



# OCTOBER 2015 VIRTUES



## Bringing Virtues to Life



*Building Our Future Through Education, History and Culture!*

Compliments of:  
Virgin Islands Department of Education  
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### ***Learning More About the Virtues Project***

#### **What is The Virtues Project?**

The Virtues Project, which is considered a global grass roots initiative to inspire the practice of virtues in all aspects of life, was founded by Linda Kavelin Popov, Dr. Dan Popov, and John Kaveline in 1991. Honored by the United Nations during the International Year of the Family as a “model global program for families of cultures”, it serves as a catalyst for the renewal of kindness, justice, and integrity in more than 90 countries.

The Virtues Project continues to inspire and mobilize thousands of families, educators, leaders, and employees to commit acts of service and generosity, to heal violence with virtues, and to create safe and caring communities.

#### **What are Virtues?**

Borrowing six year old Sharon’s description, “Virtues are what’s good about us.”

Virtues are the essence of who we are. They are the content of our character and the basis of genuine happiness.

#### **Why Virtues? Why Not Virtues?**

Values are what we value and care about. They could be anything. We may value getting rich and famous, we may value power over others, but that doesn’t mean we will have good character. Values are culture-specific because what some families or cultures value, others don’t. Virtues are much more elemental than values. While values are culture-specific, virtues are universally valued by all cultures.

#### **Why teach virtues?**

Many teachers and administrators are finding that applying the strategies of The Virtues Project is transforming the culture in their schools by helping them to create a total environment of caring and respect.

They have replaced discouragement with empowerment, having discovered that words such as “lazy”, “retarded”, “stupid”, “unacceptable” were literally demoralizing and dis-courage-ing their students.

When they filled their classrooms with encouraging words, such as “helpful”, “excellent”, “compassionate”, self-disciplined”, “integrity”, and “kind”, they find these behaviors flourish.

#### **Why has the Virtues Project been so successful?**

Its success is credited to teaching and the application of their Five Strategies. These strategies are the signature contribution of The Virtues Project. They are based on the virtues that are universally valued by all cultures and faiths.

**What are the five strategies in teaching the virtues and why are they important?**

The Virtues Strategies are important because they help us to live more reverent, purposeful lives, to raise children of compassion and idealism, and create a culture of character in our families, schools, and workplaces.

**1. Speak the Language of Virtues:**

Language has the power to inspire or to discourage. Using virtues to acknowledge, guide, correct and thank awakens the best within each of us.

What are your strength virtues? What are your growth virtues?

**2. Recognize Teachable Moments:**

Recognizing the virtues needed in daily challenges helps us to become lifelong learners open to the lessons of character.

What lessons are you learning at this time in your life?

**3. Set Clear Boundaries:**

Boundaries based on respect and restorative justice create a climate of peace, cooperation, and safety in our homes, schools, and communities.

What boundaries do you have? What boundaries do you need?

**4. Honor the Spirit:**

We sustain our vision and purpose by integrating virtues into our activities, surroundings, celebrations, and the arts.

How do you honor your personal spirit and the spirit of your group?

**5. Offer Companionship:**

Being deeply present and listening with compassionate curiosity guides others to find clarity and to create their own solutions.

How well do you listen to others, to yourself? What really needs to be heard.

Speak the Language of Virtues will be discussed during the month of November.

**If additional information is needed and / or to request a presentation for PTA, staff meeting, church group, etc., who should be contacted?**

Feel free to contact Virtues Project Facilitator, Arlene L. Pinney-Benjamin at 340-774-0100 x:2804 or alpbenjamin@doe.vi at the Department of Education Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education, which is located at J. Antonio Jarvis Annex.

