

Associating Persons of the Bible with the Virtue Benches of West Point, New York

A Biblically based 12-week Character Education Course Using the Words Inscribed on the Virtue Benches



Trophy Point is a beautiful overlook point of the historic Hudson River and its surrounding valley. It contains cannon from multiple eras of combat. Its centerpiece, however, is Battle Monument (left), which honors officers and soldiers who died fighting for the Union during the Civil War.

The monument is surrounded by walkways that weave in and around the area. Along these walkways are twelve benches placed for people to take a moment to rest and reflect on the surroundings while walking around Trophy Point.



Along the short edge of each bench is a virtue word. These words are as follows: compassion, courage, dedication, determination, dignity, discipline, integrity, loyalty, perseverance, responsibility, service, and trust. The right photo is of the bench labeled “Integrity”. The United States Military Academy Class of 1984 presented these benches as a gift to the Academy that both honored its mentoring class, the Class of 1934 and provided for inspiring future Cadets.

Most people who take advantage of these benches scarcely notice that virtue word inscribed on the edge of each of the benches. Therefore, it is the goal of this course to bring the deserved attention to these virtue words by way of videos that present biblical persons who

exemplify these virtues, as well as lesson plans to guide the trainer in teaching biblically based lessons of personal application. The objectives of this course are as follows:

At the end of this course, the student will have:

- Learned about the existence and history of the Virtue Benches located at Trophy Point.
- Learned each of the twelve virtue words inscribed on the benches
- Learned about a biblical person who exemplifies each of the words, and
- Made personal application of the life of the persons portrayed in the lessons.

The following is a table of the twelve Virtue Benches, their virtue names, the person of the Bible associated with the virtue and the persons' biblical text.

Virtue Word	Bible Person(s)	Bible Reference
Compassion	Prodigal Son's Father	Luke 15:11-22
Courage	Nathan	2 Samuel 12:1-15
Dedication	Esther	Esther 4
Determination	Noah	Genesis 6:9-22
Dignity	Stephen	Acts 7
Discipline	Daniel	Daniel 6
Integrity	Four Lepers	2 Kings 6:24 - 7:10
Loyalty	Ruth	Ruth 1
Perseverance	Caleb	Joshua 14:6-15
Responsibility	Roman Officer	Matthew 8:5-13
Service	Ananias	Acts 9:10-18
Trust	Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego	Daniel 3

The accompanying DVD contains all the trainer will need to conduct the 12 weeks of training. Included on the DVD are the following:

- An Introductory Video that introduces the course and its content
- Twelve videos that portray the stories of the biblical person(s)
 - The stories are developed in accordance with Rieger's "Five-Part Mythic Story Structure" (see: Rieger, Carla (2011). *Storytelling in Business*. Vancouver, BC, Canada: Anand Publishing. It is available in digital format from Amazon.com.)
- Twelve scripts of the videos
- Twelve sets of PowerPoint slides for use during each week's lecture
- Twelve lesson plans for each week's training
- Twelve handouts with spaces for lecture notes for each week's training
- A handout of a brief syllabus, which includes much of the above information.

For more information about this course, please contact the course developer: Dr. Joseph L. Lynch, Director of Religious Education, USAG Chaplains Office, 692 Biddle Loop, West Point, New York 10996. Phone: 845-38-8761. Cell: 918-809-6392. Email: joseph.l.lynch31.civ@mail.mil.

All photos were taken by Joseph L. Lynch.