



CORE LIFE AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

“The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.” ~Billy Graham

Introduction:

There has long existed an implied separation in the roles of public education and religious education regarding their respective areas of responsibility. While schools were to provide the foundation for academic, citizenship, and vocational success, religious institutions were to address faith and sound moral character development. The distinctions were never clear cut and overlapped especially in the development of personal, interpersonal, and social traits. Both institutions found it impossible to separate clearly a child’s body, mind, and spirit; and all eventually agreed that it was in the child’s best interest that the home, school, community, and religious institutions cooperate in providing instruction and experiences essential for building positive character associated with healthy, happy, and productive lives.

Core Life has identified fifteen character traits that serve as core building blocks for students’ personal, social, and academic success. These traits have endured by being consistently embraced by parents, educators, and religious leaders. The Core Life program is currently being used within selected schools and has proven successful in developing positive student behavior, as well as creating a more favorable school learning environment. Additionally, the program’s theoretical foundation is “Developmental Assets,” a conceptual framework developed by the Search Institute in 1990 to study young people. Since formed, over 4 million young people across the United States have been involved in the developmental assets research, and the model has become the foundation for many community coalitions that serve individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

The Core Life program was designed as a time-saving guide to assist teachers, principals, religious leaders, and other community leaders in the demanding challenge of consistently sharing in the development of the core character traits that benefit each child in academic and life success. The program components include student leaflets, teacher’s lesson plans, and parent cards for each of the 15 character traits. Using these materials along with the spiritual lessons and books will serve to minimize the effort of the leader and will encourage parents, religious leaders/educators, and public school personnel to work together to ensure a successful future for all our children.

Implementation Ideas:

- Support established community groups by participating in community-wide events.
- Use Core Life materials in the 3rd grade classrooms of Christian schools.
- Adapt Core Life materials for use in preschool programs.
- Plan church-wide family events that address Core Life principles.