

The Value of Effort

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social-emotional learning refers to helping children discover and practice ways to undertake life's challenges in a healthy, productive, and cooperative manner. There are five facets of social-emotional learning:

- **Self-respect and awareness**
- **Self-management**
- **Empathy and respect**
- **Social skills**
- **Decision-making**

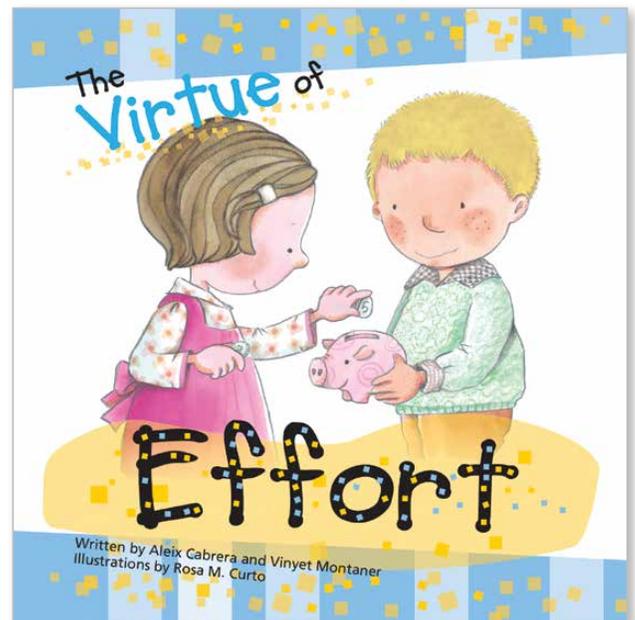
Effort and Social-Emotional Learning

Effort is an important aspect of self-awareness, self-respect, and self-management. Children can be taught to practice the virtue of effort at an early age so that trying their hardest comes naturally and animates all parts of their lives. By practicing this virtue, children will gain the singular satisfaction that comes from doing something to the best of their ability. *The Virtue of Effort* (© Loyola Press) uses simple scenes from daily life to explore the idea of persisting in the face of challenges and setbacks.

Teaching the Value of Effort

- Praise children not only for the effort they expended, but also for how they changed their approach to meet challenges when necessary.
- Allow children to express and work through their own frustrations with a task before offering your help. In addition, instruct children to ask a fellow student for help or clarification before asking you.

- Read aloud stories to young children, such as *The Virtue of Effort*, “The Three Little Pigs,” and “The Tortoise and the Hare.” Pause to discuss events in the story where a character exhibits perseverance and effort. Invite children to make connections to their own lives. The next time you read aloud the story, encourage children to point out instances they recognize.
- Assign classroom jobs to children, such as line leader, lights monitor, class pet helper, librarian, pencil sharpener, weather reporter, calendar kid, and so on. Establish a schedule so that each child has a chance to do each job. Monitor that each job is done well and completely. Praise follow-through.
- Applaud effort on assignments or tests, emphasizing the value of the information or the skill learned as well as any good grades earned.
- Use the scenarios in *The Virtue of Effort* and the activities that follow to highlight the role of effort in social-emotional learning.



I Can Get Dressed!

USE A FAMILIAR song, rhyme, or other cue to let children know that it's time to gather. Use this time as an opportunity to help children see themselves and one another as important members of the classroom community by helping them exercise important social skills, such as respecting others' personal space, listening to and following directions, taking turns, and transitioning from one activity to another.

Children often enjoy hearing a favorite book read aloud several times. So, you may wish to read the entire book to the class a day or two before doing the activity that follows.

MATERIALS

- › *The Virtue of Effort* by Aleix Cabrera and Vinyet Montaner (© Loyola Press, 2020 ISBN 978-0-8294-5036-1)
- › I Can Get Dressed! Children's Page
- › Crayons
- › Glue stick
- › Scissors

1 Begin

Signal children to gather around. Then read aloud "My Colorful Clothes" on pages 6 and 7 in the book. Ask questions to help children deepen their understanding and to give you an insight into their thinking. Open-ended questions like those below teach children to put in the effort necessary to more fully engage with a story.

