DOING WHAT'S RIGHT

WE ARE THE SMARTEST ANIMALS

ED U. GATOR'S BIG MESS

DAVE THOMAS CAME A LONG WAY
We are so smart. Just think about all the incredible things we can do. We can talk to each other. We can remember all our friends’ names. We can learn the alphabet and all the colors of the rainbow. You may not know how right now, but soon you’ll learn to read and write and add numbers. We can learn these things because our brains are so big! That’s what makes people the smartest animals on the earth!

Do you know what else we can do that proves how smart we are? We can choose things. All day long we make choices about what we want or don’t want, and what we like or don’t like. Today you want pancakes for breakfast. Tomorrow you might want a bowl of cereal. Tonight you might want to watch a video, or play a game, or draw in your coloring book. Having choices is part of what makes life so interesting!

One of the most important choices we make is between doing the right thing and doing the wrong thing. You’re such a smart animal, I’m sure you know the difference! When we help other people—that’s the right thing. When we hurt other people—that’s the wrong thing. When we tell the truth, we’re making the right choice. When we lie to someone, we’re making the wrong choice. You get the picture!

When you do the right thing, you feel good about yourself. When we get along with each other, we have more fun. It’s that simple! So show the world how smart you really are!

Vocabulary:

Incredible: wonderful; fantastic.
Prove: to show that something is true.
Difference: a way in which things are not like each other.

Activity:

Helping someone else is one of the best things to do. Think about what you did today to help somebody. What else could you do that would be helpful?
Hi, Ed here. Whew, did I mess things up today! Mom, Dad, El, Gramps and I were busy packing up the house for our move to Gatorville Park. There were boxes and stuff everywhere! I was in the attic looking through old clothes and books when I saw a mouse scurry by. I whirled around and knocked a lamp over with my big tail. It smashed into a hundred pieces. “Yikes!” I thought, “Mom’s gonna be furious!”

I didn’t know what to do. Then I saw a broom and dust pan leaning against the wall. “Maybe,” I thought, “I can sweep it up into one of these old boxes and nobody will know.” Then all of a sudden I heard footsteps on the stairs. It was El!

“What are you doing, Ed?” she asked. It was too late. I showed El the mess I had made. “Better tell Mom,” she said. I told El how I was afraid Mom would get really mad. I asked her if she thought it would be better not to let her know.

Then El told me something that made a lot of sense. “Ed,” she said, “if you don’t tell Mom the truth, you’ll always feel bad about what happened. If you tell her the truth she’ll understand. That would be the right thing to do.”

So, I walked downstairs and told Mom about the broken lamp. And guess what? She didn’t yell at me or punish me. She said, “That’s okay, Ed. Accidents happen. Telling me was a brave thing to do. Come on, I’ll help you clean up the mess.”

I felt much better after that. Now I know how important it is to tell the truth and to do the right thing.

QUESTIONS
1) How did Ed break the lamp?
2) What decision did Ed have to make?
3) What was El’s advice to Ed?
4) Why did Mom think Ed was brave?
5) How do you feel when you tell the truth?
WHAT IS THE COLOR OF FUN?

Directions: In the picture below, boys and girls are having fun playing together. Color in the scene with your favorite colors.

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CHOOSE THE RIGHT LETTERS

Directions: Fill in the blanks in these sentences with the letters on the right.

D____ ing the right thing.       l
He____ ping other people.       a
Sha____ ing with our friends.    o
Pl____ ying together.            r
IN THE NEWSPAPER

**Directions:** Look in the paper for pictures of people doing things together, like working, playing, or talking. Cut them out and paste them in the space below.

HELP THE DOG FIND HIS BONE

**Directions:** Help the dog find his bone at the end of the maze.
Once there was a young boy named Stefan. He lived with his mother on a quiet street. Stefan had no brothers or sisters, and there were no children in the neighborhood his age. At least once a week he asked his mother if they could get a dog. She always had the same response. “Maybe on your next birthday,” she would say.

One day Stefan was kicking a ball in the front yard when he saw a big brown dog lying in the street. Afraid something might happen to the dog, Stefan called her to the curb. He sat down and patted her for a few minutes, then got up to leave. To Stefan's surprise, the dog got up too, and followed him back to his house. “Go home, girl,” said Stefan, but the dog just stared at him and wagged her tail.

