

The "Reality" Ride



- Opportunity
- Freedom
- Self Respect

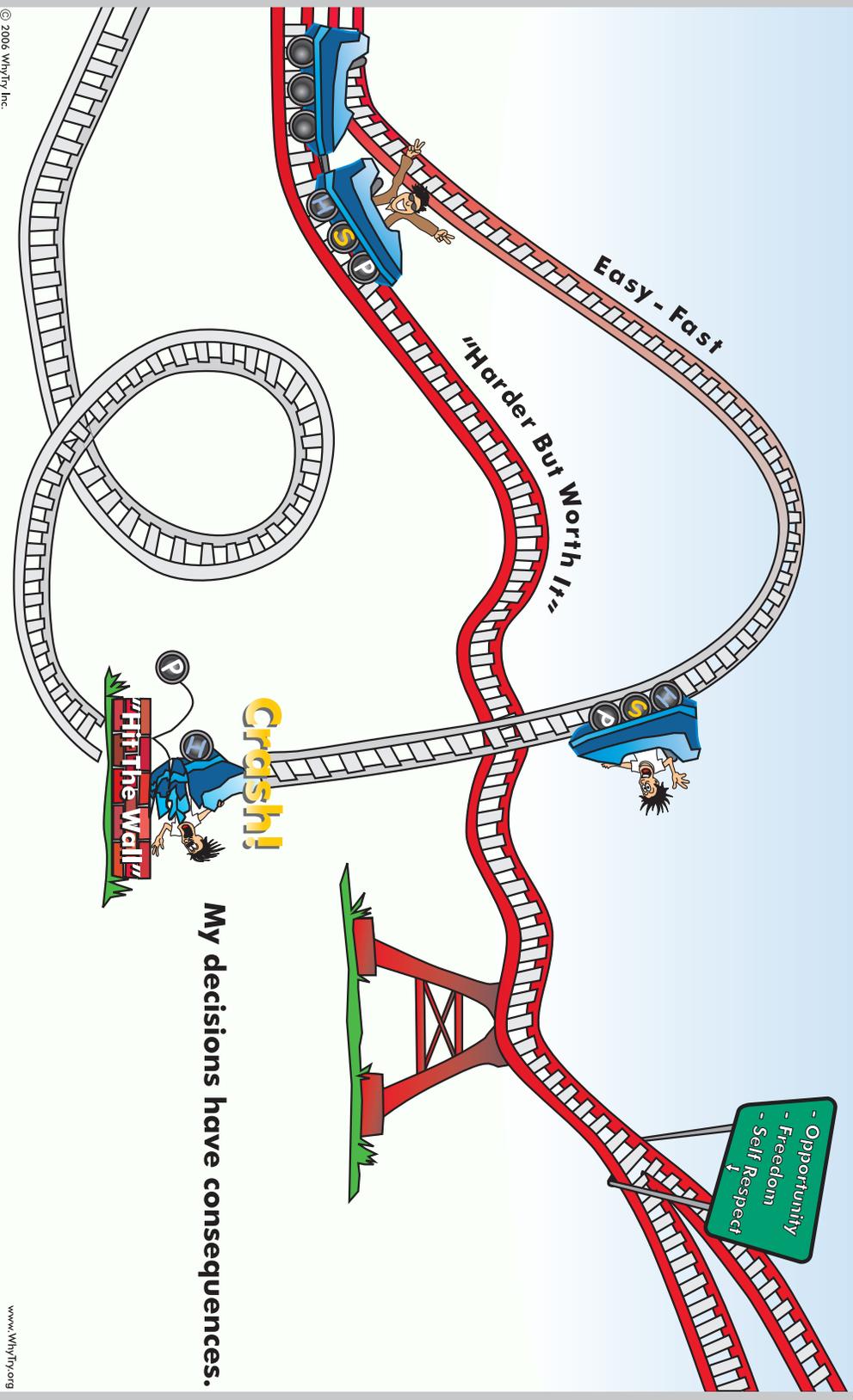
Easy - Fast

"Harder But Worth It"

Crash!

My decisions have consequences.

"Hit the Wall"





Lesson Plan:
(Attention Activity)

“The Finger Game”

Objective:

Help students to see how that they have control over the choices they make and the consequences that follow.

Materials Needed:

None

Activity:

Ask the members of the group to pair off with a partner. Demonstrate by asking one member of the group to come up front with you. Tell the group that you will be asked to put your hands behind your back and on the count of 3 show your fingers to your partner. Each partner in the group will hold up from 0 to 10 fingers. The first person that can count the total number of fingers on their partner’s hands and their own hands is the winner. Demonstrate with your partner. Tell the group that you will have three chances to determine the overall winner. Once everyone is ready count to 3 and ask all partners to show their hands. Do the process 2 more times to determine the overall winners.

