

**The Heart of the Iditarod is the Heart of Our Classrooms
Character Education – Teaching the Hearts of Our Students**

Developed by: Cathy Walters

Discipline / Subject:

Appropriate for all subjects

Topic:

Character Education – The Iditarod is the Last Great Race. Teaching respect and responsibility using the acronym RACE.

R - Respect and Responsibility

A – Attitude

C – Compassion

E – Excellence

Grade Level:

PK-5

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

- **Respect and Responsibility Song**
- ***The True Story of Balto* by Natalie Standiford**
- ***Balto and the Great Race* by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel**
- ***Togo* by Robert J. Blake**
- ***The Great Serum Run* by Debbie S. Miller**
- ***Big-Enough Anna* by Pam Flowers**
- **Other books in your Iditarod library**
- **2008 Iditarod Insider**
 1. March 4 – Rick Swenson on Feeding
 2. March 5 – Hugh Neff 2nd In To Ophir
 3. March 5 – Robert Nelson and His Leaders
 4. March 6 – Encouragement On The Glacier
 5. March 10 – Sven and His Favorite Dog
 6. March 10 – Doggy Gear: By Melissa Owens
 7. March 12 – King On His Finish
- **Descriptions of the awards given for outstanding character during the Iditarod: the Red Lantern Award, the Golden Stethoscope Award, the Humanitarian Award, Sportsmanship Award, and Most Inspirational Musher Award**

Lesson Summary:

This lesson(s) will focus on the first tenet of the acronym RACE, respect and responsibility. Through song, reading, video, discussion, and drama students will identify and demonstrate respect and responsibility.

Standards Addressed: (Local, State, or National)

Although there are no character education standards, the Character Education Partnership, which sponsors the Schools of Character Awards program, states Principle 1: schools of character are those that promote core ethical values as the basis of good character and

Principle 2: students grow to understand core values by studying and discussing them, observing behavioral models, and resolving problems involving the values.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell if characters in literature and on the Iditarod Trail are behaving respectfully.
- Students will be able to tell if characters in literature and on the Iditarod Trail are behaving responsibly.
- Students will show respect and responsible behavior in the classroom.
- Students will memorize and perform the Respect and Responsibility Song at a school function.
- Students will act out examples of respect and responsibility –ideas can be generated by the class or choose one of the books they have read to perform for another class, in an assembly setting, or for their parents.

Method of Assessment for Learning:

- Students will be recognized by having their name placed on a poster of a giant sled. The acronym RACE is written across the top. When a student is “caught” showing respect their name goes under the “R” if they are “caught” showing compassion their name goes under the “C” and so on.

Procedural Activities:

Each quarter of the year focus on a different tenet of the acronym RACE. Tell your students that there is an Iditarod thread woven through the entire school year and that in matters of character we can learn a lot from all those associated with the Last Great Race. Select a day of the week and set a time aside that you call, “Matters of the Heart.” Make it a priority to spend time at least once a week focusing on character. On your first meeting introduce the respect and responsibility song. Sing it daily until they have it memorized and then at least once a week through the quarter. During the “Matters of the Heart” time read a book, tell a story from the Trail, or show an Insider clip. Discuss what respectful and responsible behavior looks like. Ask the children if they have seen anyone in class being respectful or responsible. Make this a weekly question so they will begin to look for those good behaviors and be able to report back to the class. Decide at the beginning of the quarter when and where the children will perform the respect and responsibility song and also what type of drama they will perform.

Materials Students Need:

To encourage family conversation about the character education tenets you can incorporate a “Baggy Book” Program. Ask your librarian to select twenty or so books showing respect and/or responsibility for your grade that you can keep in your classroom for the quarter. Send the books home in a bag at the end of each week with a sheet of paper for parents to record that they read the book to their child. It takes a bit of organization to keep it going, but it’s worth it.

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

www.iditarod.com website for musher profiles, biographies, and the Iditarod Insider

Other Information: The 2008 awards can be found under Press and Media at

www.iditarod.com

Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities

The “Baggy Book” Program is appropriate for all learners because parents will be reading to their children and then, hopefully, discussing the character education tenet, respect and responsibility, and how that was shown in the book.