Just then Stefan's mother came out on the porch. “Can we keep her?” he asked.

His mother looked at the dog. “She certainly is a beauty. But she must belong to someone. Try to find her owner. That would be the right thing to do.”

Sadly, Stefan lifted the dog into his wagon and started off down the street. He stopped at every house along the way, but no one had ever seen the dog. Finally, after two hours, Stefan came to an old farmhouse.

Stefan knocked on the screen door. Suddenly the door flew open. “Maria!” said a tall man, “I've been worried sick about you!” The man thanked Stefan for returning his dog.

Stefan walked home, alone again.

On his next birthday, Stefan got a soccer ball and a radio. Another birthday came and went without a dog. That night he heard a knock at the door. He opened it to find the man from the farmhouse with a basket full of little puppies.

“Oh, I'm so glad I've found you,” said the man. “Maria has just had all these puppies, and I can't possibly keep them all. Would you like to pick one for your very own?”

Stefan's mother came down the stairs. “Mother, may I please?” the boy asked.

“Stefan, since you did the right thing by returning Maria to this gentleman, I think it's only fair that you should get your wish. Happy birthday.”

And it was, indeed, the happiest birthday of them all.
Most of you know Dave Thomas from seeing television commercials for Wendy's Restaurants. I bet most of you have eaten one of their famous old-fashioned burgers too! Thomas opened the very first Wendy's in Columbus, Ohio in 1969. He named the restaurant after one of his daughters, Melinda Lou, who was nicknamed “Wendy” by her brothers and sisters.

The company has grown tremendously since that first restaurant. Today there are more than 5,000 Wendy's throughout the world, serving more than 5,000,000 customers a day! With all those Wendy's burgers getting gobbled up, he must be doing something right!

There’s one thing you might not know about Dave Thomas. In the beginning, his life was very tough. He never knew his birth father or mother, but a couple, Rex and Auleva Thomas, adopted him when he was 6 weeks old. Auleva died when Thomas was only 5, and Thomas and Rex moved many times during his childhood. Thomas started working when he was just 12 years old! His first job was delivering groceries in Knoxville, Tennessee. He has been a very hard worker ever since.

Years ago, people were ashamed about being adopted. They thought they were different from other people because their birth parents couldn’t raise them. But Thomas has dedicated his life to telling the world about adoption. He has shown that with the love and support of adoptive parents, a child can grow up to be a wonderful and successful adult.

In 1992, Thomas started the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, which works to make adoptions easier and less expensive. He has written two best-selling books, and donates all of his money from those books to the foundation. Dave Thomas certainly knows how to do the right thing!

**VOCABULARY:**

- Nicknamed: given a made-up or pretend name.
- Tremendously: in a very big way.
- High-quality: very good.
- Dedicated: to work very hard at something.
- Expensive: something that costs a lot of money.
- Donate: to give away.
**TIPS**

1) As always, our children learn the most from our examples. As we expect them to know right from wrong, we must exercise the best judgment in our daily lives. We all make mistakes—if we discuss openly those mistakes we can turn a negative situation into a family learning experience.

2) It’s important for our children to see the consequences of their actions. It’s not enough to reprimand a child for hitting. They must understand how their action hurts another person.

3) Make a family effort to use nice words. Discourage words that are hurtful by making them off limits in the home. Again, it’s important that as adults we respect this rule, too.

4) Lecturing children about right and wrong may not be the most effective way of teaching the difference. Look for books that illustrate this problem and read them together. Watch for situations on television and discuss how characters did the right or wrong thing.

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**FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Helping out around the house is a great way to “do the right thing.” Have a family meeting and let your children decide upon a chore for which they would like to be responsible. The size of the chore is not as important as the responsibility of doing it consistently. Make a simple Monday through Sunday chart and cut out squares with the chore written on it. Tape or tack the squares to the chart each night or each morning when the task has been successfully completed. Perhaps the family can look forward to doing something fun together when the responsibility chart is filled.

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**RESOURCES**


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**FAMILY PLEDGE CARD**

Our family has completed the Family Page together:

______________________________  Child’s name

Family members:

______________________    __________________

______________________    __________________

School: ___________________________________

Teacher/grade: ___________________________

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