

# A Pot of Responsibility

This lesson demonstrates how being responsible takes perseverance and also integrity and courage.

**Kindness Concept(s)**

Responsibility, Integrity, Honesty, Courage, Kindness

**Lesson Timeframe**

35-45 minutes

**Required Materials**

- "The Empty Pot" - by Demi  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9K-sAKdk2Y>
- Fill Your Pot with Responsibility handout

**Standards Map**

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

**Lesson Objective**

Students will:

- Define perseverance.
- Discuss how being responsible takes perseverance, integrity, and courage.
- Identify ways to demonstrate responsibility as 1st graders.

**Teacher Connection/Self-Care**

How much water do you use at school? Do you think about it? This week, make a conscious effort to conserve where you can- check the bathrooms for running faucets, wash items together instead of one at a time, and report any running toilets to the janitorial staff. Every drop counts!

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- The story incorporates lessons about integrity and courage. If you have completed these units already, test students' knowledge/memory of those definitions. If you have not completed these units, definitions have been provided.

**Share**

7-10 minutes

Review the definition of **responsibility** - see if students can remember what it is: *being reliable to do the things that are expected or required of you.*

Introduce the definition of **perseverance** - you can define this differently, but essentially, perseverance means trying our best, even when it gets hard, until we reach our goal.

**Ask** students to share something they have accomplished that required perseverance - it can be as simple as finishing a puzzle or as big as winning first place in a competition.



## Inspire

12-15 minutes

**Read:** "The Empty Pot," by Demi

**Read Aloud Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9K-sAKdk2Y> (7 min)

When finished, discuss the following questions:

- What was Ping's special gift?
- How was the emperor going to choose his successor (the next emperor)?
- What happened to Ping's seed?
- Why did every other child's seed grow? (HINT: It didn't! All of the seeds were cooked so they could not grow, which means those children cheated and all planted new seeds.)
- Why did the emperor choose Ping as his successor even though he brought an empty pot? (He was the only child who was honest and tried to tend and grow the seed he was given. And, even though he only had an empty pot, he brought his best efforts to the emperor and did not cheat.)

Tending to a seed that would not grow took **perseverance** - and even then, Ping did not reach his ultimate goal. He did not grow a beautiful flower. In the end, this did not matter to the emperor. What mattered was that he was honest and did his best given his circumstances. This shows **integrity, honesty, courage, and responsibility**.

*If you have completed the Integrity or Courage units as part of the RAK Kindness in the Classroom curriculum, review those definitions now. If you have not, use the following definitions:*

- **Integrity:** Acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations.
- **Courage:** Being brave when facing new or difficult circumstances.



## Empower

10-12 minutes

Give each student a *Fill Your Pot with Responsibility* handout.

### Instructions:

- As a class, brainstorm the different things that 2nd graders are responsible for. Examples might be:
  - Do homework
  - Get lots of sleep
  - Practice reading
  - Make bed /clean room
  - Eat healthy foods
  - Be a good friend
  - Follow the rules
  - Listen carefully
  - Use kind words
- You can write these things on the board and students should write them down in their pot.
- Once students have "filled" their pot with their responsibilities, invite them to draw a beautiful flower coming out from the pot. Explain that

when we do what we are responsible for, we create an environment where we grow and thrive and become our best - just like the beautiful flowers Ping grew.



## Reflect

3-5 minutes

Have students share their flowers and circle one responsible action in their pot that they are going to work extra hard on this week. At the end of the week, follow-up with students on what they said they were going to work on. Invite them to share how it went and give an example where they practiced that act of responsibility.



## Extension Ideas

- Hang up the flowers around the room or on a bulletin board as a reminder for all the things 1st graders are responsible for and what can happen when they make responsible choices - great things bloom!
- Have students plant real flowers and tend them in class. This can be a part of a science unit. You might also cook the seeds, just as the emperor did, without telling students, and see how they react when nothing grows. How does this challenge their ability to persevere through a challenge?



The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

## Fill Your Pot with Responsibility

Fill the following empty pot with all the things 1st graders are responsible for. When you are done, draw a beautiful flower growing out of the pot, representing the beauty that comes when we make responsible choices!