# OCTOBER 2015

## VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

### Responsibility

*I am thankful for the gift of Responsibility. It helps me to fulfill my purpose.*

(October 4 - October 10, 2015)

### Self-Discipline

*I am thankful for the gift of Self-Discipline. It is the gardener of my soul.*

(October 11 - October 17, 2015)

### Reliability

*I am thankful for the gift of Reliability. It is the strength in my promises.*

(October 18 - October 24, 2015)

### Excellence

*I am thankful for the gift of Excellence. It is my true prosperity.*

(October 25 - October 31, 2015)

# *Upcoming*

## **NOVEMBER 2015**

### **VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:**

#### **Cooperation**

*I am thankful for the gift of Cooperation. It brings me into community.*

(November 1 - November 7, 2015)

#### **Unity**

*I am thankful for the gift of Unity. It makes me an instrument of peace.*

((November 8 - November 14, 2015)

#### **Thankfulness**

*I am thankful for the gift of Thankfulness. It makes my life bountiful.*

(November 15 - November 21, 2015)

#### **Respect**

*I am thankful for the gift of Respect. It helps me to handle life with care.*

(November 22- November 28, 2015)

# RESPONSIBILITY

Being *responsible* means others can trust you to do things with excellence. You accept accountability for your actions. When you make a mistake, you offer amends instead of excuses. Responsibility is the ability to respond ably and to make smart choices.

“My life is an influence on every life mine touches. Whether I realize it or not, I am responsible and accountable for that influence.”

*Ron Baron*

## **The Practice of Responsibility**

*... I practice Responsibility when I ...*

Take my agreements seriously  
Respond ably by doing things to the best of my ability  
Am willing to do my part  
Admit mistakes without making excuses  
Am ready and willing to clear up misunderstandings  
Give my best to whatever I do

## **Affirmation**

I am responsible. I give my best to all that I do and keep my agreements.  
I learn from my mistakes. I am willing to make amends.

## **CULTURAL PROVERBS**

Cut yo garment cording to yo cloth.  
Cut yoh coat to suit yoh cloth  
Measure yoh wais' before yoh go ah tailor shop

## **Meaning**

Make responsible decisions based on what you have and what you can afford.  
Don't set your aim too high.  
Make sure you have the wherewithal.

## **ANANSI STORY**

Broo Rat and Broo Cat

Broo Rat and Broo Cat were friends.  
one of them was charged with a huge responsibility.  
Read and discover what was his choice and fate!

# Activities with Responsibility



## Being Responsible

Make a list of ways you can do your part to help with the responsibilities in your home.

### Fill in the Blanks

When I do my chores I am being H\_\_\_\_\_ and R\_\_\_\_\_.

When I admit mistakes I am showing the virtues of H\_\_\_\_\_ and R\_\_\_\_\_.

When I make amends, that is a J\_\_\_\_\_ way to be.



## Virtues Reflection Questions

- What is the responsible way to respond when you make a mistake?
- What is the Teachable Moment (the virtue to be learned) when someone:
  - forgets their homework?
  - doesn't do a chore they have promised to do?
  - tells a secret they promised not to tell?
  - broke a promise to bring back a borrowed toy?
- What are some ways to make amends for these mistakes?
- What does it feel like inside when you do something wrong?
- What does it feel like inside when you admit responsibility?
- What are some things you are responsible for now that you weren't when you were younger?
- What is a teacher responsible for? What is a student responsible for?



## Drawing Responsibility

Draw a picture of yourself doing something with excellent responsibility.



## Poster Points

- The ability to respond ably.
- At my best.
- A Promise Keeper.



## Quotable Quotes

*"Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood."* Helen Keller

*"Life doesn't require that we be the best – only that we try our best."* H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

*"To live is to change. To be perfect is to have changed often."* Henry Cardinal Newman

*"We have to accept the consequences of every deed, word, and thought throughout our lifetime."* Elisabeth Kubler Ross

*"My life is an influence on every life mine touches. Whether I realize it or not, I am responsible and accountable for that influence."* Ron Baron

*"A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else."* Anonymous

## BROO RAT AND BROO CAT

Broo Rat and Broo Cat were friends. However, Broo Rat was one of those people who, whenever they can, take advantage of their friends. Broo Cat was very thrifty and was always saving up for hard times. He had saved a pound of delicious cheese and some lard which would be his food if hard times ever came. Now, Broo Rat knew about this food, and the more he thought about it, the more he wanted it! The thought would not let him rest. He had to have that food.

