

What are Virtues?

Grand Canyon University's **Canyon Center for Character Education** within the College of Education aims to provide an understanding of character, virtues, virtue development and character education to promote school cultures that encourage human and societal flourishing through virtue formation.

VIRTUES DEFINED

Virtues are positive personal strengths that enable behaviors and actions that reflect high moral standards. Virtues are empowering and are key to fulfilling an individual's potential. Virtue formation includes the actions related to forming or the process of forming virtues whether for individual or societal growth. This can be accomplished with modeling and teaching.

VIRTUES UNDERSTOOD

No definitive list of virtues can be given, as the virtues will, to a certain extent, be relative to individual constitution, developmental stage and social circumstance. However, a general idea can be broken into four categories of virtues: intellectual, moral, civic and performance. Although virtues can be divided into different categories, they form a coherent, mutually supportive whole in a well-rounded life. Character education is all about their integration, guided by the overarching intellectual virtue of practical wisdom or 'good sense.'



INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES

- Supports discernment, right action and pursuit of knowledge
- Enables problem-solving
- Examples: Curiosity, critical thinking, judgment, discernment, reasoning, reflection, resourcefulness



PERFORMANCE VIRTUES

- Equips and enables one to navigate life and uncertainty for success
- Enables intellectual, moral and civic virtues
- Examples: Confidence, determination, motivation, perseverance, resilience, teamwork



MORAL VIRTUES

- Guides social connections and decision making
- Enables one to make ethical decisions
- Examples: Compassion, courage, gratitude, honesty, humility, integrity, respect, open-mindedness



CIVIC VIRTUES

- Supports citizenship and community
- Enables collaboration and contribution to address systematic problems for the common good
- Examples: Citizenship, civility, community awareness, neighborliness, service, volunteering, culturalist

PRACTICAL WISDOM

This is the overall quality of knowing what to want and what not to want when the demands of two or more virtues collide and to integrate such demands into an acceptable course of action. This integrative virtue is developed through experience and critical reflection that enables us to perceive, know, desire and act with good sense. This includes discerning, deliberative action in situations where virtues collide.

¹Reference Jubilee Center: Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues (2017). Framework for Character Education in Schools. Available at: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf> (Accessed: Sept. 21, 2021).

Have questions? Reach out to
CharacterEducation@gcu.edu