

Camfel Productions
presents

THE PLEDGE

Elementary Version Discussion Guide

Our Message:

Empowering individuals to stand on a foundation of character values and encouraging them to act responsibly when faced with tough decisions.

When studying for a test, the amount and quality of input directly affects output. The same is true with character. What goes into the mind and heart of a student is reflected in their actions and behavior. So, with the absence of good role models and character education, why do we question student behavior when we see what they are putting into their minds? Character values are the foundation of how we think and act.

Here at Camfel Productions our mission is to be a messenger of hope to a generation in desperate need of positive, life-altering influences. We want to help your students realize their worth by building up their character...character that is built on a foundation of integrity and trust.

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

THE PLEDGE will motivate students to make a positive difference in the world around them with their words, actions, and attitudes. Everyone faces difficulties in life; we all experience loneliness, frustration, and the pressures to do negative things. THE PLEDGE will challenge your students to make good decisions and commit to building others up rather than tearing them down. It's a pledge to be part of the solution – a call to put an end to bullying, to encourage others, and to do something to make a difference.

GROUP DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVES:

THE PLEDGE will challenge students to take control of their lives and make a difference in the world around them. Students will learn how to take control of a bullying situation. They'll be motivated to get involved in helping others who are being bullied and take an active role in ending bullying at their school. It's an engaging program designed to get students thinking about how they can make a difference. The program challenges them to take a pledge to become part of the solution – a call to step-up and make a difference.

Pre-Show Discussion Session

Preparing for the Assembly

A message to the instructor:

In a short time your students will be viewing a tremendous program called THE PLEDGE. We have provided some short discussion sessions for you to use before and after the presentation. These sessions will help you increase the effectiveness of this learning experience. Please feel free to use your creativity to enhance this learning experience as you adapt it for your students.

A few pre-assembly discussion ideas:

Soon we will be seeing a program called THE PLEDGE. But before we go to the assembly, we need to talk about a few ideas that will be presented.

- What is a promise?
- What is a commitment?
- What does it mean to refrain from doing something?



A pledge is a formal promise. You purposely have decided to take a specific plan of action. It's a commitment to alter, change, commit to or do something. When you make a pledge you have decided it is time to take action, a desire to refrain from something or a serious commitment to a particular relationship or cause.

A few examples:

- _ A commitment to lose weight or reduce the amount of sodas consumed each day.
- _ A formal promise to get to school on time with all your homework done.
- _ A plan to do something for the environment, such as a commitment to a recycling program.
- _ A determined effort to help those who are being bullied.

Concluding comments:

We make promises or express a desire to change our lives all the time. A pledge is a serious commitment to make the changes real. It's a formal agreement you make with yourself or others to change the way things are for the better. When you make a pledge you are asking others to hold you accountable to that pledge and are determined to keep that promise.

Discussion Session #1

A Pledge – A Call to Take Action!

Activity:

Materials Needed: Second Hand on a Clock or Watch

How long can you hold your breath? Using the second hand on a clock or watch, keep track of who can hold their breath the longest. Take note of who was able to hold their breath the longest. What activities might they be involved in that have given them a better ability to hold their breath for so long? What is it that motivates us to stop holding our breath to breathe again?

Fun Fact: German diver, Tom Sietas, holds the world record for holding his breath. He did it for over 22 minutes.



Communicate the following:

A pledge is a formal commitment to do something. This lesson is about how a pledge can be a call to action.

A pledge is not just a simple desire to change something or do something important. It's a deep seeded passion in your life. This kind of pledge is as important to you as breathing. Think about it like this. You will do anything you can to make sure you consume oxygen. Likewise, a pledge is something you will do just about anything to make come true. A pledge is not something we casually agree to do. A pledge is something that you have decided is extremely important to you. You will do everything you possibly can to keep that pledge.

Talk about the following:

How might a formal pledge to get homework done correctly and on time alter how much time you devote to getting it done? How might a formal pledge to exercise or eat healthy alter your lifestyle? Talk about the importance of perseverance and self-control to maintaining formal pledges?

Concluding comments:

It's easy to talk about those things we want in life or those things we wish were different. But just talking about it won't accomplish anything. Walt Disney once said, "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing." Real changes will come to your life when you begin formally committing to make a change. It's taking a pledge to make those changes real in your life, as important to you as oxygen. And the best place to start practicing these types of pledges is right here at school. Making a determined effort to get better grades and accomplishing school work correctly and on time is a great way to build positive habits. It's a great way to learn about how making a pledge can change your life for the better.

Discussion Session #2

A Pledge – A Determination to Refrain

Activity:

Materials Needed: None

Have the students talk about what a habit is. Talk about good habits and bad habits. How do good habits improve our lives? What makes bad habits so difficult to break?

Communicate the following:

A pledge is a formal commitment to do something. This lesson is about how a pledge can be a determination to refrain from a particular activity.

