



*Building Our Future Through
Education, History and Culture!*

MAY 2015 VIRTUES



Bringing Virtues to Life

Compliments of:

Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education

Learning More About the Virtues Project

What is The Virtues Project? The Virtues Project was founded in 1991 by Linda Kaveline Popov, Dr. Dan Popov, and the late John Kaveline. It is a global grass roots initiative to inspire the practice of virtues in all aspects of life; it has inspired and mobilized many thousands of families, educators, leaders, and employees to commit acts of service and generosity, to heal violence with virtues, and to create safe and caring communities.

What's the difference between virtues and values? Values are what we value and care about. They could be anything. We may value getting rich and famous, we may value power over others, but that doesn't mean we will have good character. Values are culture-specific because what some families or cultures value, others don't. Virtues are much more elemental than values. While values are culture-specific, virtues are universally valued to all cultures. Virtues are the essence of who we are; it's what's good about us. It's our inner quality of character, which sometimes is there waiting to be awakened. They are the content of our character and the basis of genuine happiness.

Why teach virtues? Many teachers and administrators are finding that applying the strategies of The Virtues Project is transforming the culture in their schools by helping them to create a total environment of caring and respect. They have replaced discouragement with empowerment, having discovered that words such as "lazy" "retarded" "stupid" "unacceptable" were literally demoralizing and discouraging their students. When they filled their classrooms with encouraging words, such as "helpful", "excellent", "compassionate", "self-disciplined", "integrity", and "kind", they found that these behaviors flourished.

How are the virtues taught? The virtues are taught through the Five Strategies, the signature contribution of The Virtues Project. These strategies are important because they help us to live more reverent, purposeful lives, to raise children of compassion and idealism, and create a culture of character in our families, schools, and workplaces. The five strategies are:

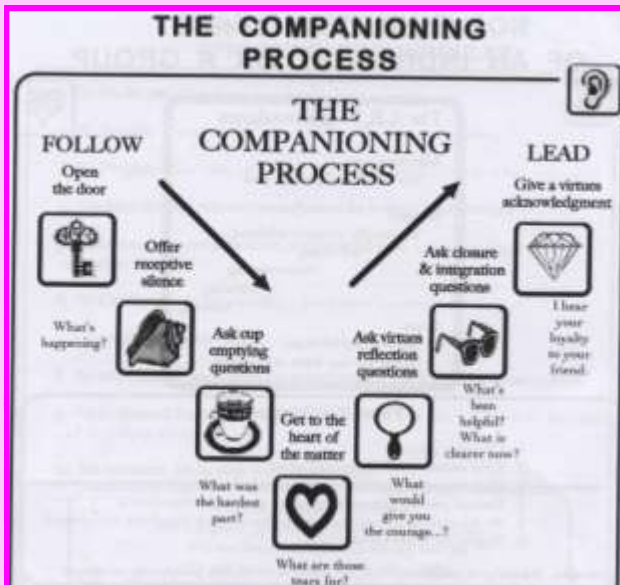
1. Speak the Language of Virtues
2. Recognize Teachable Moments
3. Set Clear Boundaries
4. Honor the Spirit
5. Offer Companionship

What is Offer Companionship? Offer Companionship supports healing and growth. How well do you listen to others, to yourself about what really needs to be heard? It is being deeply present and listening with compassionate curiosity that guides others to find clarity and to create their own solutions.

Offer Companionship involves using the virtues of compassion and detachment. While compassion is understanding and caring when someone is hurt or troubled, even if you don't know them, detachment is experiencing your feelings without allowing your feelings to control you.

It is wanting to help, even if all you can do is listen and say kind words. You forgive mistakes. You are a friend when someone needs a friend. Instead of just reacting, with detachment you are free to choose how you will act. You use thinking and feeling together, so you can make smart choices.

The concept of offer companionship will be two-fold. An introduction will be given this month and an example (problem / concern) of the companionship process will be provided next month.



This is a communication skill that:

- Requires deep listening
- Is most effective when we don't have an "agenda"
- Is meant to support and empower, not fix or rescue
- Primarily consists of silence and open-ended questions
- Requires trust in the other's process



Open the Door ... with open-ended questions:

What's happening?
What is it?
What are those tears?



