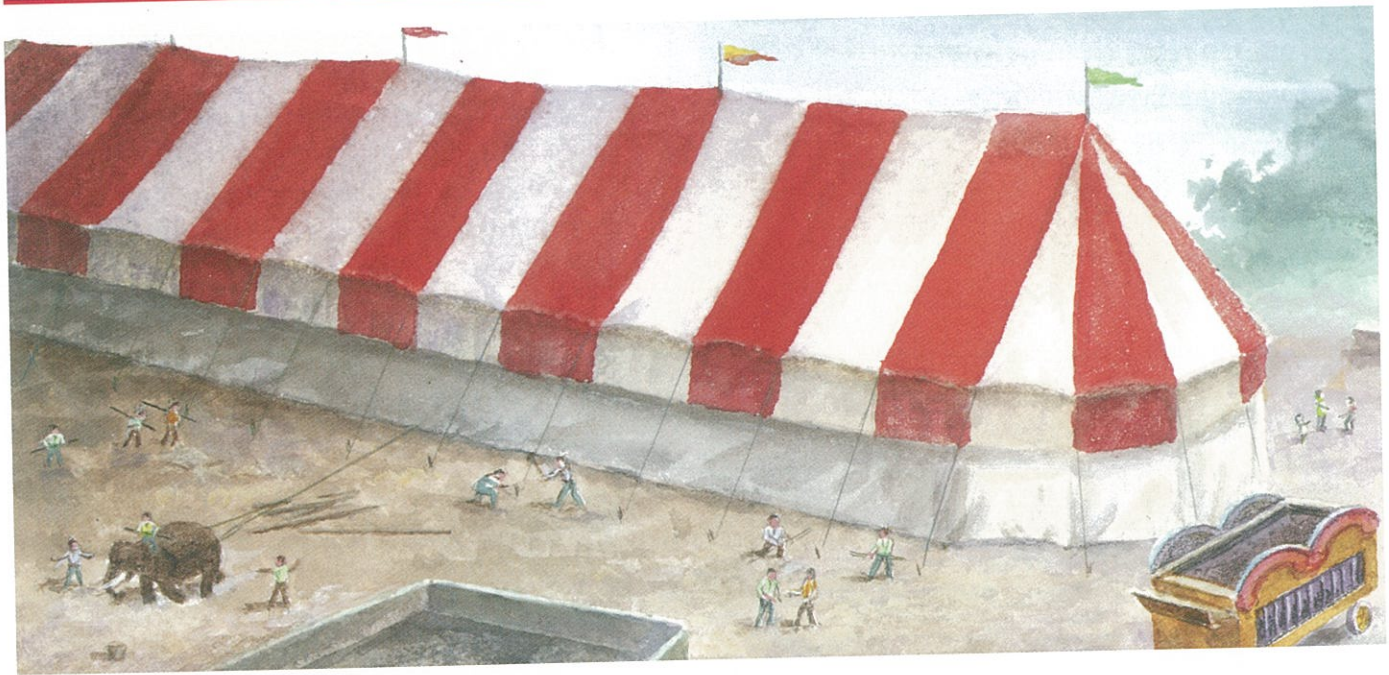
Before teachers can expect obedience from their students, they must maintain exemplary obedience to those over *them*.

If someone in your school hears you complaining about a principal or administrator, that person will immediately recognize your spirit of disobedience, even if you comply with the directives given. That example will come back to mind when they receive instructions from you. If this person does not like your instructions, he or she will justify half-hearted compliance or perhaps completely disregard your authority.

The way to effectively teach obedience is to be obedient to your own authorities. Rather than enforcing obedience with an attitude of superiority, obedience should be enforced as a matter of principle and as a measure of individual character, which starts in your own heart.



Obedience in Nature



The Circus Elephant

Hheavy wheels rolled along the road, stirring up great clouds of dust. Horses strained and axles squeaked as the old wagons wound their way toward the edge of town. The circus was coming! Each wagon carried strange animals which the townsfolk had never seen before.

There were lions, tigers, and elephants; camels, bears, and monkeys; zebras, giraffes, and peacocks. Children gathered along the road. Their eyes shone with eager anticipation as they crowded around the wagons, hoping to catch a glimpse of the ringmaster, or the clowns, or the high-flying acrobats.

However, what the children were about to witness was more astounding than any circus act. They were about to see an example of obedience which they would never forget.

As the wagons came to a stop in a large empty field which skirted the edge of a river just outside of town, several circus hands laid out a huge red and white tent

on the grass. They carefully unfolded and unfolded it until it covered almost the whole field. Others fitted long poles together and inserted them into brightly polished brass rings.

Much to the children's surprise, a young man not much older than they were walked up and looked at the tent. He folded his arms and studied the situation. Then without a word he turned and disappeared into the crowd of circus workers. A few minutes later the young man reappeared. Walking next to his right shoulder was a magnificent Indian elephant! As the young man stepped forward, his elephant moved obediently with him. When the young man stopped, his elephant stopped too.

Hanging from the elephant's shoulders was a huge leather harness. It wrapped around the front of his neck and hooked together under his chest behind his front legs. It looked strong! As he stood there, the circus workers tied a thick, heavy rope to the harness. At the other end of the rope lay a large loop which the

workers fitted around the base of the largest tent pole. Once everything had been carefully arranged, the young man whispered a single word into his elephant's ear. He simply said, "Kneel." The elephant never hesitated as it lowered its head and raised its front leg. The young man stepped up on the elephant's bent knee, swung himself up, and straddled the elephant's neck just behind its ears.

