Lesson 4.11  Developing a Work Ethic

Objectives: Students will be able to:
1) Define “work ethic” and identify the components.
2) Describe the benefits of a work ethic.
3) Practice a work ethic and reflect on the experience.

Materials Needed: □ Handout 4.11.1

Bell Ringer
Pretend you are starting a company.
What product will your company make and sell?
What is a name for your company?

Introduce Lesson & Essential Questions
Today we will explore what it means to exhibit a work ethic.
[Ask volunteers to read aloud the Essential Questions.]
• What is a work ethic?
• What are the benefits of having a work ethic?
• How can we develop a work ethic?

What to Look for in an Employee
[Have students form groups of 3-4 young “entrepreneurs”]
Good news! Your company is taking off! You need to hire employees in sales, production, and bookkeeping. Meet with your group to discuss what to look for when hiring employees.
• State the name of your company and the product you’re selling.
• Identify traits you will be looking for in new hires.
• Agree on at least five traits as a group. Rank order them 1-5.

What is a Work Ethic?
A dictionary definition of work ethic is as follows:
A belief in the importance and intrinsic value of work and its inherent ability to strengthen character.
[Click to reveal the quote from Wayne Gretzky, widely purported to be the best hockey player of all time in the NHL.]
➢ How does Wayne Gretzky display a work ethic as provided in this definition?

Components of a Work Ethic
How many of these traits did you include on your group list?
• Dedication: Devoting time, energy, and effort to a project.
• Reliability: Following through on commitments.
• Honesty: Being truthful and trustworthy in all situations.
• Teamwork: Working well with others to complete a project.
• Initiative: Taking action to improve the quality of work that you perform.
**How Do You Display a Work Ethic?**
Think about the different types of work you do, including schoolwork, household chores, and paid work outside the home. On the handout, make a check next to the components of a work ethic you display. Star your three strongest traits.

[CLICK to next slide. Have students offer antonyms for each of the traits on the slide, e.g., undependable, undedicated, shirker, etc.]

- When have you observed these behaviors, which are the opposite of a work ethic, in a workplace setting (no names, please)?

**What Employers Think**

[SHOW VIDEO (2:30 minutes). Have students discuss the following questions in their groups and then as a class.]

- What are the opinions and expectations of these employers? (Expect employees to be on time, ready to work, honest, respectful, take responsibility for their actions, etc.)

Let’s do a “Quadruple A” reflection: In this video, what do you:

- Agree with?
- Argue with?
- Appreciate?
- Think “Aha, I hadn’t thought of it that way?”

- What are your expectations of an employer?

**Employee Protections T/F Quiz**

U.S. labor laws protect employee rights. Take this True/False Quiz to see what you know about these safeguards.

1. **Employee rights must be posted in the work-place.** (True. They must be visibly posted, e.g., on a bulletin board.)

2. **Children under the age of 14 may be employed if they have a work permit.** (False. If you are under the age of 18, you need a work permit, but, with the exception of agricultural work, children 14 and under may not receive a work permit. This protects children from being forced to work.)

3. **Most hourly employees are entitled to overtime pay if they work more than 40 hours/week.** (True. There are some state exceptions.)

4. **Employers are required to pay double-time for hours worked on holidays.** (False. Employers are not required to pay double-time on holidays, but many do.)

5. **Employers may fire employees for any reason.** (False. Employers may not fire employees based on race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.)

**Wrap Up**

[Review the essential questions.]

**Reflection/Application**

Select one trait that indicates a work ethic. Apply this trait whenever you can over the coming week. Then write about it:

- What indicator of the work ethic did you apply?
- What were the results?
- How did you feel afterward?
- Will you continue to apply a work ethic in your life? Why or why not?