Ask: ***How do you think the boy feels about getting dressed by himself for the first time? What are some kind words the other children could say to him about how he is dressed? What do you do when you are not able to get something right the first time you try?*** Allow time for children to respond to each question before moving having children return to their seats.

2 Connect

Distribute the worksheets. Read aloud the directions. For groups with children who have not yet developed the fine motor skills necessary to cut and glue the pieces, consider having the children draw clothing and shoes on the figure instead. Allow five to ten minutes for the children to complete the page.

3 Close

Invite children to share their finished work with the class.

Store the children's finished work in a portfolio to assess their progress over time or send the worksheet home with the children so parents and guardians can reinforce the lesson concepts.

The Virtue of Effort

Name _____ Date _____

I Can Get Dressed!

Directions

1. Color the outline of the face of the person to look like you.

2. Color the clothing at the right of the page.

3. Cut out each piece of clothing.

4. Glue the pieces of clothing onto the figure.

The Virtue of Effort • Children's Page • Activity 1

Name _____ Date _____

I Can Get Dressed!

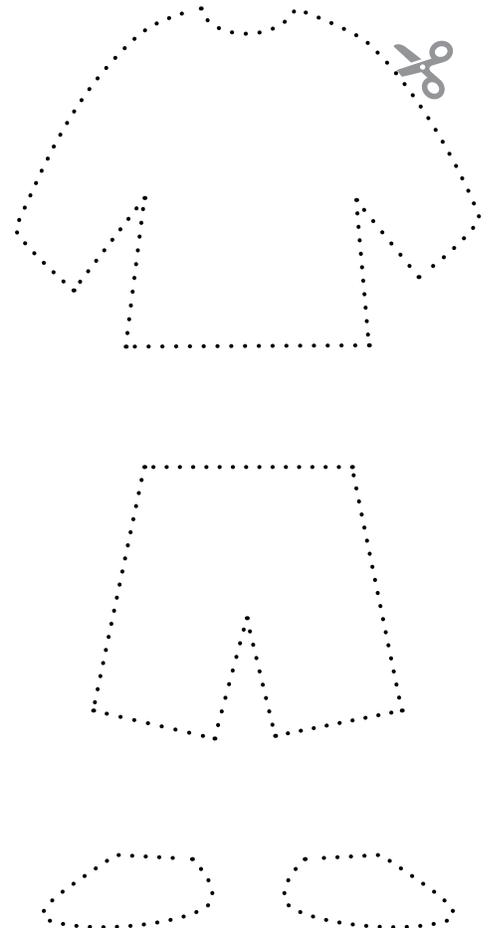
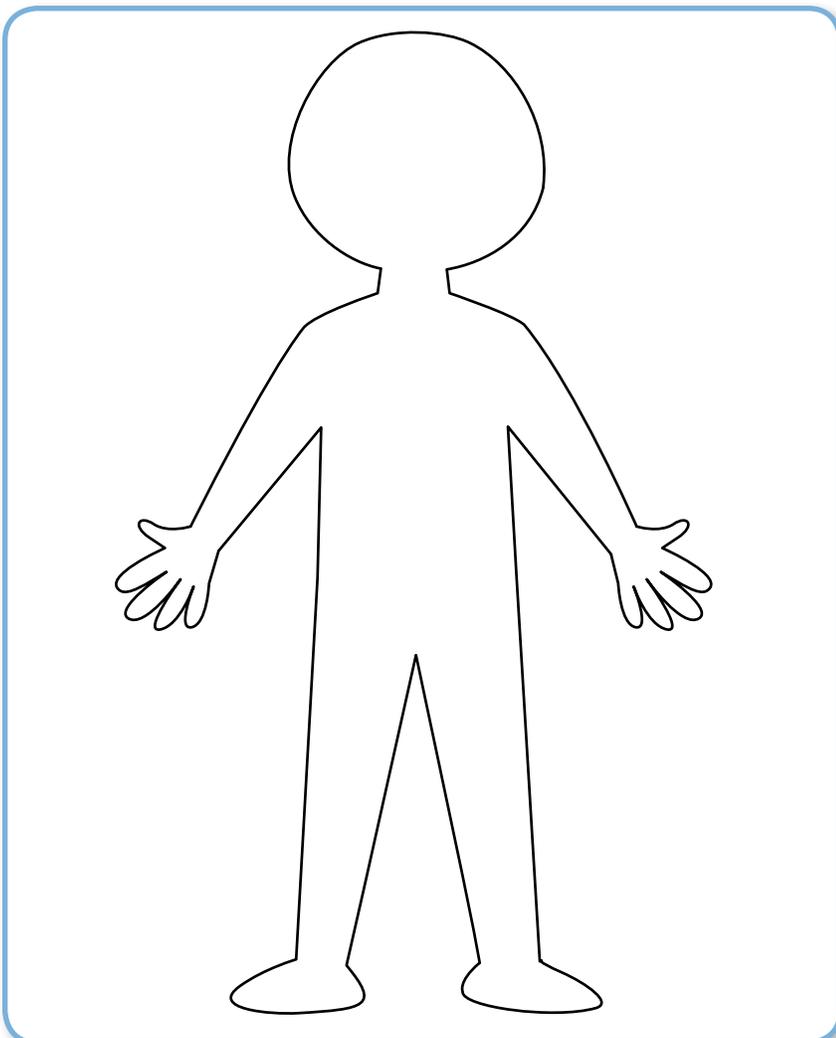
Directions