Then the young man whispered another word. He simply said, "Pull!" Without even the slightest pause the elephant leaned forward. The harness squeaked as it tightened around his shoulders. The rope drew taut! Every muscle in the elephant's body strained against the weight of the tent. Slowly, but steadily, the bottom of the tent pole moved across the ground. As the bottom moved forward, the top of the pole began to rise. Higher and higher it rose until it was almost vertical. The whole weight of the tent rested on the pole, but the elephant didn't flinch. He continued to pull!



His master once again leaned over and whispered a single word. All he said was, "Stop." The children saw the elephant stop abruptly in the middle of a step. The pole stood straight up and down. To pull even a few inches too far could send the tent pole plummeting over backward, collapsing the tent, and injuring the circus workers who risked their lives every time they pitched the "Big Top." Everyone cheered as the circus workers feverishly staked down the edges of the tent to hold it in place. The elephant's job was done.

In just a few hours the tent would echo as the ringmaster shouted the words, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, the circus is about to begin!" There was just one problem: one small, but disastrous problem. The workers, in their haste to prepare for the evening show, had pitched the tent in the wrong spot! The Big Top was supposed to be on the other side of the river, where all the food for the animals had been delivered a few hours before the circus had arrived in town. No food meant hungry animals. Hungry animals meant hungry lions, and hungry lions meant... Oh, boy!

Unfortunately, the only bridge across the river was too far away to move the food before the evening show, and the circus tent was too hard to take down and move to the other side of the river. The show must go on! But how?

Boldly the young man stepped forward with his elephant still at his side. He whispered but one word in his elephant's ear. He simply said, "Fetch." Immediately, the elephant turned and headed toward the river. He stepped into the water, not knowing how deep it was. He waded deeper and deeper until only his back legs touched the rocky bottom. Not knowing how to swim, he balanced

himself on his hind legs to keep his head above water. Eventually he climbed out of the river on the other side.

At first the elephant appeared puzzled. His master had given him only one word of instruction. He looked back across the river at the young man who had sent him. He could see his master leaning against a tree with his arms folded, waiting! Doing what he was expected to do, the elephant carefully slid his powerful tusks under one of the pallets of food which lay before him and wrapped his long trunk securely over the top to hold the bags in place. Looking more like a forklift than an elephant, he turned and stepped back into the river. Holding the feed high above the water to avoid getting it wet, the elephant worked his way back across the river.

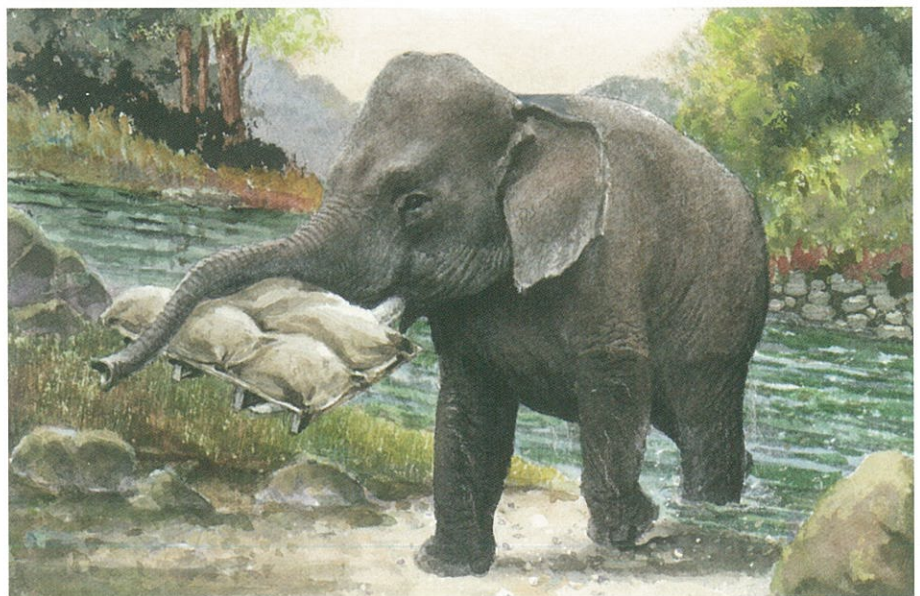
Setting the pallet of grain at his master's feet, the elephant looked expectantly at his master. But his master said nothing. He just leaned against the tree with his arms folded. Again the elephant looked puzzled. He looked at his master. He looked across the river. He looked at the heavy pallet of grain. Doing what he was supposed to do, the elephant plunged into the water. Across the river he went

for a second load of grain.

By the time he'd returned, the first pallet was empty. Workers busily distributed the food among the circus animals, but his master continued to lean against the tree with his arms folded. The elephant looked at his master. He looked at the food. He looked across the river. Without any further instruction, he plunged into the river a third time. Again and again! Back and forth he went. All afternoon and into the early evening he worked until he had carried the final pallet of feed across the river and set it at his master's feet.

When all was done, the amazing elephant had fed the whole circus. Then to everyone's surprise, he stepped up to his master, lowered his head, and began to purr. Though he hadn't eaten anything himself, though he had worked all day, though he was dripping wet and cold, the pleasant rumbling sound expressed the elephant's cheerful attitude.

Inside the Big Top, the laughter of children quieted and the lights dimmed as the words, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls" rang throughout the circus... only because of the obedience of the elephant.





Obedience in History

The River Rescue

Abe was an obedient, hard-working boy. Others in the little farming community where his family had moved in southern Illinois noticed this. The owner of the largest farm in the county had hired him and one of his friends to build a riverboat, fill it with flour and bacon, potatoes and vegetables from his farm, and float it all the way down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. After everything was sold, they returned home and gave the farmer all they had been paid for his produce.

