

Building Literacy, Character & Life Skills

Professional Development Handout 4 of 6

Stories can help children practice literacy while also thinking about how people treat one another, solve problems, respond to emotions, and make everyday choices.

Key Takeaways

- Literacy includes more than recognizing words; it also includes understanding, discussing, interpreting, and communicating meaning.
- Character and life skills become more concrete when children can see them demonstrated through a situation and its consequences.
- Questions such as 'Why?' 'What might happen next?' and 'What would you do?' encourage reasoning as well as comprehension.
- Useful story discussions can explore kindness, sharing, responsibility, perseverance, honesty, respect, empathy, gratitude, cooperation, courage, patience, self-control, and problem-solving.
- Children benefit when adults help them transfer a lesson from a fictional or animated situation into real life.

Putting It Into Practice

Literacy lens	Ask children to retell, sequence, describe, predict, compare, or explain.
Character lens	Identify the choices characters made and the qualities those choices demonstrated.
Critical-thinking lens	Explore alternatives: What else could the character have done? What might have changed?
Life-skill lens	Connect the situation to school, home, friendships, family, or community.

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Reflection & Discussion

1. How can the same question strengthen both literacy and character development?

2. Which character or life skills are most important for the children you currently serve?

3. How can adults encourage children to disagree respectfully during a story discussion?

4. What helps children transfer a lesson from a story into their own decision-making?

My Next Step

Select one character trait or life skill. Write three questions about a Gracie story that move from understanding the story to applying that trait in everyday life.

Continue Learning: Watch the complete Professional Development series and explore the free Gracie stories and printable activities at GraceLaJoy.com/worksheets.