1. **Color** the outline of the face of the person to look like you.
2. **Color** the clothing at the right of the page.



3. **Cut** out each piece of clothing.
4. **Glue** the pieces of clothing onto the figure.



I Did It!

CHILDREN OFTEN ENJOY HEARING a favorite book read aloud several times. So, you may wish to read the entire book to the class a day or two before doing the activity that follows.

MATERIALS

- › *The Virtue of Effort* by Aleix Cabrera and Vinyet Montaner (© Loyola Press, 2020 ISBN 978-0-8294-5036-1)
- › I Did It! Children's Page
- › Crayons or markers

1 Begin

Signal children to gather around you. Once children have comfortably gathered, read aloud "We've Reached the Peak!" on pages 26 and 27 in the book.

Ask: **How do you feel when you are encouraged to do something you think is too difficult?**

What is something you did that someone encouraged you to do that you didn't think you could accomplish?

How do you think the boy felt when he got to the top of the hill?

What would the boy have missed out on if he had not put in the effort to climb to the peak?

Say: **We all need support and encouragement. We can combine the support and encouragement we get from others with our own efforts to accomplish our goals.** Direct children to return to their seats.

2 Connect

Distribute the Children's Page. Read aloud the directions and walk children through each of the criteria on the My Best Effort Checklist portion. Say: **If you like, include people who encouraged and supported you in your drawing. You will have five minutes to complete your drawing. Be sure to use the time to do your best work.** Allow children time to complete their drawings.

3 Close

After the time for drawing has concluded, guide children in completing the checklist. Invite volunteers to share their drawings and checklists and tell about what they drew. If time allows, have children draw pictures of themselves on the back of the Children's Page taking the steps necessary to reach their next goal. Say: **No matter what we are doing, we should always give it our best effort.**

Store the children's finished work in a portfolio to assess their progress over time or send the Children's Page home with the children so parents and guardians can reinforce the lesson concepts.

The Virtue of Effort

Name _____ Date _____

I Did It!

Directions

- Think** of something that you did that you didn't think you would be able to do.
- Use** three different colors to draw a picture of yourself after you did it that shows how you were feeling.
- Do** your best work on the drawing.

My Best Effort Checklist

Draw a smiley face next to each area where you showed your best effort.

e	I carefully listened to the directions.	😊
🎯	I followed all the directions.	😊
👤	I worked on my drawing the whole time.	😊

The Virtue of Effort • Children's Page • Activity 2

Name _____ Date _____

I Did It!

Directions

- **Think** of something that you did that you didn't think you would be able to do.
- **Use** three different colors to draw a picture of yourself after you did it that shows how you were feeling.
- **Do** your best work on the drawing.



My Best Effort Checklist

Draw a smiley face next to each area where you showed your best effort.

	I carefully listened to the directions.	
	I followed all the directions.	
	I worked on my drawing the whole time.	