One day Abraham Lincoln was preparing for another trip down the river. He was going to make another journey to take some goods to trade in New Orleans.

This time he needed a new boat for the trip. He and some friends had chopped down some trees and sanded them to make a nice smooth flatboat that would float down the river with their goods.

They had just finished constructing a canoe to go with their flatboat when two of the young men jumped into the canoe to try it out.

The men began rocking the canoe to and fro in the strong current. The river was high, and the current was strong. Men along the river bank dropped their tools to watch the men in the rocking canoe. "Abe, look!" yelled one of the men. "Those men don't know how to steer the canoe!"

"They're going to tip for sure," yelled another, pointing to the weaving canoe.

Abe stopped to look. The men were right. Soon the canoe dumped its passengers

into the swirling water. If someone didn't do something quickly, the men would surely drown in the freezing water. Abe ran downriver to catch up with the men. He spotted a huge tree that stuck out in the middle of the river.

"Swim for the tree!" he yelled. "You can do it! Don't give up! Swim hard!"

The men reached the tree and hung onto the branches. They were safe from drowning. But now there was a new problem. How would Abe and his friends rescue them from the middle of the river? The men were too exhausted and cold to swim against the mighty current. They would never make it to shore.

Abe also knew that if something wasn't done immediately, the men would freeze.

"Get some rope!" he ordered the men on the shore. The men rushed to find some.

Meanwhile, Abe continued to call out to the men in the water. "Hang on there! We're coming for you. Hang tight!"

The men quickly returned with a rope, and Abe explained his plan.

Did you spot the "I Will"? The men on shore obeyed immediately when given the instruction to find a rope.

"We can tie one end of the rope to that big log over there," Abe continued. "I'll use the rope to guide the log downstream to the tree the men are holding onto. We'll put a person on the log, and that person can help the men out of the tree and onto the log. Then, we can all work to pull them back to the shore."

"Jim," Abe asked one of his friends, "will you ride downstream on the log?"

"Sure," replied Jim as he instantly waded into the angry river toward the log.

After Jim had climbed aboard the log and was holding on tightly, Abe slowly began to let out the rope. As the current pulled harder and harder, Abe held firm. As he let out more and more rope, the log inched closer and closer to the tree where the men clung.

"It's working!" shouted the men on shore, as others held their breath expectantly.

Then, just as Jim reached the men clinging to the tree, he looked down at the swirling, rushing river. He became scared. "What if I fall in the river?" he wondered. Instead of following Abe's instructions and staying on the log, he grabbed a branch and lifted himself into the same tree the first two men were in.

Now Abe had to figure out another plan. As Jim worked to make sure that he was safely in the tree, Abe pulled the log back to shore. Now there were *three* men to rescue from the river.

Did you spot the lack of "I Will"? Jim did *not* complete what he was expected to do. Instead of rescuing the men, he climbed into the tree with them.

"He would have been fine if he had just stuck with the plan," one of the men said.

"I've got another idea," said Abe. "Do you think you could pull me and all the others back on the log?" he asked the men on shore. "It won't be easy."

"Of course," the men cried out in unison.

Abe called out to the men in the river, "I'm going to ride this log downstream to bring back all three of you. Jim, when I get to you, can you catch the rope that I throw?"

"I think so," quaked Jim from his perch in the tree. "Abe, be careful or you'll



drown like the others almost did," warned a man on shore. But it was too late. Abe was already on the log, pushing out into the water.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe went the "extra mile" by coming up with a new plan when the previous one failed. He finally went into the river himself to rescue the men.

The current caught the log and pulled it quickly downriver. The rope the men were holding uncoiled faster and faster. Closer and closer Abe came to the three men hanging onto the tree.

As Abe drew closer to where Jim sat, he wound up the rope and threw it to him. The plan was for Jim to catch the rope and pull Abe and the log through the rushing

current, safely over to the tree. A gasp rose from the men on shore as they watched Jim *miss* the rope. Abe and the log sailed past the tree, farther down the river!

"He's missed the rope! Abe's gonna miss the tree! Quick, pull him back! We gotta try again!" they yelled.

"No, look," said another. "He's lassoed the tree. He's pulling himself back up the river!"

Abe had thrown his rope around the tree just as he sailed past it. The rope had caught, and now he was slowly pulling himself back up the river, against the current, until he reached the men in the tree.

He helped the men onto the log and then yelled to the others to start pulling them back. With a shout, all the men on shore strained together, each one encouraging

the others to pull with all of their strength. Inch by inch the log crept upstream, till all four men were safely back on shore. Everybody lay on the bank, exhausted.

Did you spot the "I Will"? The men on shore willingly (cheerfully) obeyed by pulling all the others to safety.

Later, as the men warmed themselves around a hastily built fire, one of them turned to Abe and, with chattering teeth, said, "I guess you saved our lives." Abe just grinned back.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe didn't complain about the foolishness of the young men who had put their lives and the lives of others in danger.

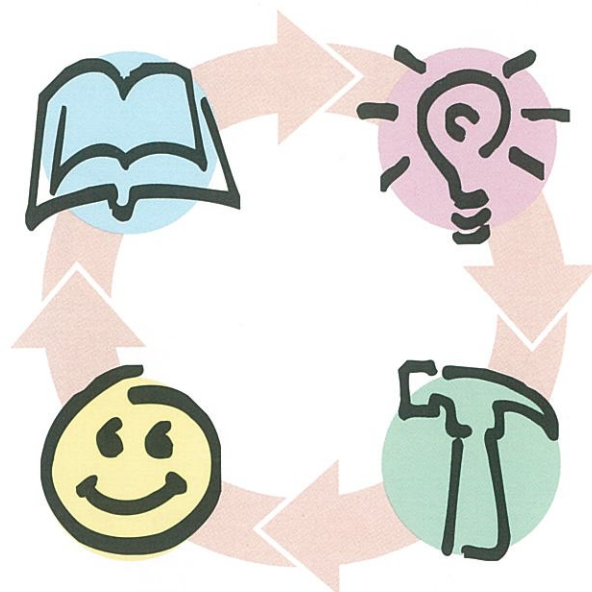


Will to Be Obedient

I Will Obey My Authorities Immediately.

