The Bundle of Sticks

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: A **fable** is a short story, often with animals that talk and act like people. It ends with a **moral**, a lesson about how to live.

Find the moral: What mistake did a character make, or what wise thing did they do? What should we learn from it?

The Bundle of Sticks



An old farmer had three sons who argued all the time. They fought over chores, over food and over who was the strongest. The farmer worried about what would happen to them when he was gone.

One evening, he called his sons together. He handed them a bundle of sticks tied tightly with string. "Break this bundle," he said.

The oldest son tried first. He pushed and pulled until his face turned red, but the bundle did not break. The second son put it across his knee and pressed with all his might. Nothing. The youngest son even stood on it and jumped. The bundle didn't crack.

The farmer untied the string and gave each son a single stick. "Now try." Snap! Snap! Snap! Each stick broke easily.

"My sons," said the farmer, "you are like these sticks. If you stand together and help each other, no one can break you. But if you keep quarrelling and stand alone, you will be as easy to break as a single stick."

The sons looked at the broken sticks, then at each other. From that day on, they worked side by side.

Moral: *There is strength in standing together.*

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1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. What was the farmer worried about?

(a) His crops
(b) His sons always arguing
(c) The weather

2. Could the sons break the bundle?

(a) Yes, easily
(b) No, not one of them
(c) Only the youngest

3. What happened with the single sticks?

(a) They broke easily.
(b) They bent.
(c) They would not break.

4. How did the sons change at the end?

(a) They worked side by side.
(b) They left the farm.
(c) They argued more.

2. Write your answer

Answer in complete sentences. Use details from the text.

1. **What do the bundle and the single sticks stand for?**

2. **In your own words, what is the moral of this fable?**

Answer Key

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1. Check your understanding

1. What was the farmer worried about?

- a His crops
- **b His sons always arguing**
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- c They argued more.

2. Write your answer

Sample answers. Students' wording will vary.

1. **What do the bundle and the single sticks stand for?**
   The bundle stands for the sons working together, which makes them strong. The single sticks stand for each son alone, which makes them weak.
2. **In your own words, what is the moral of this fable?**
   There is strength in standing together.