Processing the Experience:

Tell the group, “I saw a few of you, (I will not mention any names) that counted your partners fingers and then counted your own.” (As you say this hold your hands up and bob your head up and down as if counting your own fingers)

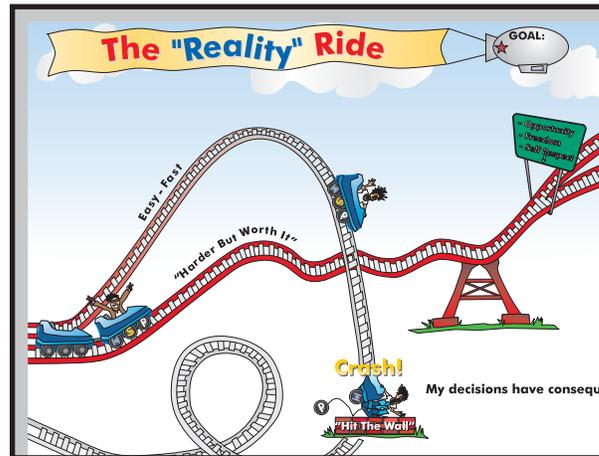
- Should you have known how many fingers you had behind your back?
- Who were the people that usually won the activity? (The ones that knew how many fingers they were going to show their partner)
- Why is it so important to make up your mind before you are faced with a choice that will get you into trouble?
- What does this statement mean?

“When you choose the beginning of the road you also choose your destination.” (or) “You are free to choose, but you are not free to alter the consequence of your choice.”

Visual Analogy Overview

“The Reality Ride”

The reality is that life has both ups and downs. Taking the short ride to the top of the high-risk hill may be fun, but it will ultimately cause you to crash. You can get stuck in the loop of acting-out and crashing over and over. To get out of the loop, you have to choose a different track—one that doesn't go quite so high, but also doesn't go so low that you crash.



Key Concepts:

- Reality
- Goals
- Challenges
- Choices and Consequences
- Harder but worth it
- Opportunity
- Freedom
- Self respect
- Who can help me?
- Stuck in a loop – repeating behaviors
- Getting into trouble
- Harder but worth it
- Stuck in a loop

Vocabulary

While teaching the Overview lesson for the visual analogy “The Reality Ride” you may want to discuss and define the following vocabulary words.

1. Reality:
2. Goals:
3. Challenges:
4. Choices:
5. Consequences:
6. Trouble:
7. Value:

Lesson Plan:

Overview Lesson:

“Reality Ride”

Introduction

Watch a short video segment of roller coasters and/or amusement park rides.

Question:

How many of you have ever ridden on a roller coaster?

- Did you like it?
- What makes the ride fun? Or not fun?
- Do you think you could have stayed on the ride all day? Why not? How long do you think the ride would continue to be fun?

**Emphasize that what can make the ride fun for a while, the big steep climbs and the fast drop offs can get tiring and old after a little while and will eventually make you sick or not feel good.

Show a picture (real or drawing) of a roller coaster or ask the students to think back on the video of the roller coaster.

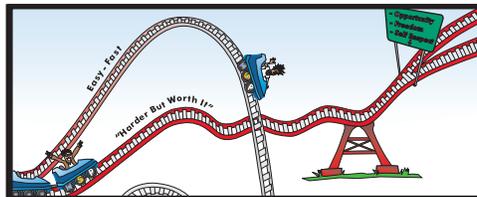
- Look at this roller coaster. Can you see a pattern? What happens each time the roller coaster goes up? (It comes back down)
- What happens when the roller coaster climbs higher more sharply. (It comes down more quickly and sharply.)
- What about the little small inclines? Do they go down as sharply?

Poster:

Show the poster of “The Reality Ride”

Tell students that is a picture of a ride called “the Reality Ride.” Explain that you are going to talk about this ride today and when you are done you will want them to be able to tell you what this ride teaches. Tell students that if they can do that you promise that they will learn one way they can get more Opportunity, Freedom and Self-respect.

The Reality Ride has two different paths you can choose from.



1. Notice the first one. It rises up pretty fast. But then what happens? It drops off very quickly and crashes right into a wall.

2. Now look at the second choice. What happens on this ride? The ride still has ups and downs but their more gradual. Does the ride crash? What happens at the end of the ride? (We don't know but we can see that the rider has more choices ahead so how the ride ends depends on the rider.)

"Reality"

Look at the name of this ride. It is call the Reality Ride. Let's talk a little about what that means.



Question:
What does the word "reality" mean to you?

Discussion:
Emphasize that reality is what is real or what is actually happening in our lives. For example, "Us sitting here looking at this picture right now is reality." Let students know that this picture shows one reality of life: our choices eventually have consequences.

Question:
Reality and Fantasy are opposites. Can you tell me some things that are fantasy?

Write:
Write the words fantasy and reality on the board and have the students make a list of things under each word. Can you tell me some things that are real?