While true obedience obeys right away, an obedient child must consider a command and obey only if the request is lawful. An obedient child recognizes that some laws supersede other laws and that they must always follow the higher standard. To comply immediately to something wrong may be as harmful as to delay doing something right. However, obedience *must* be consistent. A child cannot pick and choose which instructions to obey and which ones to ignore merely out of preference.

Children must also guard against blindly following the instructions of strangers. An obedient child knows *whom* to obey as well as *what* to obey.



Character Training Never Ends

I Will Have a Cheerful Attitude.

A cheerful attitude makes even difficult tasks easier to complete. It also implies support for teachers and their plans and tells others that they trust their authorities to protect and care for them.

I Will Complete All That I Am Expected to Do.

A classroom assignment is really a delegation of short-term authority. For example, an obedient student accepts temporary responsibility for an assignment until it is completed. Failing to finish a project is to fail a teacher's trust. Completing an assignment demonstrates that a student is worthy of added responsibility.

It is also important to know the respective jurisdictions of those in authority. Complying with instructions from one authority may often conflict with the instructions of another. An obedient student should respectfully request unrelated or indirect authorities to verify instructions with his or her teacher. Likewise, a wise teacher respects the jurisdictions of others in a school and doesn't knowingly contradict or question another teacher publicly.

I Will Not Complain.

To grumble as one complies with instruction is not true obedience. To grumble implies independence, disagreement, and doubt. If doubt exists, an appeal should be made directly to the decision-maker in a spirit of cooperation. If an appeal is not approved, submitting to the decision without complaining proves your loyalty and earns a hearing for appeals in the future.

I Will Go the "Extra Mile."

Historic Roman law permitted soldiers to conscript civilians to carry their heavy packs. The civilian was required to go one mile; however, some chose to go above and beyond their legal obligation. When a student goes an "extra mile," he or she demonstrates obedience at the highest level. Like a cheerful attitude, the act of obedience conveys agreement with and support for a teacher. Completing the "letter" of what is required earns praise. However, completing the *intent* of what is required earns trust and respect, elevating a student to a position of honor and influence.

Definition Scramble (Game)

Write out the definition of *obedience* on separate sheets of paper, putting just one word on each sheet. Use sheets of different colors, shapes, or sizes if children can't read. Review the definition by arranging the words in their proper order. Scramble the sheets and repeat.



Variations:

- Give one sheet to each child and arrange the children in the proper order of the definition.
- Build enthusiasm by timing how quickly the definition can be unscrambled.
- Remove one or more sheets and see who can figure out the missing word(s).
- Show one word and ask what word precedes and follows it.
- Play "concentration," where a "match" is any two consecutive words.
- Scramble all the definitions from previous weeks of study. Instruct the children to place all the words with the right definitions and in the correct order.
- Decorate and tape the sheets together to make a "banner" for the classroom.
- Use pictures and symbols to help children who can't read.
- Remember to praise the children for effort, attitude, improvement, and teamwork.

Line-up Drills (Game)

Make an "L" with your thumb and first finger. Use this as the signal for the children to line up in a straight line. Tell the children that you want them to line up as fast as they can without making a sound, but not to start until the moment you give the signal. Time them several times to increase their speed at obeying.

Variations:

- Use the palms of your hands to indicate which way the children are to face. Turn your palms left, right, facing, opposing, up or down, like a drill sergeant, to help them practice instant obedience. Make the most of every opportunity to praise obedience.
- Play "follow the leader" as you march around the room or school. Salute individuals, touch selected objects, or weave in and around posts in the hallway.
- Make being quiet part of an obedience test. Praise those who don't make a sound. Write their names on slips of paper to place in their *Praise Pockets*. (See page 14.)

If You're Obedient...



(Sing to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It.")

If you're obedient and you know it, clap your hands.
 If you're obedient and you know it, clap your hands.
 If you're obedient and you know it,
 Then your life will surely show it.
 If you're obedient and you know it, clap your hands.

If you're obedient and you know it, stomp your feet.
 If you're obedient and you know it, touch your head.
 If you're obedient and you know it, turn around.
 If you're obedient and you know it, stand and cheer.
 If you're obedient and you know it, do all five.



Activities

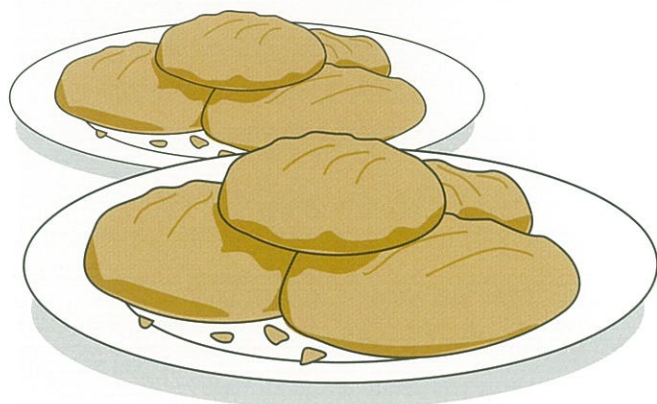
Looks Can Be Deceiving (Object Lesson)

Prepare two batches of cookies. Make one batch according to the recipe. Make the other batch with an excessive quantity of salt (perhaps one cup rather than one teaspoon) or less sugar (one teaspoon instead of a cup). The batches should appear identical, but the one with too much salt will taste horrible.