Offer Receptive Silence:

Give them the space to speak fully, to tell the whole story. Be fully present with deep concentration and compassionate curiosity. Shield yourself with detachment, so you can walk intimately with them without taking on their feelings.



Ask Cup-Emptying Questions:

Follow their lead and ask questions that allow them to empty their cup and get to the heart of the matter. Use what and how questions, NOT why or which.

How was that for you? Take your cues from their words: For example,

Speaker: I'm really worried.

Listener: What worries you?

Speaker: I'm just not sure.

Listener: Either remain silent or ask, What are you unsure of?



Focus on Sensory Clues:

Concentrate on and even repeat words they use that involve seeing, hearing, feeling, sensing.

Speaker: It was the most beautiful sunset I ever saw.

Listener: Beautiful ...

Listener: (Speaker's eyes well up with tears) What are the tears for?

Speaker is yelling, This place is so stupid!

Listener: (Match their volume.) What's stupid about this place?

Listener (Speaker is crying): What are those tears?



Ask Virtues Reflection Questions:

When they seem to have gotten to the heart of the matter or the core issue, ask a question that helps to reflect on a virtue that will help them. About something that is frightening,

What would give you the courage to ... ? Or What would give you peace about this?



Ask Closure and Integration Questions:

What was helpful about talking?

What's clearer to you now?

What did you appreciate about this meeting?



Give a Virtues Acknowledgement:

This is an essential step in restoring the speaker even if your companioning was brief and did not include all these steps.

I appreciate your openness to explore this.

Who can be contacted for additional information? Feel free to contact Virtues Project Facilitator, Arlene L. Pinney-Benjamin at alpbenjamin@doe.vi or 340-774-0100 x: 2804 at the Virgin Islands Department of Education Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education.

MAY 2015

VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

. Commitment

I am thankful for the gift of Commitment. It brings passion to my purpose.

(May 3 - May 9, 2015)

. Courage

I am thankful for the gift of Courage. It makes my life purposeful.

(May 10 - May 16, 2015)

. Confidence

I am thankful for the gift of Confidence. It helps me to contribute fully and freely.

(May 17 - May 23, 2015)

. Loyalty

I am thankful for the gift of Loyalty. It nurtures my commitments.

(May 24 - May 30, 2015)

Upcoming

JUNE 2015

VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

. Helpfulness

I am thankful for the gift of Helpfulness. It allows me to make a difference.

(May 31 - June 6, 2015)

. Service

I am thankful for the gift of Service. It makes my life a prayer.

(June 7 - June 13, 2015)

. Generosity

I am thankful for the gift of Generosity. It helps me to give and receive abundantly.

(June 14 - June 20, 2015)

. Enthusiasm

I am thankful for the gift of Enthusiasm. It makes life simply wonderful.

(June 21 - June 27, 2015)

. Creativity

I am thankful for the gift of Creativity. It allows my talents to flower.

(June 28 - July 4, 2015)

COMMITMENT

Commitment is caring deeply about a person, a goal or belief. Once we discern a direction, we go for it wholeheartedly. We don't hold back, second-guess our decision or hesitate to act on it fully. We set goals and achieve them. We make promises and keep them. We go the extra mile. We are faithful to our relationships and don't allow problems to make us waver. Keeping our commitments strengthens our inner integrity.

'It deepens our capacity to carry responsibility with grace.

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness ... the moment one commits oneself, the Providence moves too."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Practice of Commitment

... I practice commitment when I ...

Think before I make a promise
Keep every agreement I make
Make decisions confidently
Go the extra mile
Give 100% to everything I do
Am faithful to people I care about

Affirmation:

I commit to my decisions. I keep my agreements. I give my all. I am a faithful friend.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

Goat down on hill waitin for win to blow."

Meanings:

Like the goat, stay on a committed mission and endure until completed. When an agreement is made, it is imperative that one remains committed and apply stick-to-it-ive-ness.

FOLKTALE

"Tukuma and the Sugar Cane"

Broo 'Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Tukuma was charged with cleaning a sugar cane field by the king.
While you read, learn how and if Tukuma's commitment paid off!