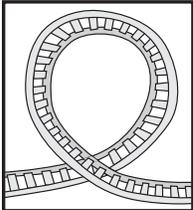
"Choices-Time"

Discussion:
Return to the poster and explain that this is the Reality Ride. Real life can sometimes be like a ride. We have ups and downs. We have challenges and choices. How we chose to deal with our challenges determines which path we take on this ride. Look back at the picture of the reality ride. The car has 3 wheels. These 3 wheels take the rider up and down the ride of life. Each of these wheels has a letter on it that represents a place where you spend a lot of your time.

- The H stands for **Home**.
- The S stands for **School**.
- The P stands for **Peers (Or friends)**



“Choices - Consequences”	<p>Write: List home, school and peers on the poster.</p>
	<p>Discussion: We know that one of the realities of life is that everyone has challenges. Let’s list some of the challenges you might have in each of these 3 places.</p> <p>Write: Home: Too many rules, Parents are too strict, divorce, fighting, not enough money etc, School: Don’t understand, confused, bored, behind, too hard, too much homework etc. Peers: Don’t have a lot of friends, bully’s bother you, don’t fit in, fight with friends or other kids, kids are mean or pick on you, don’t have the “Cool” clothes or shoes, Peers try to get you to do things that get you into trouble.</p>
	<p>**Show that you understand that dealing with these challenges can be tough. You may not have any control over these challenges but you have control over how you deal with them. For example you may not be able to control how much homework you are given but you have control over whether or not you do it.</p> <p>**Go back over the list and have students talk about ways they can deal with these challenges that might get them into trouble. For example: Too much homework, so they don't do it.</p>
	<p>Discussion: Then go over what the consequences are for those choices. For example: Too much homework, don’t do it, get a bad grade, misses recess, gets held back etc. Does that give you more Opportunity, Freedom and Self-respect?</p> <p>Emphasize that whenever you do things that get you into trouble it is like being on the first ride. It may seem like fun for awhile, you may even get away with it for awhile but eventually you will crash. The short-term thrill is not worth the crash.</p> <p>**You may want to point out that the prisons are full of people who made bad decisions that caused them to crash. People in prison don’t have a lot of opportunity or freedom and they probably don’t have much self-respect, because they have hurt themselves and others.</p>
	<p>Question: Look at the two tracks of the reality ride. How are the two tracks different?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first track goes way up then comes down with a crash. The second track doesn't go way up or way down, but is more level. It splits out into two directions in the end.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first track has a loop and it always takes you back to the place that you started. (you may want to point out that the whole first track is like a big loop) The second track continues forward in the same direction and has options. It also leads you towards your goal. • Who can support me? Who are people we listed as support system? • The second path is harder because it continues to climb higher and higher. What is some positive self-talk we can use to stay on that track? 
<p>“Choices-Goals”</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you want to ride on a roller coaster can you just walk up and get on? No, you need a ticket. • Anyone can ride on the first track. You just get on, do the easy thing that gets you in trouble and you always crash. • But To get on this the second track you need something like a ticket. <p>Look up in the top right corner of the picture and read what it says. “Goal”.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to ride on this Reality Ride you need a Goal. What is a goal? • You can pick any goal you want as long as it doesn't break the following rule: “ Your goal cannot hurt yourself or others.” <p>Use the following questions and the poster to finish teaching and summarizing the visual analogy.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What choices will give you opportunity, freedom, and self-respect? •Who can support you? (Help them identify a support system that can help them stop crashing and stay on track.) •What would motivate you to ride here? (Discuss how the reality of the crash can motivate them to get on the other track. What can motivate them to ride on the track that creates options and helps give opportunity in life, freedom, and self-respect.)

•What does each track do to your options? (Point out that the track with the crash takes away their options and opportunities in life, while the other track gives them unlimited options in life.)

Activity:



Conclusion Activity For Overview Lesson

Have students turn to the Introductory Activity page for The Reality Ride chapter of their WhyTry Journals. Or give the students a paper have them each write 3 things about themselves. Have them write one thing that is real and two things that are fantasy. You may want to share three things about yourself as an example. Then have them take turns reading the 3 things and have the class members try to guess which is the reality.

Teaching Tip:

After teaching students this visual analogy, have them teach it back to you. (do this with all of the other 9 visual analogies as well.) This will help you assess students' understanding of what you taught. Keep it light, without pressure; just assess for a general understanding.

As you teach the other analogies, always tie the pictures back into the "reality ride." The other pictures will help keep them on the track to opportunity, freedom and self-respect. Keep reinforcing this!

Remember, although this is a very detailed walk through of the WhyTry Program (Reality Ride), always start where students are and teach it at their own pace. It is also important that you use your own creativity and experiences to bring the pictures alive. This is just your road map through the program. If it is too much information, simplify; if it is too little, add. Most importantly, students must understand the basic concepts of all ten visual analogies. Have fun with the rest of the ride!