Take both batches to your class, being careful to note which one is which. Invite someone to come up in front of everyone and have a cookie. Give him or her one of the good ones. Ask how it tastes. Offer a second cookie to someone else, and give that child a good one also. Again, ask how it tastes. After giving out several good cookies, give someone a bad cookie. Ask how *it* tastes.

Show both batches of cookies. Point out that they look the same, but explain that they were prepared with a slight variation. One batch was prepared obediently—trusting that the person who designed the recipe in the cookbook knew what he or she was doing. Whether or not the one who wrote the recipe is likable does not matter—the cook is the one with the experience to know how to make good cookies, so we obey his or her instructions. Our success depends on our obedience. The second batch varied slightly from the master cook's instructions. The results of a "little" disobedience sometimes appear acceptable, but are far from it.

NOTE: Obtain approval before serving food to the children in the classroom. Beware of allergies.



Elephant Puppet (Craft)

Give each child a small paper bag. Have the children write their name and the five "I Wills" on the back side of the paper bag. Cut out two "elephant ears" from gray construction paper. Attach them on opposite edges of the back of the bag (side without flap). Cut a "trunk" from gray construction paper. Attach it to the middle of the flap on the front of the bag. Curl the "trunk" upward by rolling it around a pencil.

Cut two "tusks" from white construction paper and attach to the underside of the flap. Have the children draw eyes on the elephant's face. Make the elephant's mouth under the flap by cutting a "tongue" from pink construction paper and gluing it in place.



Supplies:

- One small paper bag per child
- Gray, pink, and white construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Markers or crayons

Encourage the children to learn from the elephant's example in the nature story.

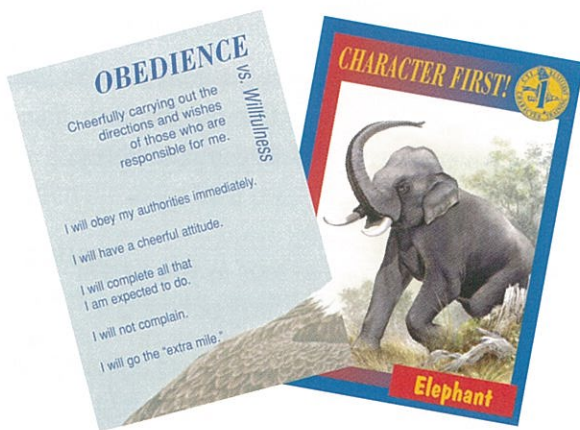
Remember:

1. The elephant's immediate stop at his master's command.
2. His thorough completion of raising the circus tent.
3. The satisfaction of "a job well done" illustrated through purring to his master.
4. His cheerful attitude while serving everyone before himself.
5. Doing more than what was required of him by going back and forth across the river for the food.



Character Cards

Character must be demonstrated in everyday life. Distribute the Obedience *Character Card* to each child, looking him or her in the eye and saying, "Here are ways *you* can be obedient." Read the "I Wills" on the back of each card. Review the elephant story, asking how the Indian elephant illustrated obedience. See page 8 for more elaboration on the "I Will" commitments.



Variations:

- Act out a wrong and a right way to respond to an authority figure using the five "I Wills" as an outline.
- Share a personal illustration from your own life of when you obeyed or didn't obey. Be sure to emphasize that there were benefits to obedience and consequences to disobedience.
- Give each child an opportunity to make a commitment to be obedient. Say, "Will you...?" and have children respond, "Yes, I will..." for each of the five "I Wills."

"Will you obey your authorities immediately?"

"Yes! I will obey my authorities immediately."

"Will you have a cheerful attitude?"

"Yes! I will have a cheerful attitude."

"Will you complete all that you are expected to do?"

"Yes! I will complete all that I am expected to do."

"Will you complain?"

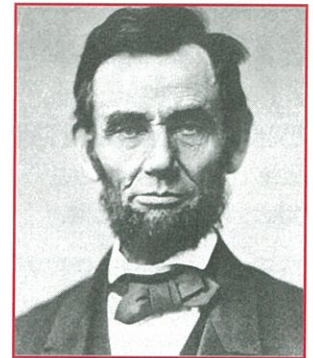
"No! I will not complain."

"Will you go the 'extra mile'?"

"Yes! I will go the 'extra mile.'"

Abraham Lincoln Story

Role models play a critical part in influencing children. Therefore, it is important to uphold people from the past and present whose lives are worthy of imitation. Abraham Lincoln is one of those people. He learned the importance of being obedient as a young man. In fact, he often signed his correspondence, "Your Most Obedient Servant"—Abraham Lincoln.



The character developed in the life of Abraham Lincoln prepared him to become one of the world's finest leaders. His experiences as a young man taught him valuable lessons he would never forget.

The account on page 6, based on a true story, is a powerful illustration of obedience in young lives. As you read this story, use the questions in the boxes to focus the children's attention on how Mr. Lincoln demonstrated the five "I Will" statements.



Memory Work

I'll obey with no excuses,
I will do it right away.
I will make the effort gladly
At any time of day.

I will do the work until it's done
And even further yet!
I will never speak a grumbling word
To show if I'm upset.

Commitments are important steps
To guard us from disaster.
And just to show we know them well,
Let's say them even faster.