One day Broo Cat decided to go into town. He called Broo Rat and asked him to look after his house while he was gone. Broo Rat agreed. No sooner than Broo Cat's back was turned, than Broo Rat sneaked in through a hole in the floor and ate up all the cheese and lard. He smacked his lips and licked his whiskers.

When Broo Cat returned and found all the food gone, he questioned Broo Rat.

Broo Rat put on a look of innocence: "Broo Cat, but you really hurt me. You mean to say that we have been friends for so long and that you don't trust me? Do you think that I would eat the food that you have been saving for hard times? Me?"

"Well," said Broo Cat, "I don't know what could have happened to it. You and I were the only ones who knew where the food was. But if you say that you did not take it, I believe you."

Things returned to normal and in time Broo Cat saved up some more cheese and lard. Every time Broo Rat thought about it, his mouth watered until he thought his whiskers would drown. Finally, Broo Cat had to go into town again, and his trust in Broo Rat restored, asked him to mind the house. Broo Rat agreed with alacrity. He could almost taste the cheese and lard. Finally, Broo Cat was out of sight. Broo Rat slithered through the hole as fast as his body would go and soon ate up all the cheese and all the lard. When Broo Cat returned, he was sitting under a mesple tree dozing and relaxing.

"Well, Broo Rat, how did things go?" inquired Broo Cat.

"Fine Broo Cat, no problem, no problem!"

Broo Cat thanked Broo Rat and went into his house. There, he discovered that all his food had been eaten. He thought: "It is that mangy, greedy, ugly, flea-bitten rat. He keeps saying that we are friends and that he would never steal my food, but I know he is the one who did it. This is a violation of our friendship. I will teach him to steal. I am going to take care of him once and for all."

While Broo Rat went unsuspectingly about his business, Broo Cat planned for him. Presently, Broo Cat announced a great feast and dance and invited all the rats, mice, and cats to attend. The gentlemen animals wore tie and tails and the ladies wore embroidery and lace. Everybody was quite elegant. There was enormous quantities of food and drink and for those who wished to dance, calypso music. The guests had a marvelous time. They had so good a time, in fact, that by midnight they had all fallen out on the floor. Then Broo Cat had his revenge. He and all of his friends ate up Broo Rat and all of his friends! One tiny mouse managed to escape and as he was rushing down the street, met two sporting rats bound for Broo Cat's house. They asked, "What is the matter little brother? Why are you running so fast?"

Hardly bothering to catch his breath the mouse gasped: "I . I . I am going to fetch my musical instruments."

The rats smiled and hastened their pace. It must be some party at Broo Cat's. They rang the door bell and, as they waited, they whistled. But when Broo Cat came to the door, it was not with welcome but blood in his eye. The two gallant rats were killed and eaten. Afterwards, Broo Cat felt kind of sorry about what he had done, but not too sorry. After all, Broo Rat with his untrustworthiness had deserved his fate. And it was to be believed that all the other rats had similar bad habits. So Broo Cat had his revenge and a good square meal at the same time. And from that day to this, whenever Broo Cat sees a rat or a mouse, he remembers what Broo Rat had done to him, and he kills it and eats it. The moral of this story is: If you eat your friend's cheese and lard, you might end up being eaten yourself.

Translated from the Dutch Creole  
by Lezmore E. Emanuel

# SELF-DISCIPLINE

***Self-discipline*** means self-control. It is doing what you really want to do, rather than being tossed around by your feelings like a leaf in the wind. You act instead of react. You get things done in an orderly and efficient way. With self-discipline, you take charge of yourself.

“Those who make channels for water control the waters; makers of arrows make the arrows straight; carpenters control their timber, and the holy control their souls.”

*The Dhammapada 10, Buddhism*

## **The Practice of Self-Discipline**

*... I practice Self-discipline when I ...*

Use detachment so my emotions won't control me  
Speak and act calmly when I am hurt or angry  
Create routines that bring peace and order to my day  
Practice moderation  
Do what is expected without anyone watching over me  
Do things on time

## **Affirmation**

I have self-discipline. I use my time well and get things done.  
I choose my actions with detachment.