Journals:

Review Lesson and Follow-up Activities: "Reality Ride"

Review Lesson:

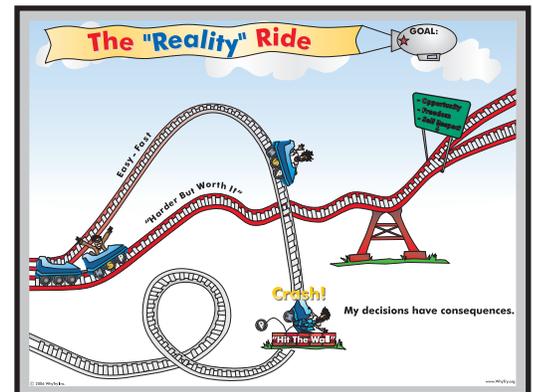
Vocabulary

For the review lesson have students define the vocabulary words in their WhyTry Journals. This will help increase understanding of the analogy and give you an opportunity to assess comprehension and retention from the overview lesson.

1. Goals:
2. Challenges:
3. Choices:
4. Consequences:
5. Trouble:
6. Value:

Visual Analogy

In their WhyTry Journals students have a copy of the visual analogy. Have students use this to do a review/walk through of the analogy. Have them make notes, answer questions, or use a personal example to explain the concept.



Follow-up
Activities



Journal Response Activities

The WhyTry Journals include pages for the following activities: Music Responses, Art Activity Responses, Experiential Activity Responses and Literature Responses and Daily Journal Responses. When using these activities for follow-up choose one or two activities for each category. Once the activity is completed take time to process the experience with a group discussion. Students may complete the activity using the designated journal page or on separate materials. If students use separate papers for the

activity, have them write a response (following group discussion) to the activity on their journal page.

Daily Journal Writing

The WhyTry Journals include 10 response sections for each analogy that are intended to be used for daily journal writing. These are simple review questions that relate to the analogy and are designed to give students an opportunity to make practical application of the analogies and have daily reinforcement.

Music



Music Responses

Listen to "Life's Big Ride" and "Reality Ride" from the WhyTry Elementary and Hip Hop Music CD's. Choose one of the discussion questions from each song to have students respond to in their WhyTry Journals.

Music Response:

"Life's Big Ride"

- Where are you in "life's big ride"? How do you think your life would be different if you changed the way you act or changed tracks?
- What does it mean to build bridges? How can it help you on your reality ride?
- What does it mean to build fences? How can it hurt you on the reality ride?
- What do you think the author means when he says, "your life will follow your commands"?
- What does the author mean when he says, you "gotta treat this ride respectfully?" In what ways can you treat "life's big ride" respectfully?

Hip Hop "Reality Ride"

- This song talks about "two tracks from which to choose, the one where you win and the one where you lose." How can you decide which track is the one where you win?
- The song says that, "the first track seems easy at first until you hit the wall when your bubble bursts." What does that mean? What happens when you hit the wall?
- One part of the song says, "Yo the second track is harder but worth it you've got to set a goal stick to it and work it, Work a little harder"

look what you get, Opportunity Freedom and Self-Respect.” Tell about a time you did something that was “harder but worth it.”

- What are some things the song says you can do if you get stuck in the loop?

Art



Art Activities

Choose one or two of the following art activities. The art project may be done by students in their WhyTry Journals or you may want to use other materials. If you use other materials use the Art Response pages in their journals to have students respond to one or more of the discussion ideas.

Art Prompts:

- Draw a picture of your own “reality ride”. Label some things that might cause you to crash as well as some things that could help you stay on track.
- Where do you think you are on your reality ride? Do you think you are on a track that leads to opportunity? Why?
- Draw a line to divide paper in half. On one side draw a picture of something real about yourself then on the other side draw a fantasy picture about yourself. **Have as many as want to or time allows share their pictures and see if the class can guess which thing is the reality and which is the fantasy.
- Have students draw a picture that represents a goal that they have. Have them list some choices they have to make in order to reach that goal.
- Who Supports Me Pyramid: Have students create a simple pyramid made out of squares on their paper. In the top square have them draw and label themselves. In each of the squares underneath have them draw and label individuals in their life who support them and want to see them succeed.
- Mapping Out the Course: Have students identify a goal they want to achieve. Then have them create a map that shows the way to get to their goal. Have them identify several specific steps that they need to follow to reach their goal.
- Game of Life: Have students create a board game that represents the choices and consequences they may have along the way to achieve their goals. You may want to show them some sample board games for ideas.

Experiential Learning



“ON THE BRINK”

Experiential Activities

Choose one or two of the following activities. After the activity is completed have students use one of the Activity Response pages in their journals to respond to one or more of the discussion ideas from the Processing the Experience section of the activity instructions.