Activities with *Commitment*



Make a Commitment

Choose a virtue and make a commitment to practice it for a week. Share with your class at the end of the week how it felt and what changed as a result.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- Name some athletes who show commitment. How do they express it?
- What does it feel like to be able to count on someone completely?
- What does it feel like when someone breaks a promise?
- How do you decide what promises you want to make?
- How do you know when you do not want to agree to something?
- What are you committed to?
- What virtues help you to keep your agreements?



Drawing Commitment

Draw your idea of something you really want in your life.



Poster Points

- Go for it!
- Give 100%.
- A Promise Keeper.
- Always a friend.
- Dreams do come true.



Quotable Quotes

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to one that would never otherwise have occurred." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Commitment isn't something that just happens by chance. Commitment is a capacity, and it grows as a muscle grows, by being exercised." Charlotte Jollo Beck

"Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts. That is the secret of success." Swami Sivananda

"Nothing deflates commitment faster than broken agreements."

Gay Hendricks and Kate Ludeman

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Meade

TUKUMA AND THE SUGAR CANE

The king had a sugar cane field to be cleared. He sent for Tukuma to do the job and told him: "When the field is cleared, I will send for a man to make a fire and put on the big kettle so that we may have sugar."

Tukuma answered, "That is a masterful idea. As a matter of fact, I know the very man for the job. My friend Nansi is the man to do it because he knows how to make fire." He went and told Nansi the proposition.

Nansi said, "Yes, I will make the fire, but when I am finished, the king will have to give me fifty patacong and two tuns of sugar because it is a deep crop to clear."

Tukuma told the king what Nansi said and the king said, "Yes, I will give him that because it is a sweet crop there in the land."

On Monday morning, Tukuma rounded up several people to help him cut the sugar cane. They worked all week until the field was cleared. Then Tukuma told the workers, "You must come back next week."

The next week they returned and scoured the large coppers in the house in preparation for boiling the sugar, and prepared the big mills for grinding. They brought the sugar cane to the mill where it was ground. They then boiled the cane and took the syrup to the curing house for the molasses to come in. This was done until all the cane was ground and boiled. Then the sling was put into a tun to ferment into rum.

When the work was finished, the king called Tukuma and Nansi and asked them what they wanted for their labor. Tukuma asked for two tuns of sugar, 12 patacong, and a cow. The king decided that since they had not overcharged him, he would give them something extra. He gave them 100 patacong and a cow, plus two tuns of sugar each. He told them, "The gold you can take either in food as you need it or in parts." So they did as the king recommended. Then they took their food and went home and enjoyed the fruits of their labors.

COURAGE

Courage is bravery in the face of fear. You do the right thing even when it is hard or scary. When you are courageous, you don't give up. You try new things. You admit mistakes. Courage is the strength in your heart.

“Be strong and let your heart take courage.”

Psalms, 31:25

The Practice of Courage

... I practice courage when I ...

Stay strong even when I am afraid
Am willing to try new things
Admit mistakes and learn from them
Make amends when I do something wrong
Do what is right for me even when it is hard
Ask for help when I need it

Affirmation:

I have courage. I listen to my heart. I face my fears and I am willing to try new things.
I have the courage to do the right thing.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

“Food can't cook if you sitting on the pot. “

Meanings:

In life, courageous people are needed to boldly stand up and speak out against injustices, rather than sitting down and doing nothing like the majority of people!

FOLKTALE

“The Girl and the Snake”

Broo 'Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

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As you read, you will be stunned by the brother's courage after his sister was swallowed by her husband, the snake.

Activities with *Courage*



Courage Collage

Make a collage of pictures of people showing courage.

Courage Commitment

Each person (including the teacher) chooses something that will require courage to do and sets a goal to do it in the next three days. At the end of the week, share your experiences with one another. It might be calling someone and clearing up an old problem, it might be trying a new activity, like skating, that you have never done before. The boundary is that it must keep you safe, and not be foolhardy. Even if it doesn't go just right, share the Teachable Moment together.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ When in your life have you needed the most courage?
- ❷ What helps you when you feel afraid?
- ❸ Name three people you know or from history who had great courage.
- ❹ What jobs require physical courage?
- ❺ What jobs require other kinds of courage?



Drawing Courage

Draw a picture of yourself doing something that requires courage.



Poster Points

- ❶ Do the right thing.
- ❷ Feel the fear and do it anyway!
- ❸ My heart is full of courage.
- ❹ Brave heart.
- ❺ Take a risk.