## **CULTURAL PROVERBS**

Mash ants sof' so yoh could fine 'e guts

## **Meaning**

Exercise self-discipline and don't overdo things.

## **ANANSI STORY**

Turtle and Fowl-Cock

Broo Nansi - - A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected by Dr. Lezmore Emanuel

In Turtle and Fowl-Cock,  
the fate of Turtle is evidence due to his lack of self-discipline.

# Activities with Self-Discipline



## Personal Map

Make a map of how you spend your time on a typical day, illustrating what you do, where you go, ending with going to bed. Discuss things you want to keep in your routine and things you would like to change.



## Virtues Reflection Questions

- What are some problems we might have if we didn't use self-discipline?
- What are some of the benefits of self-discipline?
- What does it feel like to lose control of our emotions?
- When is it most difficult to feel in control of our emotions?
- Name three things you can do to stay in charge of yourself when you feel angry?
- How can you stop yourself from watching too much TV?
- What could you do instead?



## Drawing Self-Discipline

Draw someone doing a task or job that requires a lot of self-discipline.



## Poster Points

- My time is my own.
- My choice.
- I am the captain of my ship.
- Plan Ahead (with last letters crowding the margins).
- Being in charge of myself.
- Being my own leader.



## Quotable Quotes

*"I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul."* William Ernest Henley

*"Procrastination is the thief of time"*  
Edward Young

*"I don't wait for moods. You accomplish nothing if you do that. Your mind must know it has to get down to work."* Pearl Buck

*"What it lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do."* Aristotle

*"He who conquers others is strong. He who conquers himself is mighty."* Lao-Tze

*"Discipline puts back in place that something in us which should serve but wants to rule."*  
A. Carthusian

*"Consistency is the key to true success...the people who get the better grades, are the ones who are consistently self-disciplined."*  
Jim Paluch

## TURTLE AND FOWL-COCK

One time the governor had a big ball. He asked Turtle and Fowl-Cock to come to the dance. Now these two were famous for their dancing ability and their stamina. They could dance all night, next day, and next night again. When the news got around that Turtle and Fowl-Cock were going to be at the governor's ball, everybody came from miles around to see them dance.



They danced until dark, then Turtle said, "I can dance longer than Fowl-Cock." There was a big argument, and finally to settle the issue, they made a bet between them. Now the governor had a young daughter who was very beautiful. When he heard of the bet, he told them that he would have another ball the next week and that he wanted them to attend it and also made a bet with them. Now the first bet between Turtle and Fowl-Cock was that each could outdance the other. Then the governor bet them that if Fowl-Cock flew above the land and Turtle swam underwater that neither could beat the other. Naturally, they took up the challenge.

Turtle said, "I might be slow on land, but water is my element. I could easily out-distance Fowl-Cock; he is no great shakes as a flier!"

Fowl-Cock retorted, "You could out-distance me! When? Maybe you think that I cannot fly, but just wait until I beat you."

"Well," said the governor, "the first man to reach the door of my palace will marry my daughter."

It was understood that they would each have a resting period, and with this in mind they planted posts along the seashore so that Fowl-Cock would rest when he was tired. Turtle would rest under water at the same place.

Turtle, however, had a trick to play on Fowl-Cock. He rounded up all his friends and cousins who looked exactly like him and placed them at strategic points along the way.

The day for the race came and each went to his starting place. Fowl-Cock on the tallest tree and Turtle beneath the water. Soon the signal was given to start the race. Fowl-Cock flew along rather briskly at first until he came to the first resting place. When he alighted, he cried out, "Kokorioko, Salamande, oh salamande!"

Turtle answered, "Zinkaio daho amali welo marifomi marigel."

When Fowl-Cock heard Turtle's reply, he flew on until he was tired and alighted to rest again. When he did so, he cried, "Kokorioko, Salamande, oh salamande!"

Turtle answered, "Zinkaio daho ago amaniwel marifomigel maribumbi!"

Fowl-Cock went on. When he reached Mahoo Bay, he was so tired, he was forced to rest. All this time Turtle's relatives moved steadily until Turtle himself took up the race. While Fowl-Cock was resting, Turtle was already at the governor's house. Turtle went straight into the Great Hall where the young girl was. He put his arm around her neck and they sat down together.