Level: 2nd thru 6th

Objective: Too often trouble starts out as fun. This activity is to help kids see that they can have fun but they need to make decisions that keep them from crossing over the line of “fun” to the areas that get them into “trouble”. Often youth don’t plan to get into trouble they just think it is a way to carry their “fun” further and don’t think of the consequences. The message is “have fun but don’t cross the line”. (This activity may also apply when teaching about rules and laws in “Lifting the Weight”)

Materials Needed:

- A penny for each team
- A ruler, paper and pencil for each team
- Desk or table space for each team

Activity:

Divide class into partners and have them sit opposite each other at a desk or table. Make sure that they are at least 18 inches apart. Give each pair a penny. Explain that the rules of the game are to slide the penny across the top of the table and see how close you can come to the opposite edge without going off the table. They can slide the penny by flicking it with their finger. Partners take turns shooting the penny back and forth and to help retrieve their partners shot if it goes over the edge. Give students a few minutes to practice sliding their penny across the tabletop

After a few minutes of practice give each student five tries to get as close to the opposite edge of the table as possible. Have students use a ruler to measure each try. After each of the five attempts have them record their distances then add all the distances together. A penny off the edge would be counted as 15-inch penalty. The winner would be the one with the smallest total number. (If a penny goes over the edge but doesn’t fall count as penalty. The point is to not cross the line)

Processing the Experience:

- During the practice time did you find a way to shoot the penny that you thought worked best? What?

**“THE HARDER
I WORK THE
LUCKIER I
GET”**

- How hard was it to control where the penny would stop?
- How hard was it to stop the penny right next to the edge?
- How easy is it for fun to cross the line and turn into trouble?
- What are some strategies we can use keep from crossing the line from fun to trouble?
- How can having a strategy or plan (make decisions) ahead of time help us to stay away from the line of trouble?

Level: 2nd thru 6th

Objective:

Often people think that what happens to them in life is the result of luck. Because of this they don't take responsibility for what happens to them. Rather than having goals these individuals merely react to the events that happen each day and make decisions based on daily circumstances. When we take responsibility for our lives and make decisions based on goals we have set then we realize the luck doesn't control our lives, we do. Once we realize this we will quit waiting for good luck to strike and start making our own luck. The concept is "the harder I work the luckier I get". The object of this activity is to help kids realize that the way to succeed in life is by setting goals and then taking personal responsibility to reach your goals.

(This activity could also apply to "Lifting the Weight")

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pencil for each student
- A coin for each student

Activity:

Give each student a coin, a paper, and a pencil. Have them number their paper one through ten. Have them flip (shake in hands then flip it over on the back of one of their hands) the coin ten times. Before each flip, they must make a guess as to whether the coin will come up heads or tails. Have them write down their guess each time before they flip the coin. Then after they flip the coin have each person write down whether or not they guessed correctly. Have students record guesses with an "H" for heads and a "T" for tails. After everyone has completed their ten flips, have them report out to the class how many times they guessed accurately.

Next have students repeat the activity with a partner. This time, however, have them try to guess the results of two coins per flip. Have each team number their paper one through ten. Then have them draw two columns labeled "Me" and "Partner". This time to be right, they will have to correctly guess which way both coins will land. Once again have each student record their guesses before the coins are flipped. Then have both partners flip their coins at the same time then record the results. Finally, after all pairs complete their ten coin flips, have each person report to the

class how many times they guessed correctly.

Processing the Experience:

- Was it easier to guess with one coin or with two?
- What role did luck play in this activity?
- Would you want to rely on a coin toss (Luck) to make a really important decision in your life?
- Can we depend on luck to make us succeed in reaching our goals?
- How can we make the odds better that we achieve our goals?
- Is "Luck" real?
- Whose responsibility is it to make our own luck?
- In reality what is the best way to reach our goals?

**"NOW OR
LATER"**

Level: 3rd thru 6th

Objective:

One question we need to answer on a daily bases is whether what we want today is more important then what we want in the future. This activity is designed to help students consider how the choices they make today will affect their goals of tomorrow.

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pencil for each student
- 2 pennies, 1 nickel, 1 dime, 1 quarter and 1 dollar bill (you will give away the quarter)
- A dollar bill wrapped up in a box like a present (you might give away another quarter or the dollar bill)

Activity:

Ahead of time wrap up a dollar bill to look like a small present. Give each student a piece of paper and have them write down 3-5 goals they would like to accomplish in the next 10 years. Next, give everyone a few minutes to share their goals with a partner. Then have each student write down one secret goal that they think would make them happier than anything they can imagine.

Next, choose a volunteer to help you with a demonstration. Show the volunteer a penny and a nickel. Ask the volunteer which coin they would rather have, the penny or the nickel. If they choose the penny, thank them and have them sit down and start over with another student. If they choose the nickel, then give it to them. Now put away the penny and bring out a dime. Ask them which they would rather have, the nickel or the dime. If they want the dime, give it to them and take back the nickel. Now bring out a quarter and ask them which they would rather have the dime or the quarter. If they want the quarter take back the dime and give them the quarter. Thank them and have them return to their seat.