Quotable Quotes

"We cannot escape fear. We can only transform it into a companion that accompanies us on all our exciting adventures." Susan Jeffers

"Heart, be brave. If you cannot be brave, just go. Love's glory is not a small thing." Rumi

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage." Anais Nin

"With courage, you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity." Keshavan Nair

"Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing." Helen Keller

"Look fear in the face and it will cease to trouble you." Sri Yukteswar

"If you don't go out on a limb, you're never going to get the fruit." Anonymous

"If you think you're too small to do a big thing, try doing small things in a big way." Anonymous

THE GIRL AND THE SNAKE

Once there was a pretty girl who lived in a far away village. She was so pretty that everyone wanted to marry her. But for one reason or another, she would always turn down her suitors. But one day Mr. Snake came into the village. At first she was afraid of his long fat body and his forked tongue. But Snake had a way with words, and soon he had won her affection. Everybody was surprised that this pretty girl would marry a man such as Snake. But they shook their heads and said, "It's her choice. You can't choose for her."

Her brother was very unhappy about the wedding, but he too realized that you can't choose a mate for anybody else.

Snake took the girl home. Once there, he reverted to his wily ways and swallowed the girl whole!

Well, the girl screamed for her brother who came running. As he ran he could hear his sister calling, "Brother, you hear your sissy calling? Poor me. Poor sissy. Your sissy needs you."

When the brother heard this, he took his cutlass and gave Snake one stroke, but Snake joined himself together again. Then he took some ochre and he rubbed the cutlass and he hit the snake again. Then he said to Mr. Snake: "Well, mend yourself now!" And he took his sister home where she got better. But after that experience, her brother was very careful with her and would not allow even a fly to rest on her.

CONFIDENCE

Confidence is having faith in ourselves and in life. We feel capable and competent. We trust that we have the strength to cope with whatever happens. Confidence helps us to be free of worry. When we are confident in others, we believe in them and rely on them. We build self-confidence as we learn from our mistakes and improve for the better. Confidence brings the strength to try new things, to gain mastery through practice. With confidence, we cast off self-limiting beliefs and doubts. We offer our gifts as a worthy contribution.

When opportunity comes, we step up to it. We just say “yes”.

“Do not, therefore, throw away your confidence, for it carries a great reward.”

Hebrews, 10:35

The Practice of Confidence

... I practice confidence when I ...

Know I am worthwhile and feel sure of myself
Don't let fear, doubt, or worry stop me
Discover my talents and try new things
Learn from my mistakes
Think positively
Trust that all things work together for good

Affirmation:

I am confident. I appreciate my gifts and give my best. I enjoy trying new things.
I welcome new possibilities.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

“Wake of wise boat mek safe road to steer on.”

Meanings:

Having confidence in oneself, improves your chances for success in whatever you undertake and removes chances for fear of failure.

FOLKTALE

“Compere Zayeh and the La Jablese”

Broo 'Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Compere Zayeh confidently boasted repeatedly how he was not afraid of Jablese and Mama Maladie. When his confidence was put to the test, explore how he behaved!

Activities with Confidence



Activities with Confidence

- Invite your students to set a goal of meeting one new person they have been wanting to get to know. Ask them to describe how a confident person would go about getting to know someone new.
- Ask them to reflect on something new they would like to try.
- Ask them to journal about the smell, the taste, the feel, the sound of confidence.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- Name one of the most confident people you know. What do you think gives them confidence?
- When do you most need your confidence?
- When do you feel most confident?
- What are you best at? What gave you the confidence to do it the first time?



Drawing Confidence

Draw a picture of yourself doing something with confidence.



Poster Points

- Think positively.
- Go for it!
- Why not?
- Just say YES!



Quotable Quotes

"We learn wisdom from failure much more than success. We often discover what WILL do by finding out what will NOT do."

Samuel Smiles

"If we are not fully ourselves, truly in the present moment, we miss everything."

Thich Nhat Hanh

"Only a person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others." Erich Fromm

"You see things; and you say 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say 'Why not?'" George Bernard Shaw

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars." Les Brown

"Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become." Anonymous

"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!" Anne Frank

COMPERE ZAYEH AND THE LA JABLESSE

Everybody knew that Compere Zayeh besides being lazy and greedy was a big coward. However, whenever the villagers met and told stories of the jumbis they had encountered, he always laughed.