A pledge can be a desire to stop doing something that may be harmful or negative in your life. Smoking, drugs, or alcohol are activities that are very addictive and difficult habits to break. Those addicted to these negative activities can spend a tremendous amount of money and time attempting to kick these habits. However, there are other less life threatening habits that may be damaging to one's lifestyle. Disrespectful behaviors, poor hygiene, picking your nose, foul language, shyness, and spending too much time watching TV are a few things people regularly battle with that if changed could radically alter the direction of their lives.



A writing exercise:

Have the students write about a negative habit they are currently addicted to doing. Why does that habit have such a control over their life? How might their life be different if they were to gain control over this habit? Write about what it might take for them to break this habit. How might making a pledge to end this habit and asking others to hold them accountable help?

Concluding comments:

A pledge to refrain or stop a particular action may go a long way to improving our lives. These pledges are not easily kept. Most New Year's resolutions involve pledges to refrain. However, the majority of resolutions are quickly broken. Often, it takes the help of others to keep these pledges. However the rewards for breaking a habit can lead to a better quality of life and open more doors of opportunity.

Discussion Session #3

A Pledge – A Devotion to a Relationship

Activity:

Materials Needed: The American Flag

Recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance is a national symbol, one that practically all Americans have heard at some point in time. The Pledge was written in August 1892 and modified a few times since then. The Pledge was created as a way to teach patriotism to the nation's youth. The Civil War era had left its scars. The unity of America was at a low. Times were changing. There was considerable unrest. The nation was in need of healing and the Pledge helped to focus people on a common cause.

Communicate the following:

A pledge is a formal commitment to do something. This lesson is about how a pledge can be a devotion to a particular relationship.

The Pledge of Allegiance, Boy & Girl Scout pledges, and marriage vows are a few examples of pledges given to a particular relationship. These relationships may be defined as faithful, determined, loyal, or devoted. We honor, protect, and give more of ourselves and our resources to those whom we have pledged our loyalty. We may be loyal to a particular restaurant, clothing line, gaming equipment, or sports team. We've pledged our allegiance to them. We're devoted fans.



A writing exercise:

Write about something or someone you have pledged an allegiance to. For example, you may be a devoted fan of a particular sports team. You may belong to a club or loyal to your family. Write about how your relationship to this person or group affects the decisions you make each day.

Concluding comments:

Former President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, once stated, "My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." It was a call for Americans to step up to the challenges facing the country. He asked Americans to pledge to do something to make this country better tomorrow than it is today. You too can determine to make those people or groups whom you've pledged allegiance to become better tomorrow than they are today.

Discussion Session #4

A Pledge to Stand Against Bullying

Activity:

Materials Needed: 4 pencils

Ask for a volunteer. Give them a pencil and ask them to break it. This should be simple to do. Now, give them three pencils and ask them to break all of them at the same time. This is much more difficult and perhaps impossible.

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” A Biblical Proverb

Communicate the following:

You may not be able to stop a bully from teasing, taunting, or physically hurting someone but you certainly can be there to support the person who was bullied. Most bully victims need a friend, someone who will listen to them. Often, the bullying will stop if the victim has someone to hang out with before, after, or during school breaks. You could be that person that keeps the bully at a distance. Remind the victim that they are important. Help them avoid the bully and help them develop confidence. Bullies look for those who are weak. Helping the victim's confidence can go a long way to ending the bullying in their life. Finally, help the victim get help. Encourage them to talk to an adult and be there for them along the way.

Writing Exercise:

Write about a time when you witnessed someone being bullied or teased. What was happening? How might the situation have been different if those standing by got involved in helping the person being bullied? How might being a friend to those who are being bullied help put an end to the bullying or teasing?



Closing comments:

If you are being bullied it is not your fault. You don't deserve it. You have a right to feel safe. You have a right to be heard. It is not an opportunity to grow and develop. It's not supposed to happen. If you see someone being bullied, get a grip on the situation, consider what you'd like others to do if they saw you being bullied, and then do something to help them. Let's make a pledge to be a part of the solution and stand together with others against bullying.

Discussion Session #5

Pledge to Encourage Others

Activity:

Materials Needed: None

Cheerleaders motivate the team they are cheering to rise up to the challenges they are facing. Have the students recite a few cheers they've heard at various events. Then, have the students rewrite those same cheers with words that will motivate each other to perform better in class.

Communicate the following:

The history of cheerleading began in the late 1800s. Organized cheers were developed when Johnny Campbell directed several chants to energize the team and the crowd. The University of Minnesota was having such a terrible football season that people felt the need to come up with positive chants and cheering was born. The goal of the cheerleaders was to get the crowds passionate about building up their teams with positive statements and motivating them to excel.



Writing Exercise:

Have the students write three motivating statements they'd like to hear others tell them. Then have them list three people around them who they could motivate and what they should say to them that would be encouraging to them.

Closing comments:

Wouldn't it be great if we had groups of people motivating us with positive statements throughout the day? In sports, there's a home court advantage to the team that has the majority of fans cheering and encouraging them to win. The same is true for each of us in life. We can make a big difference in someone's life by making a pledge to be the loudest cheerleader in their life. Let's become that encouraging voice which motivates them to excel and put out their best effort. We can give hope and praise, challenging others to rise to their potential and achieve their dreams.