Activities

The Five Keys of Obedience (Craft)

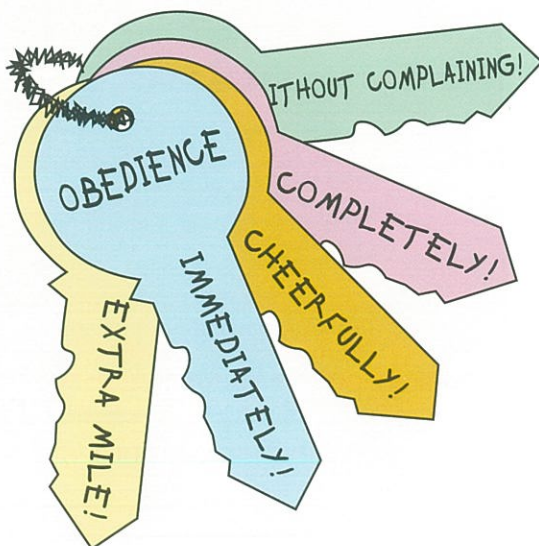
Imagine a door that has five different locks, requiring five separate keys. Even though each key "works" on the same door, it cannot open it alone. In the same way, true obedience comprises several "keys." One used apart from the others is not complete.

To illustrate the five "I Wills" of obedience as presented in this bulletin, make key rings for the children.

Supplies:

- Construction paper
 - Pipe cleaners (each child receives 1/2 of a pipe cleaner)
 - Hole punch
 - Pens or pencils
 - Scissors
- Make a key template out of posterboard for children to trace. Have the children cut out five paper keys. Punch holes in the tops with the hole punch. Have the children write on each key: "Immediately!," "Cheerfully!," "Completely!," "Without Complaining!," and "Extra Mile!"
 - Lace each child's pipe cleaner piece through the holes punched in the tops of their keys. Twist the ends together to form a "key ring."

Review the analogy of the door with the five locks. Just as one key is not enough to open the door, cheerfully doing what you are told but three days later is not obedience.



Taking out the Trash (Drama)

Obedience Application:

Dramatize a relevant situation in which children are faced with the decision to be obedient or not. Compare and contrast obedient responses with disobedient responses. Help the children to recognize right choices by asking them questions about the scene. For instance:

Topic: Taking out the trash

Scene: You are on your way out the front door. Suddenly your mom or dad asks you to take out the trash. You are now faced with a decision: To obey or not to obey.

Do you:

1. Say that you will do it as soon as you return?
or Immediately begin to carry out the task?
2. Agree to do it but proceed with a bad attitude?
or Cheerfully do what you have been told to do?
3. Take the trash only part-way?
or Complete all that you are expected to do?
4. Gripe to your friends and feel sorry for yourself?
or Do what you are asked without complaining?
5. Do as little as you can get away with?
or Pick up litter on your way and throw it in too?

Additional Topics:

- Clean your room.
- Wash the dishes. (or other chores)
- Do your homework.
- Be quiet.
- Turn off the T.V.
- Erase the chalk board.
- Straighten your desk.

Note: Personal examples are often the most effective.

“Parachute People” (Craft)

No sane skydiver would jump from an airplane without the safety of a reliable parachute. In the same way, no child should be allowed to plummet through life without the guidance of appropriate authorities.

Parachutes slow us down and keep us from crashing, ensuring a safe and controlled landing. However, the effectiveness of the parachute is thwarted if the skydiver refuses to put it on and buckle the harness.

Obedience is the “harness” which attaches a child to the “parachute” of authority, allowing him or her to receive wise direction and protection. To illustrate this lesson, the children can make their own “parachute person.”

Supplies:

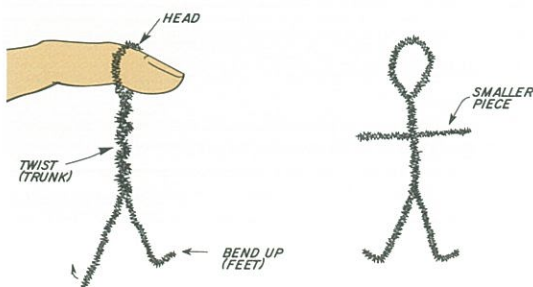
- Pipe cleaners (one per child)
- Yarn (two 1-ft. segments per child)
- Paper napkins (one per child)
- Clear tape
- Hole punch
- Scissors

Making the Parachute

- Tape each corner of the napkin for reinforcement.
- Punch a hole in each of the four corners.
- Tie a separate end of yarn to each of the four holes.

Making the Person

- Cut one third off each child’s pipe cleaner. The larger portion will be the parachute person’s head, body, and legs. The shorter piece will be the arms.
- Bend the larger portion of the pipe cleaner in half around an index finger. Twist the pipe cleaner to form a “body,” leaving enough of the ends for “legs.”



Harnessing the Person to the Parachute

- Use the pieces of yarn to harness the pipe cleaner person to the napkin. Hook the person’s arm to the center of one of the yarn pieces by bending the tip (“hand”) tightly around the yarn. Attach the other arm around the second piece of yarn.

Points to Remember:

- Parachutes may not always be comfortable, stylish, or popular, but they are necessary. Wearing a parachute is a matter of life or death.
- A person who manipulates authorities by whining and nagging is like a skydiver who jumps with the parachute tied in knots so that it isn’t free to open.
- A person who rebels against authority is like one trying to be on top of (instead of under) his or her parachute. Being *over* one’s parachute, like rebellion, leads to disaster.

Obedience Is...



Obedience is listening attentively;
Obedience will take instructions joyfully;
Obedience heeds wishes of authorities; and
Obedience will follow orders instantly.