When Fowl-Cock finally arrived, he sat down on the veranda and said, "Kokorioko, Kokorioko, Salamande, Salamande!"

And when Turtle heard this, he put his old scaly hand around the girl and led her to the dance floor where they started to dance. When Fowl-Cock saw this, he was so angry that he flew straight up and dashed himself against the floor and broke his neck.

# RELIABILITY

**Reliability** means that others can depend on you. You keep your commitments and give your best to every job. You are responsible. You don't forget, and you don't need to be reminded. Other people can relax knowing things are in your reliable hands.

“The only lifelong, reliable motivations are those that come from within, and one of the strongest of those is the joy and pride that grow from knowing that you've just done something as well as you can do it.”

*Lloyd Dobens*

## **The Practice of Reliability**

*... I practice Reliability when I ...*

Make promises I can keep  
Really care about doing what I promise  
Return things I borrow  
Plan ahead  
Do my best and finish on time  
Find another way if obstacles occur

## **Affirmation**

I am reliable. I keep my promises. Others can depend on me.  
Nothing can stop me from giving my best.

## **CULTURAL PROVERBS**

Lil by lil, Bird build 'e nest

## **Meaning**

Step by step things get done.

## **ANANSI STORY**

Tukuma and the Sugar Cane  
Broo Nansi - - A Selection of Anansi Stories  
Collected by Dr. Lezmore E. Emanuel

Explore the rewards of being reliable in Tukuma and the Sugar Cane.

# Activities with Reliability



## Activities with Reliability

- Name the things you do on which others rely. (Feed your pet, make your bed).
- Name the things you do on which you rely. (Brush your teeth, remember your homework).
- Describe your morning routine. How reliable are you about getting out of the house on time? What would help you to be reliable?



## Virtues Reflection Questions

- What would happen to pets if their owners were unreliable?
- How do people feel about people who keep forgetting to do what they promised?
- What helps you to remember to be reliable about returning borrowed things?
- How can reliability help you in your future job?
- What is important about reliability?
- What does reliability have to do with success?



## Drawing Reliability

Draw a picture of yourself taking care of a responsibility reliably.



## Poster Points

- You can count on me.
- I'm here for you.
- Regular as clockwork.
- On time every time.
- Consistently dependable.



## Quotable Quotes

*"The shifts of Fortune test the reliability of friends."* Cicero

*"An honest man's word is as good as his bond."* Cervantes

*"And I to my pledged word am true.  
I shall not fail that rendezvous."* Alan Seeger

*"The only time you can't afford to fail is the last time you try."* Charles Kettering

*"Lean on me, when you're not strong. I'll be your friend. I'll help you carry on."* Song

*"Choices and follow through, that is all that separates the 'champions' from the 'also rans.'"* Jim Paluch

## TUKUMA AND THE SUGAR CANE

The king had a sugar cane field to be cleared. He sent for Tukuma to do the job and told him: "When the field is cleared, I will send for a man to make a fire and put on the big kettle so that we may have sugar."

Tukuma answered, "That is a masterful idea. As a matter of fact, I know the very man for the job. My friend Nansi is the man to do it because he knows how to make fire." He went and told Nansi the proposition.

Nansi said, "Yes, I will make the fire, but when I am finished, the king will have to give me fifty patacong and two tuns of sugar because it is a deep crop to clear."

Tukuma told the king what Nansi said and the king said, "Yes, I will give him that because it is a sweet crop there in the land."

On Monday morning, Tukuma rounded up several people to help him cut the sugar cane. They worked all week until the field was cleared. Then Tukuma told the workers, "You must come back next week."

The next week they returned and scoured the large coppers in the house in preparation for boiling the sugar, and prepared the big mills for grinding. They brought the sugar cane to the mill where it was ground. They then boiled the cane and took the syrup to the curing house for the molasses to come in. This was done until all the cane was ground and boiled. Then the sling was put into a tun to ferment into rum.

