

## CRY WOLF

### **Purpose:**

Students will develop an understanding that rights, such as those offered in the First Amendment, have consequences and must be used responsibly. Using the classic Aesop's fable, the Boy who Cried Wolf, students will analyze the corresponding responsibilities of free speech and inevitable consequences for misuse of liberty.

### **Procedure:**

1. Ask students if they have ever heard the phrase "crying wolf." What do they believe the phrase means? Have they ever been accused of "crying wolf"? In what situations? What happened as a result of their actions?
2. Read aloud the handout featuring Aesop's fable, the Boy Who Cried Wolf. (There is an optional illustrated children's book listed at the end of this lesson which can be used.) Ask students if they believe the boy used his right to free speech well. Why or why not? What were the unfortunate consequences of his "crying wolf"?
3. Using the situations below, ask the class to identify the consequence of using the right to free speech in each of the following:
  - Amy likes to play on the telephone. She dials any number she makes up and when someone answers, she tells them that she is lost and can't find her way home. Then she hangs up.
  - John is upset that traffic is so heavy in his neighborhood that he and his friends cannot ride their bikes safely to school. He asks his mother to help him write a letter to the City Council, asking for more stop signs to be put in his neighborhood.
  - Kathy attends Sunday School every week, but when she gets bored with the lesson, she interrupts her teacher, claiming she feels sick.
  - Sam gets into an argument with his neighbors because their dogs bark all night and he cannot sleep well. He makes up posters and puts them throughout the neighborhood, calling his neighbors bad names.
  - A group of citizens get together to talk about many robberies of trashcans in the neighborhood. They decide to organize a crime watch and each take turns patrolling the streets at night.
4. Give student groups cut out segments from the handout, "Rights and Rubbish". (Note to teacher: This is a separate PDF file.) Allow time for students to put the segments in the correct chronological order, telling the story of an attempt by a young girl to use her freedom of speech to bring about needed change in her neighborhood. Is this an example of using free speech responsibly to bring about positive consequences?
5. Extension: Use the children's book, *Betsy Who Cried Wolf*, by Gail Carson Levine, 2002 (ages 4-8) to create a class Venn diagram comparing this modern tale to Aesop's fable. (This book is a

comical twist on the original folktale, featuring a feisty and endearing heroine. The cartoon-like illustrations and witty sheep commentaries are engaging.)

Optional Text to replace Aesop's fable included in the lesson: *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, by B. G. Hennessy, 2006 (preschool-grade 2). Aesop's tale is given new life in this imaginative picture book. The story is best when read aloud, using the and the large watercolor paintings for group viewing.

## The Boy Who Cried Wolf

There once was a shepherd boy who was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the village sheep. To amuse himself he took a great breath and sang out, "Wolf! Wolf! The Wolf is chasing the sheep!"

The villagers came running up the hill to help the boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no wolf. The boy laughed at the sight of their angry faces.

"Don't cry 'wolf' shepherd boy," said the villagers, "when there's no wolf!" They went grumbling back down the hill.

Later, the boy sang out again, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!" To his naughty delight, he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him drive the wolf away.

When the villagers saw no wolf they sternly said, "Save your frightened song for when there is really something wrong! Don't cry 'wolf' when there is NO wolf!"

But the boy just grinned and watched them go grumbling down the hill once more.

Later, he saw a REAL wolf prowling about his flock. Alarmed, he leaped to his feet and sang out as loudly as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!"

But the villagers thought he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn't come.

At sunset, everyone wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't returned to the village with their sheep. They went up the hill to find the boy. They found him weeping.

"There really was a wolf here! The flock has scattered! I cried out, "Wolf!" Why didn't you come?"

An old man tried to comfort the boy as they walked back to the village.

"We'll help you look for the lost sheep in the morning," he said, putting his arm around the youth, "Nobody believes a liar...even when he is telling the truth!"