Choose another volunteer and tell this person that you will be offering them money also. However you also have this box. Bring out the box that is wrapped up like a present. Explain that they can either take the money that you offer them or they can hold out and get what is in the box at the very end. If at any time they accept the money you offer them, then they will not be offered the box at the end. Ask them if they want a penny or if they want to hold out for the box. Continue with the nickel, dime and quarter. If at anytime they accept the money, thank them and have them return to their seat. Then reveal what was in the box. Ask them if now that they know what they gave up they wish they would have held out for the box.

If they refused to take any of the coins then tell them that because of decisions they have made they are now eligible for what is in the box. Then give them the box and have them open it. Ask if they are glad that they waited for what was in the box. Explain that if they had taken any of the coins offered them they would have been happy for the moment. However, they would have been disappointed later because they gave up something better for what made them happy at the moment.

Have them write at the bottom of their paper. "The chief cause of unhappiness and failure is sacrificing what is wanted most for what is wanted at the moment."

Processing the Experience:

Look at the reality ride

- How can having a goal help you decide which track of the reality ride you are going to ride on?
- What is meant by "The chief cause of unhappiness and failure is sacrificing what is wanted most for what is wanted at the moment?"
- How does that relate to the phrase on the reality ride "harder but worth it"?
- How hard was it to think of five goals?
- Did you have a hard time thinking of one goal that would make you the happiest?
- Would you have made different choices than the volunteers?
- How can the decisions you make today affect or change your future?

"PAST TO PRESENT"

Level: 3rd thru 6th

Objective:

To avoid repeating past mistakes it is helpful to reflect on how your thoughts, feelings and actions have changed over time. When students realize that as they grow and change some of their goals, likes and dislikes also change it can help them to be more purposeful and thoughtful in the decisions they make today. This activity will help students to think about

ways they have changed already as well as areas where they still feel or act the same. This can be especially helpful in trying to show some past mistakes or challenges that they have overcome or are no longer doing.

Materials Needed:

- Past to Present worksheet for each student
- Pen/pencil for each student

Activity:

Create a "Past to Present" worksheet and make copies for each student. (Some sample questions follow) Give each student a worksheet and pencil and allow time to fill out the work sheet. Then discuss in small groups or as a class some of the answers they listed.

Sample Past to Present worksheet:

7. Last year my favorite subject in school was _____, and this year it is _____.
8. Last year my favorite T.V. show was _____, and this year it is _____.
9. When I was younger the biggest problem I had was _____, now the biggest problem I have is _____.
10. When I was little I used to wonder about _____, now I wonder about _____.
11. When I was little I used to worry about _____, but now I worry about _____ or now I know _____.
12. When I was little I used to think _____, but now I know _____.
13. When I was little I used to wish _____, but now I wish _____.
14. Five years ago my best friend was _____, now my best friend is _____.
15. My Parents used to _____, but now they _____.
16. I used to get into trouble when I _____, but now I _____.

Processing the Experience:

- What are some of the things that have changed since you were little? (a year ago etc.)
- What are some things that are the same?
- How do you feel now about some of the things you used to think or want or do?
- How does thinking about the changes in the way you think, feel, and/or act help you to avoid repeating past mistakes or bad behaviors?
- What have you learned from the past about yourself?
- What are some times in life when it might be a good or helpful idea to think about the growth and changes you have made? How will this help you when making a choice?

“The Keys To Staying on Track”

Level: 3rd thru 6th

Objective:

Individuals who are involved in self-defeating behaviors, do not understand the impact they have on themselves, family, work, school, and society. Self-defeating behaviors are easy to do. It's harder, but worth it, to stay on track and work toward ambitions, dreams, and goals. Doors will open and opportunities will be available to the person who stays on track. Freedom, and self-respect follow those who stay on “track”. It is not always easy, but in the long run it is worth it.

Materials Needed:

- 30 laminated pieces of card stock (8 1/2" by 5-1/2 ") with the same number on both sides (from 1 to 30)
- Masking tape
- Timer/stop watch
- Whiteboard and markers
- Permanent marker

Preparation prior to beginning:

Beforehand, set up a rectangular shape (12' by 24') on the floor with the masking tape. Place the numbered card stock on the floor inside the rectangle in random order with the even numbers spaced on one half of the floor, inside the rectangle, and the odd numbers on the other half. (see chart on the following page) Set it up in an area where the group cannot see it until they start the activity. Make a starting/ending line 20 feet away from the rectangle with masking tape. Explain the activity, away from the playing field in another room. Draw on the whiteboard the rectangle and a few of the numbers inside the rectangle as an example. (Do not tell them that there are 30 numbers) Tell the following story to set the stage for the activity.