For when I am busy at my work or play
And someone calls my name, I’ll answer right away!
I’ll be ready with a smile to go the extra mile
As soon as I can say “Yes, sir!” “Yes, Ma’am!”
Hup, 2, 3! (Clap)

Obedience is listening attentively;
Obedience will take instructions joyfully;
Obedience heeds wishes of authorities; and
Obedience will follow orders instantly.
Hup, 2, 3! (Clap)



Praise Project

Pockets of Praise (Craft)

Construct "Pockets of Praise" by folding sheets of paper almost in half and taping or stapling the sides adjacent to the fold. Leave one side open to form a pocket. Have children decorate their own "Pockets of Praise" and write their names on the front. Explain to the group that they will be receiving awards for demonstrating the character quality of obedience.

Cut out strips of paper and write the word "Obedience" on each one. Place one of these awards in the child's "Pocket of Praise" each time you see him or her applying one of the five "I Wills" of obedience. These awards can be any shape and as simple or elaborate as you have time and resources.

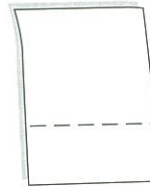
Variations:

- Hang the "Pockets of Praise" on the wall for everyone to see.
- Use stickers or cutouts in the shape of animals instead of strips of paper.
- Send the awards home with children each day to encourage parents. Don't compare one child with another.
- Set daily goals with individual children as an incentive. Never exchange the awards for tangible prizes such as candy or stickers. Make character worth achieving in and of itself.
- As children demonstrate other character qualities or "I Wills" from past or future character bulletins, make additional awards to put in their "Pockets of Praise."

1 Begin with whole sheet.



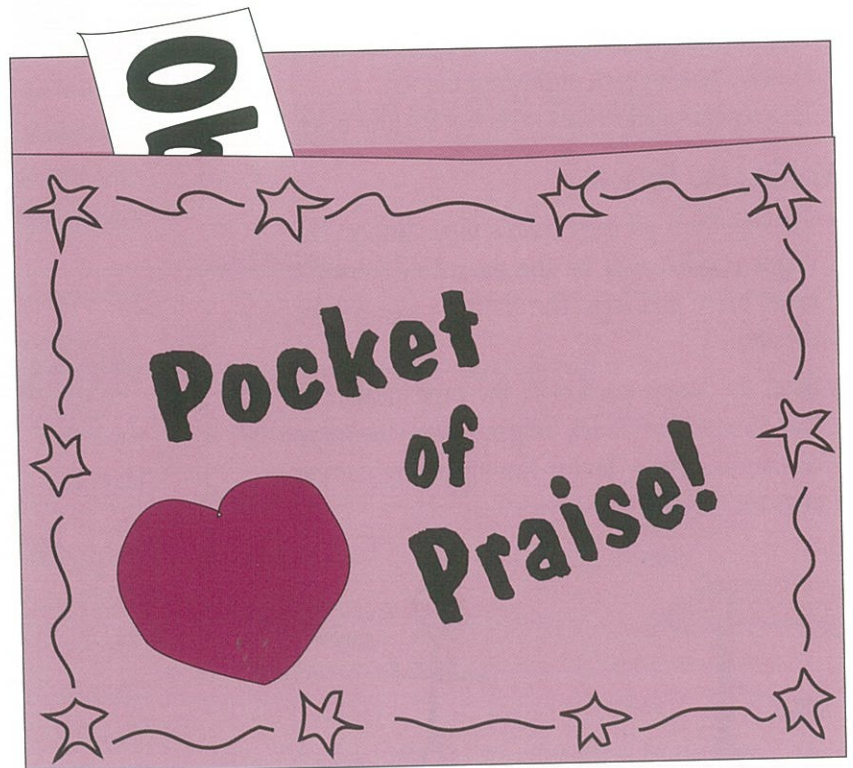
2 Fold bottom upwards, leaving 1 to 1.5 inches at top.



3 Tape sides to secure "pocket."



*for neat appearance, roll small pieces of tape and place along inside lining on each side.





Use Assignments to Praise Character

The nature of the assignments or instructions you give a child communicates a great deal about your trust in his or her obedience. If a child is proven diligent, you may give an assignment and not need to check on him or her as frequently as others. If a child is characterized by contentment, you may give greater freedom in areas of self-direction.

Trust is a significant form of praise that goes beyond words. Trust lets children know you are confident of their character, even to the point of staking your own success on it. This motivates the children to prove themselves further in that quality. As other children see the trust you place in one child and how he or she responds, they are inspired to be trustworthy in the same way.

As appropriate, let children know that obedience is required for trust. You might say, "Paul, I appreciate the way you cheerfully completed the task I gave you last week, so I would like you to..." (some desired privilege or task).

However, in situations where children prove their character and ability to handle certain tasks, be careful not to restrict them to the same tasks over and over unless they genuinely enjoy it. It is a commendation of character to trust someone with responsibility, but it can feel like punishment to bind that person to the same tasks all the time. Give children a chance to apply and expand their character and abilities in different areas.

Another way to communicate praise is to say, "Roy, I've got a job that is going to require a lot of precision. I immediately thought of you. Let me explain what I need." Even without directly attributing any qualities to Roy, this statement affirms his alertness, discernment, orderliness, and other qualities required for precise work.

A Word of Caution: Do not give assignments based on past achievements. Past achievements are the result of character qualities, such as diligence, creativity, or orderliness. Praise these *qualities*, and you will motivate achievement. If, on the other hand, you praise the *achievement*, that individual may try to make character "shortcuts." This may appear to work for a while, but sacrificing character for results will bring greater loss in the long run.

