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☀ Values

- Caring
- Commitment
- Sincerity
- Courage
- Vision
- Leadership
- Social Emotional Learning

☀ Reflection Questions

Have you ever moved from one place to another and felt lost or out of place?

What do you think it was like for the kids moving from Appalachia to Cincinnati?

What does “hillbilly kids” mean? What’s wrong with using such words to describe people?

Why do you think Ernie helped these kids? Has anyone ever given you a second chance?

☀ Lessons Learned

When someone says, “Let’s talk/ it’s a way of letting you know that they care about you.

Mentors can help young people cope with the stresses of life.

We can be especially helpful to others by caring for the small matters of great importance.

To be a role model for other people requires us to take on a special responsibility.

Papa to His People

Ernie Mynatt
Cincinnati

Ernie Mynatt grew up in the hills of Kentucky and moved to Cincinnati with the Appalachian migration in the ‘SO’s. To 600 teenagers, he was more or less officially Papa to his People in the city. He spent the next 30 years helping “hillbilly kids” learn how cope with urban life - street kids like Larry Reddin, who were essentially homeless at age eleven. “The way we were growing up, there was no vision of the future. Ernie gave us a way to see what might be.” Today, Larry helps run Ernie’s Urban Appalachian Council, which provides social services and cultural programs for 250,000 citizens of Appalachian descent. “With Ernie it wasn’t just a second chance,” Larry says, “For a lot of us there was a third and fourth chance...he shepherded an entire generation into adulthood.”

☀ Language Arts: SEL & Diversity

Study the Appalachian folktales and home remedies in the Fox-fire books. Research the Appalachia culture. What are some of the contributions of their culture? Listen to a tape recording of bluegrass songs. Listen to how the songs’ words describe these people’s struggles as well as their hopes and dreams. Imagine you were one of “Ernie’s kids.” Keep a journal for a week and write about how it felt to move from a “holler” in the backwoods to Cincinnati. Study records of literacy rates in the U.S. in the 1950’s vs. the 1990’s. What has happened overall in the U.S. in these two years? In Appalachia? Watch the video, Les Miserables, and discuss the power of being given a second chance.

☀ Social Studies: Diversity

Read about the history and economy of the Appalachian area of the U.S. What kinds of jobs are available now vs. in 1959 when Ernie moved from rural Kentucky to Cincinnati? Research the agriculture, strip mining practices and health issues of Appalachia. How has life changed for the people of Appalachia in the past 40 years? Research the great Appalachian migration. Why did people move? What was the impact?

☀ Community Service: Service Learning

Learn about Appalachian service organizations. Organize a slightly used clothing drive. Set up a cultural exchange program with a school in Appalachia



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