**A diagram showing the set up of this activity can be found on pg. 44 of the regular WhyTry teachers manual.

Activity:

(Explanation of activity to the group)

Your group has been selected to compete for a contract to build a railroad to connect the tip of South America to Alaska. The people awarding the contract have come up with an activity to test how you work under pressure, time deadlines, team work, and problem solving skills. Each member of the group needs to touch the numbered card stock (the card stock represents railroad ties) in numerical order (1 through 30). One player runs in and touches the #1 and comes back out. The second player runs in and touches #2 and comes back out etc. Each member in the group needs to touch at least one of the numbers. A group member needs to be out of the rectangle before the next group member comes in to touch a number. A 10

second penalty will be assessed for each number touched out of order, 2 people in at the same time, or a person in the group not touching a number. In order for the group to get the contract, they need to do the activity under 1 minute and 25 seconds. They have 4 attempts to get the contract. Give the group 3 to 5 minutes to plan the activity without you in the room. After the planning is over, bring the group to the starting line and ask if there are any final questions. Start the group and start the timer.

Notes to the facilitator:

As the group is going through the activity keep track of penalties. Stop the timer when the last person in the group is over the starting/ending line. Give the group their time and penalties and 3 to 4 minutes to process. Start the processing by asking the group what they learned and what they can do better. Continue for 3 more attempts. After the 4th attempt or when they get under the 1:25, process the activity.

Processing the Experience:

- What were some of the challenges of the task?
- Did you make the same mistake more than once? What was it?
- What mistakes did you correct in the activity?
- What type of team work was displayed in the activity?
- By accomplishing your goal, what kind of opportunities were opened up for your group?
- What consequences came as a result of a penalties?
- What would have happened if a member of the group said, "This is stupid and I am not going to do it"?
- What motivated you to stay with the activity and not quit or give up?
- What challenges do you face in your life?
- What are some consequences in life that come as a result of a crashing (penalty)?
- What were some of the principles that helped you accomplish the task?
- How would these principles help on the path to opportunity, freedom and self-respect?

**"LINCOLN'S
CHOICE CHAL-
LENGE"**

Level: K thru 6th

Objective:

Staying on the right track involves making a lot of choices. This activity is designed to help students realize the importance of taking control of their choices and not leaving them up to someone else or chance. It can be a lot harder to reach our goals when we leave our choices up to others.

Materials Needed:

- A penny for each team
- Cards with directions written on them, give one easy and one hard

per card. One direction will be for “heads” and one will be for “tails”.

- A course for a race
- A prize at the end of the race (optional)

Activity:

Ahead of time determine and set up a course for your race. Divide the class into teams of 4 or 5. Depending on the age and ability of your students you may want to have obstacles and or challenges along the course but have the same course set up for each team. At intervals have markers with cards that give 2 sets of directions, one for “heads” and one for “tails”. The team then flips a coin to determine which choice they are making and then they must follow that direction before continuing to the next marker. Teams continue along the course until reaching the finish line. The first team is the winner. You may have a prize or treat for the winning team.

Processing the Experience:

- If your team won, why do you think you won?
- If your team lost, why do you think you lost?
- Was this race easy or hard? What made it hard? What made it easy?
- What would have made this race easier?
- If you could have would you have made choices different from what the coin made?
- How did you feel when the coin made a choice different from what you would have chosen?
- Is leaving choices up to chance a good idea? Why or why not?
- How does being in control of your choices lead to more opportunity, freedom and self-respect? Keep you on the right track? Reach your goal?

**“MOST HOR-
RIBLE MOST
EXCELLENT”**

Level: 3rd thru 6th

Objective:

When something good or bad happens to us it is good to recognize if we did something that directly or indirectly led to that event. This self-evaluation is important for getting out of the loop or staying on the right track. This activity will give students an opportunity to reflect on ways they may have contributed to both the good things that happened to them as well as the bad. This will help them see the value of desisting in behaviors that are getting them into trouble and motivate the to continue with behaviors that are positive.

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pencil for each student

Activity:

Give each student a piece of paper. Have them fold the paper in half. Have them label one half of the paper “Most Horrible” and the other half “Most Excellent”. Direct students to write, on the “most horrible” side of the

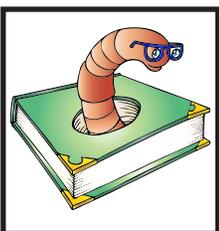
paper, the three worst things that happened to them in the last week or month. Then have them write the three best things that happened to them on the “most excellent” side of the paper. Divide the students into groups or as a whole class share some of the things students wrote under each heading. Explain to students that sometimes bad and good things happen that are completely out of our control, like another car running a red light and hitting your car. But, often we do things directly or indirectly that can contribute to the events. For example staying up late to watch a movie on TV and then doing poorly on a test the next day. As a class go over some examples of good and bad things that happened and what may be possible behaviors that contributed to these events. Really try to get students to think of any possible behaviors that could have contributed in any way. Next direct students to look again at the things they listed on their paper. Have them determine if there was any action of their part that may have directly or indirectly contributed to the event. Have them list anything they can come up with. If you have time you may have some share what they listed.