Ways to Praise

Every teacher must realize the importance of praising children for the demonstration of good character. Children feel valued when given an encouraging word or approving glance. It doesn't take much to lift a child's attitude and motivate him or her to continue doing what is right. Look for opportunities to use the ideas on this list to praise even the smallest steps in improved character.

Words of Praise

- "Well done!"
- "Wow!"
- "Good job!"

Trophies of Praise

- Formal plaque
- Bumper sticker
- Blue ribbon

Gestures of Praise

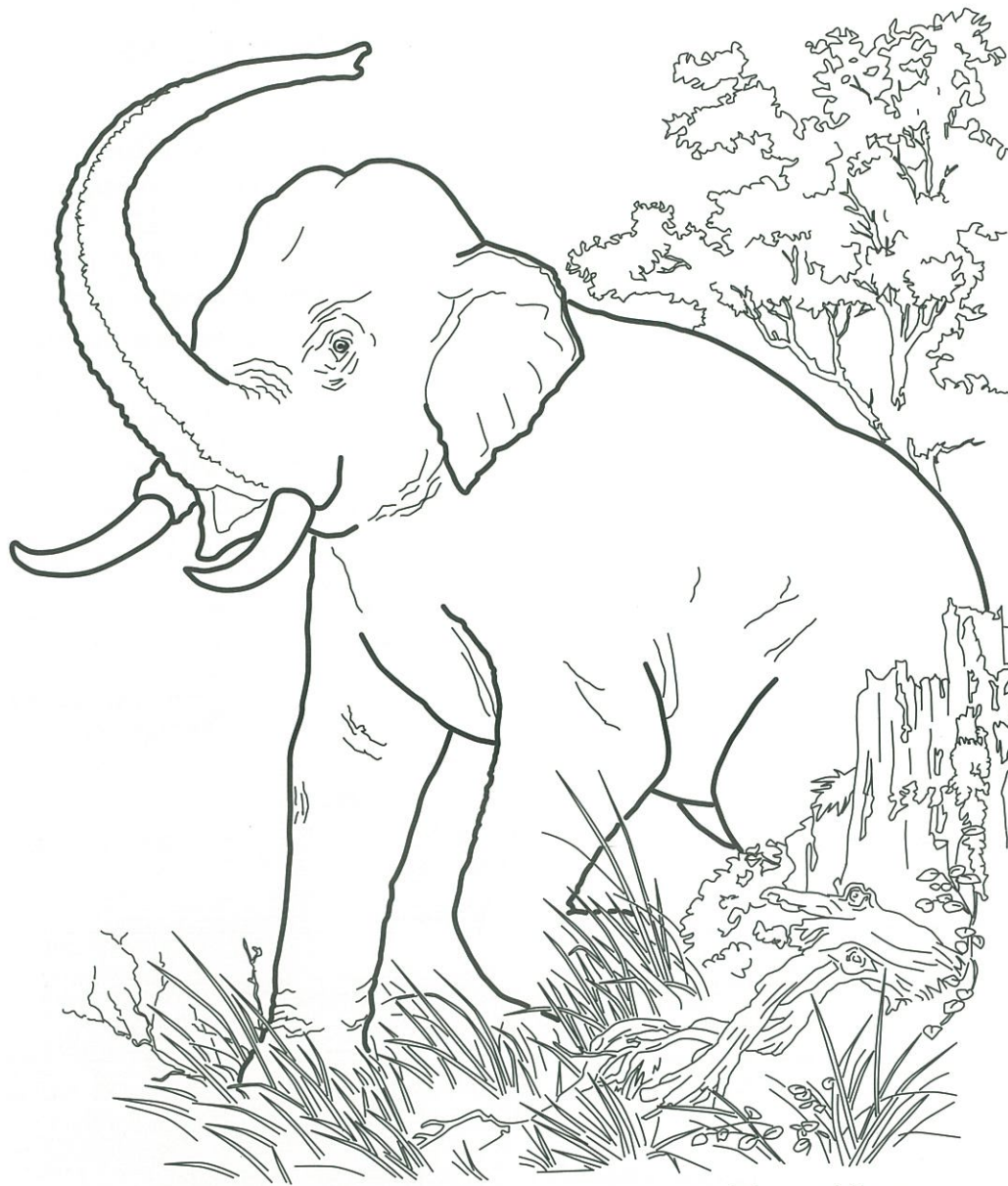
- Salute
- OK sign
- Thumbs up

Notes of Praise:

Write a special note to each individual child, praising him or her for demonstrating a particular character quality. Let the child know how glad you are to be his or her teacher. Make your note truthful and sincere.

Decorate the notes and envelopes so they are creative and attractive. Distribute them by the end of the week.

OBEDIENCE



Cheerfully carrying out the directions and wishes of those who are responsible for me.

© Copyright 1997 Character Training Institute. May be reproduced for educational use only.



Coloring Fun

Make copies of the picture on the left. Let students color and take home.

Copying guide:

Choose "enlarge"—8.5 x 11 to 11 x 17 (129%) to fill an 8.5 x 11 page.

Be sure to choose the "8.5 x 11" paper source.

Some copiers may require repositioning the page on the copier to copy only the area to be colored.

Teaching Tips

Get to Their Level

- Look for applications and lessons that apply to the children's lives.
- Communicate concepts with understandable adult words rather than childish ones.

Be Enthusiastic

- Exaggerate your gestures.
- Wave your arms and move your head.
- Smile and use exaggerated facial expressions.
- Vary your rate and volume of speech.

Be Creative

- Sponsor an "elephant day," when children can bring toy elephants, books, and pictures of elephants to class.
- Ask your librarian for materials illustrating elephants or obedience.