When the work was finished, the king called Tukuma and Nansi and asked them what they wanted for their labor. Tukuma asked for two tuns of sugar, 12 patacong, and a cow. The king decided that since they had not overcharged him, he would give them something extra. He gave them 100 patacong and a cow, plus two tuns of sugar each. He told them, "The gold you can take either in food as you need it or in parts." So they did as the king recommended. Then they took their food and went home and enjoyed the fruits of their labors.

# EXCELLENCE

**Excellence** is doing your best, giving careful attention to every task and every relationship. Excellence is effort guided by a noble purpose. It is a desire for perfection. The perfection of a seed comes in the fruit. When you practice excellence, you bring your gifts to fruition. Excellence is the key to success.

“When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece.”

*John Ruskin*

## **The Practice of Excellence**

*... I practice Excellence when I ...*

Give my best to whatever I do  
Give my best to relationships  
Set noble and realistic goals  
Remember to plan and practice  
Don't try to do everything  
Develop my special gifts.

## **Affirmation**

I give my best to the work I do. I give my best to others. I dare to set noble goals.  
I choose excellence in all things.

## **CULTURAL PROVERBS**

Who do good, good for them; and who do bad, bad for them.  
Do-so Noh Like-so

## **Meaning**

What goes around comes around.  
When you try to harm others, you are hurting yourself.  
Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

## **ANANSI STORY**

Tukuma and the Prickly Bush  
Broo Nansi - - A Selection of Anansi Stories  
Collected by Dr. Lezmore E. Emanuel

The rewards of excellence are great, as you read Tukuma and the Prickly Bush you will discover Tukuma's rewards.

# Activities with Excellence



## Make an Excellence Mobile

Using a coat hanger, cards and string, make a mobile about yourself listing your most excellent virtues – those that are your strengths – as well as things you do with excellence.



## Virtues Reflection Questions

- Name a time that you needed excellence but chose to give up instead.
- Name a time you chose to practice excellence.
- Name a character from a story or lesson you have been learning. How did they show excellence? What difference did it make?
- How would things have turned out without excellence?
- List the names of three famous people who excel in their field. How do they show it?
- What do you think they have done to become excellent?



## Drawing Excellence

Draw yourself doing some of the things you do best.

Draw people doing three different kinds of work. (for example, nurse, farmer, house builder) Write or tell what would happen if they didn't practice excellence. Then write or tell what would happen if they did practice excellence in their work.



## Poster Points

- It's okay to make mistakes. That's the way we learn.
- At my best.
- The key to success.
- Day by day I'm getting better and better.
- Excellence in all things.
- Growing our gifts.



## Quotable Quotes

*"I do the very best I know how – the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end."* Abraham Lincoln

*"Dost thou reckon thyself a puny form, when within thee the universe is folded?"* Imam Ali

*"May you discover your own special abilities and contribute them toward a better world."* Charlene Costanzo

*"Attention to little things is a great thing."* St. John Chrysostom

*"It's a funny thing about life: if you refuse to accept anything but the very best you will very often get it."* W. Somerset Maugham

*"When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece."* John Ruskin

*"The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg...dreams are the seedlings of realities."* Anonymous

## TUKUMA AND THE PRICKLY BUSH

The king called Tukuma to clear a patch of prickly bush for him. He told Tukuma that he would like to give him 1200 patacong, but that at this time he was unable to do so.

Tukuma said, "As you would like to give me that, there must be something good you can give me until I finish chopping the bush."

The king said to him, "I will give you half of the gold now and the other half after you have cut the bush." Tukuma agreed.

The next week he called Nansi who helped him chop the bush. When they had chopped it, the king asked them to burn the bush. When they had finished that, he said that they had the other part to do and by that they would fulfill the whole of their promise to clean the bush.

When they were finished cutting and burning the bush, they went to the king for food. The king gave them everything they wanted; food and drink, so that they were not in want.



*An initiative of The Virtues Project,  
Governor's Children and Families Council  
coordinated by the Community Foundation  
of the Virgin Islands,  
and  
Virgin Islands Department of Education  
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education*



*Bringing Virtues to Life*



*Building Our Future Through  
Education, History and Culture!*

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