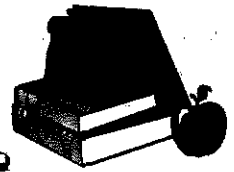
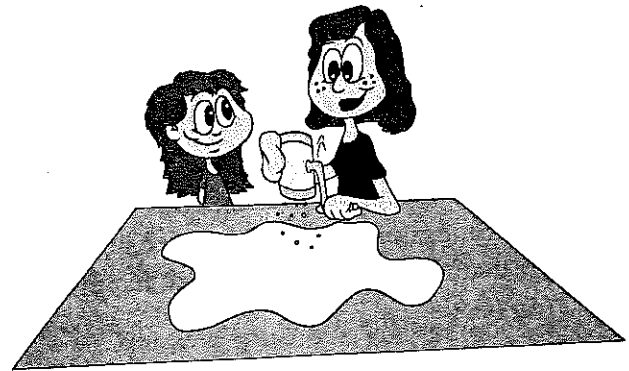


Understanding



What Is Understanding?

Understanding is thinking clearly. It is using your mind so that you can see the truth about things. It is paying careful attention and thinking about things in order to see their meaning. Understanding is also having empathy and showing compassion. Understanding gives us the power to think and learn and also to care.



Why Practice It?

Without an understanding mind, there would be no learning. People who don't practice understanding don't use their minds fully. Life is dull and boring because they just do the least amount of learning or thinking. People who use their heads to understand and solve problems, have great insights and wonderful ideas. People who use their hearts to understand show compassion and forgive people for their mistakes.



How Do You Practice It?

To practice understanding, you pay close attention. Look, listen and think. When faced with a difficult problem, you reflect and reason it out until the answer becomes clear. You resist distractions. You concentrate your mind to help you see the whole picture and to understand the meaning of what you see. You open your heart to understand how people feel and put yourself in their shoes. You understand that we all make mistakes. You are willing to be forgiving.

The Virtues Project

What would Understanding look like if...

- You are listening to a story?
- You have a difficult math problem?
- Your teacher is explaining how to do something new?
- You are trying to do your homework and watch TV at the same time?
- Your mother has been irritable for a week?
- Your friend forgets to meet you after school?

Signs of Success

Congratulations! You are practicing Understanding when you...

- Concentrate and pay close attention
- Reflect on the meaning of things
- See the whole picture
- Resist distractions
- Put yourself in other people's shoes
- Forgive others and yourself when you make mistakes

Affirmation

I have an understanding mind. I concentrate and pay attention so that I can think clearly. I have an understanding heart. I have empathy for other people's feelings.

Activities with Understanding



Activities with Understanding

Read a story and have students empathize with the characters and ask "If you were X, how would you feel?" Together, make a list of feelings on the board – sad, mad, glad, scared, embarrassed, confused, happy, and so on.

Read about Albert Einstein and discuss his late blooming as a student and as one of the greatest thinkers in the world.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ What happens when we don't pay attention?
- ❷ Share with a partner some of the things you find easy to understand and some that you find difficult to understand.
- ❸ What can you do when you have trouble understanding something in school?
- ❹ What are your biggest distractions?
- ❺ Name three things you can do to help you concentrate your mind.
- ❻ What is one of the most important things you have ever learned?
- ❼ What do you think great inventors do to come up with new ideas?
- ❽ When have you felt empathy and understanding for an animal or a person?
- ❾ When someone makes a mistake, what would help you to be understanding?



Drawing Understanding

Draw yourself doing something that you understand how to do well.



Poster Points

- ❶ Look. Listen. Think.
- ❷ A reflective mind.
- ❸ A compassionate heart.
- ❹ Awake and aware.
- ❺ Seeing the whole picture.



Quotable Quotes

"If one is master of one thing and understands one thing well, one has at the same time insight into and understanding of many things." Vincent Van Gogh

"What the heart understands today, the head understands tomorrow." Anonymous

"It is obvious that to be in earnest in seeking truth is an indispensable requisite for finding it." John Henry, Cardinal Newman

"Of course understanding of our fellow beings is important. But this understanding becomes fruitful only when it is sustained by sympathetic feeling in joy and sorrow." Albert Einstein

"Understanding a person does not mean condoning: it only means that one does not accuse him as if one were...a judge placed above him." Erich Fromm