You may also want to do this in conjunction with reading the story “Alexander, and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” by, Judith Voirst. (Why Try Elementary Book list and Why Try Elementary Journal, Literature Response Activity)

Processing the Experience:

- What are some of the “most horrible” things you listed?
- In what way did you directly contribute to that happening? Indirectly?
- Can you do anything to prevent this from happening again?
- In what ways is this like getting out of the loop?
- What are some of the “most excellent” things you listed?
- In what way did you directly contribute to that happening? Indirectly?
- What can you do to try to have this happen again?
- In what ways is this like staying on the right track?
- What can you do when something bad happens that you cannot control?
- How do you feel when something good happens that is not in your control? How should you behave?

Literature



Story Response

Choose one or two stories below to read aloud to your students. Discuss with your students how the story relates to the Reality Ride. Choose a Literature Response Activity and have them respond to the activity in their WhyTry Journals or other paper

“Garden of Abul Gasazi”

By Chris Van Allsburg

Allan agrees to take care of the bad-mannered dog, Fritz, who loves to eat hats and tear up the furniture. When he runs off into the garden of retired magician, Mr. Gasazi, Allan is sure Fritz will be lost forever. This story serves as a good introduction to the differences between reality and fantasy.

“Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day”

By Judith Voirst

Poor Alexander! He woke up with gum in his hair; his mom forgot to put dessert in his lunch bag; there were lima beans for dinner, and kissing on TV even the cat refuses to sleep in his bed. Some days are just like that. Alexander's awful day is the perfect lead-off for a discussion about the about the challenges of childhood and how our reactions to those challenges can affect us. It is insightful and humorous and a good way for kids to see that everyone has challenges

“David Gets in Trouble” (and the other “David” books)

By David Shannon

“No” and “David” were the first words David Shannon learned how to spell and “No, David!” is based on a book he made as a child. In this book, it's David's turn to talk back. What does he say when he gets in trouble? “I didn't mean to,” “It was an accident!” “I forgot!” “But Dad says it!” Of course, David wins us over in the end. A defiant “No, it wasn't me!” evolves into a guilt-ridden, late-at-night shout, “Yes! It was me! I'm sorry. I love you, Mom.” This is great for illustrating and discussing “What gets me into trouble”, consequences of choices and personally responsibility.

“The Little Red Lighthouse”

By Hildegarde Swift

This book is a powerful metaphor for young children, that something little can still be important in a world where some things are much bigger. Also, the story is “true,” real in the very real sense that you can see the great gray bridge and see the little red lighthouse, which is never ever going to be torn down just because of this book. The idea that stories can be true is a very important idea for young readers to absorb and can lead to a great discussion about reality (non fiction) and fantasy (fiction). The Little Red Lighthouse And The Great Gray Bridge includes a fascinating afterword on the back cover about the history of the real lighthouse and bridge, portrayed in this story, to further enlighten. This classic also touches on the concepts of opportunity and self respect.

“The Story About Ping”

By Marjorie Flack

This book has a simple moral, that many times, simply accepting an unpleasant consequence is better than trying to avoid it. The story is about Ping, a duck, that realizes that he will be the last duck to board the boat (and thus get a whack upon his back). The book really taps into a young child's fears. I remember being thrilled that Ping ran away instead of accepting his punishment. What small child hasn't fantasized about running away? And I remember thinking how terrifying to wake up and find that you were totally lost in the wide world. What child's greatest fear isn't that sort of separation? This is a great book for discussing how a bad choice can lead to a “crash,” and that sometimes the right choice seems harder

but ends up being worth it in the end.

“The Lamb and the Butterfly”

By Arnold Sungaard and Eric Carle

A lamb and a butterfly have a conversation during which the habits and behavioral traits of each creature are revealed. The lamb is bound by rules and closely tied to its mother's side; the butterfly, on the other hand, is free of rules and of maternal bonds. Comparisons can be made by readers about the way of life that each creature is destined to follow. But when storms arise and dangers appear, the freedom enjoyed by the butterfly is no longer to be coveted. Readers can move still one step further as the lamb comes to see that the butterfly has no choice and must fly south to escape the freezing cold weather against which it has no protection. Which track do you chose, and Opportunity, Freedom, and Self-respect.

“Magic Fish”

By Freya Littledale and Winslow Pinney Pels

This folk tale is similar to the original grim fairy tales in that it has something of a sense of menace and danger about it, and also lacks the now-requisite happy ending. It tells the story of a fisherman who earns the favor of a magic fish through his own good-heartedness. He has no thought of reward, but his wife convinces him to ask the fish to upgrade their hut to a house, which the fish seems happy to do. But then the wife continues to want more and more. Every time the fisherman goes to ask the fish for something else, the sea is stormier, although the fish says nothing. In the end, the fish decides that the wife has asked for too much, and takes away everything. The characters and their relationship to each other provide for an instructive discussion about why we do favors, and why we should be reasonable in our requests. It also tells us a lot about what it takes to be happy. Choice and consequences, goals, opportunity, and self-respect.