

Questions and Family Activities



Comprehension Questions:

- What did Alexander forget to take to school? (His self- portrait) Why did he need it? (So he could go to the fair with his class) Who did Alexander blame for not bringing his assignment? (His mom) Was that fair?
- What were the Erodians trying to do? (Kill the Singing Forest) Why? (The trees remembered the values)
- What was Alexander's quest? (Sail the boat to the island tower and find the one on whom he could rely to save the trees)
- Was Alexander prepared to sail the boat? Why? (No, he did not get the boat ready) What happened because he was not prepared? (He forgot the oars and the anchor and ended up stranded on the rocks)
- Who did Alexander blame for his problems? (Theo and the Lightkeeper) Did he finally take responsibility for his actions? (Yes, he finally acknowledged that it was his responsibility to get the boat ready)
- Who did Alexander meet on the island? (Hobart) What did he offer Alexander? (A turnip) What did he show Alexander and Theo? (His garden)
- Who was Alexander supposed to rely on? (Himself) What did Alexander do to save the trees? (Made the light tower operational)

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to be self-reliant?
- Why should we be self-reliant? What can we do to feel self-reliant?
- What is potential?
- What is potential?
- What do you think you have the potential to do in your life? How can you nurture and protect that potential?
- What is initiative?



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Scenarios:

Let's say you've taken piano lessons for a couple years and started to be pretty good on the piano but you don't really like to practice and you don't like your teacher very much. You have the potential to be a good piano player. What should you do?

Let's say you got a bad grade on a test at school. Your teacher didn't really explain things very well and the test was confusing. Whose fault is it that you got a bad grade? What could you have done to get a better grade?

Let's say you like basketball and you played on a team last year. This year, it won't work out to be on a basketball team. How can you take care of your potential to be good at basketball?

Let's say you really like drawing and you heard about an art class that will be offered in your community.

Let's say you're feeling like you're not good at anything. You just got a bad grade on your book report. Math is getting really hard this year. And you never make any goals in soccer. How can you figure out what your potential is? Whose fault is it that you're feeling bad about yourself?

Activity Ideas

- **Self-Starter Award:** Introduce a new award that kids can be "in the running" to receive each week this month. Make a simple paper award that says "Self-Starter Award" on it (kids could help design it) and award it to a child who has done an especially good job noticing what needs to be done without being asked. The award can be taped on the door of the award recipient for the week before it goes to someone new the next week.
- **Individual Goals:** Have every family member (parents included) choose something they want to accomplish before the end of the month (learn a new song on the piano, get 20 baskets in a row while practicing basketball, finish a book, get a certain score on a test at school, finish a project at work, accomplish something new in your workout routine, etc.). Write up everyone's goals and post them where everyone can see them. Encourage each other throughout the month. Offer a special prize to everyone who accomplishes their goal that month.
- **Parents – Interviews about Potential:** Interview each child individually this month and discuss what they see as their potential and what you see as their potential. Talk about the talents, abilities and skills you've noticed in your child – and what they've noticed in themselves. Talk about ideas for what they might want to do with what they like, what they know, and what they can do. Talk about hobbies, careers, and interests. Talk about how you've been able to reach your potential in certain areas and how hard work is a big part of reaching our potential.
- **Parents – Family Economy:** Start or improve your family economic system to help your children learn self-reliance by taking responsibility for certain chores and receiving money/rewards based on specific tasks they're responsible for. Decide what parents will pay for and what children should be expected to pay for in your family and set up a way for kids to earn and budget money. You may want to read *The Entitlement Trap* by Richard



and Linda Eyre or *The Parenting Breakthrough* by Merrilee Boyack for great ideas. (Check out the Work and Money Program at The Power of Moms if you want to get serious about this.)

Family Activity Idea: The Good Sport Game

This game helps teach young children the principles of sportsmanship, of doing your best, and of not blaming others. To set up this simple game, you will need a pair of dice -- actually one die will do; a kitchen pan with either a bean bag or some other soft object to throw into it, and any game board with markers that move around it from start to finish. (A Monopoly or Candy Land board will work, or you can make up a simple board on cardboard or paper that has about fifty spaces from start to finish.)

On their first turn, each child tosses the die and moves their marker that number of spaces (from one to six). On their second turn, a child tries to toss the beanbag into the pan from a few feet away. If it goes in, they move their marker six spaces. If it hits the pan, but doesn't go in, they move four. And if it comes close, they move two. On their third turn, each child rolls the die again and it starts over.

Your discussion during and after this game will teach principles of sportsmanship and self-reliance. When a child rolls the die, say something like, "What did you get?" (A three.) "Is that good?" (I guess.) "Is it as good as a six?" (No.) "Whose fault is it that you didn't get a six?" (Nobody's.) "It just happened, didn't it? Some things aren't anyone's fault. Should we be upset when we get a three, or a one?" (No.) "That's right. Let's just see what will happen and be happy we're all playing the game."

When a child throws the beanbag, ask questions like, "What did you get?" (A two, because I came close.) "Do you wish you got a six?" (Yes.) "Whose fault is it that you didn't get a six? Is it the beanbag's fault?" (No.) "Is it the pan's fault?" (No.) "Is it Billy's fault for laughing when you tossed?" (No, not really.) "Is it your fault?" (I guess -- maybe if I practiced a lot, I'd get good at it.) "But you tried, didn't you?" (Yes.) "Then it's not anyone's fault, is it? You'll just try again next time and think about how to do better."

As a child gets a high roll say, "Oh, good -- lucky for you." And as he gets a low roll say, "Oh, well, better luck next time." As he does well with the beanbag, say, "Good job." And as he missed, say, "Nice try." Encourage other children to say the same kinds of things to each other.

When one child wins, be sure you and the other players congratulate him, and make sure he is a good winner and says, "I was lucky. Maybe you'll win next time." Be sure good losers are praised as much as good winners. Tell them that in the Good-Sport Game everyone wins who is a good sport no matter where his marker is on the board.

Introduce the term good sport. Explain sportsmanship as being a good winner and a good loser who doesn't blame other people for what happens. Explain why everyone loves a good sport.

Then watch for chances to compliment children on any good sportsmanship they show in normal activities throughout the month.



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