

+Responsibility: Younger Students

The September Character Trait of the Month

When we are accused of doing something wrong, it can be tempting to blame someone or something else. This is called “making excuses.” Here are a few examples:

“It’s not my fault!”

“She did it first!”

“I forgot!”

The problem with making up excuses is that it stops you from taking **responsibility** for yourself. People who are **responsible** are able to admit when they make a mistake. If you can admit when you make a mistake, you are more likely to learn from that mistake. You are also more likely to try to fix the problem. These are some reasons that **responsibility** is an important character trait. Please watch this video with an adult you enjoy talking to, and then discuss the questions below.

[Stop Making Excuses & Own Your Actions](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. Morgan uses an example of a child kicking another kid for swiping his toy. Both children did something wrong. A child who was making excuses might say, “**He** started it” or “**He** deserved it.” A responsible child would say something like, “I shouldn’t have kicked my friend” or “I took his toy without asking.” When you focus on your part in a situation instead of the other person’s, you are being **responsible**. Taking responsibility for yourself often starts with the word “I.” Talk about a time when you got in a fight with a friend or sibling. What is something you could have said to take responsibility for your part in the conflict? (Note: taking responsibility for yourself doesn’t mean that your friend was being a perfect angel).
2. People sometimes make up excuses to try to get themselves out of trouble because being in trouble feels bad. Here’s a secret: adults LOVE it when kids take responsibility for their actions, and they get MORE ANGRY when they hear excuses. Pretend you broke a lamp, but lied and said you didn’t do it. Ask your adult: what would my punishment be if I took responsibility for my actions? Would I be in more trouble if I made up excuses and blamed the broken lamp on the dog?