"Jumbis? Jumbis? Who believes in Jumbis? Not me, Zayeh."

So it was that whenever they spoke of Jablese and Mama Maladie, Zayeh would always sneer, "Let me meet one Jablese or one Mama Maladie. I will show them who is afraid."

The neighbors finally grew tired of Zayeh's boasting and decided "to do" it for him. One moonlight night, with the moon shining down on the graves in the cemetery, they dressed up the tallest person in the village in a long white sheet and gave him a bundle of rags to carry in his arms. Then one of the neighbors went to Zayeh's house.

"Eh, Compere, I want to ask you a big favor. I have to go visit my sister who is sick, and I am afraid to pass the burying ground all by myself. Since you are not afraid of Jumbis, I thought I would ask you to accompany me. I know you are not afraid of Jumbis and such things."

Now Nansi knew that his boasting had got him into trouble, but he could not very well back down, so he said: "I will be glad to accompany you, but right now I am turning some coo-coo* and you know how cornmeal is. If you leave it for long it will lump up."

"I know Broo, but I am in no hurry. I will wait."

Nansi thought up one excuse after the other, but to no avail. In the end he had to accompany the man. As they neared the burying ground, Nansi began to sing and talk loudly.

"Why are you making so much noise, Compere? This is the burying ground you know. We don't want to disturb the spirits."

"Spirits?" replied Nansi with as much lack of concern as he could muster. "You know that I am not afraid of Jumbis."

"That is true, Compere, that is why I asked you to accompany . . . eh, eh! But what is that I am seeing? Look over there, Compere."

Nansi looked nervously in the direction of the other's outstretched finger. "Where Broo? I don't see anything."

"Well, it's gone now. It couldn't have been anything."

"Just where does this sick person live? And can't we walk any faster? I have other things to do, you know?"

Just then, the man wrapped up in the sheet emerged from behind a grave, moaning and groaning in the most terrible manner. Nansi took one look and took to his heels. It seemed to him that Mama Maladie was right behind him with her bundle of sickness. He was so frightened that he ran past his house and kept on running until he was clear out of the village. He found an abandoned old hut and ran in and climbed to the roof and stayed there shivering until morning.

He was so ashamed that he remained there rather than face the jeering and laughter of the people, and he is there still. If you don't believe me, just check the rafters of any house and you will see him there.

An Anansi Story from Grenada

*The Grenadian name for fungi cornmeal balls.

LOYALTY

Loyalty is unwavering commitment to the people and ideals we care about. We are steadfast through good times and bad. Even when others disappoint us, we are resilient and forgiving. We invest in our relationships and do what it takes to keep them whole and strong. We stand by our true friends whatever the cost. We don't allow blind loyalty to lead us into trouble. Above all, we must be true to ourselves and loyal to what we know is right.

“The best mirror is an old friend.”

George Herbert

The Practice of Loyalty

... I practice loyalty when I ...

Stand up for people and ideas I believe in
Choose my friends wisely
Am a faithful friend through good times and bad
Don't allow loyalty to lead me into trouble
Don't let others come between my friends and me
Am loyal to myself

Affirmation:

I am loyal to the people and ideas I care about. I stand by my friends and loved ones.
I keep my commitments.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

“Whe’ de goat go de kid follow”.

Meanings:

When we find folks that are loyal, you want to be around them all the time. Their character helps you as you strive to emulate them in ways beyond your wildest imagination.

FOLKTALE

“Tukuma and His Father-in-law”

Broo ‘Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Tukuma and his father-in-law had a great relationship. Tukuma paid a solemn promise to him. As you read, discover the strength of his loyalty!

Activities with Loyalty



A Sign of Loyalty

Have a demonstration of the various “hand-shakes” you know about.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ How do you know you want to be friends with someone?
- ❷ What is good about having a loyal friend?
- ❸ Are there times when it would be loyal to tell a secret a friend told you?
- ❹ What is it like when a friend is not loyal to you?
- ❺ What would you do if a friend asked you to do something you felt was wrong?
- ❻ How can you be loyal to yourself?
- ❼ When do you know it is time to end a friendship?
- ❽ Name three things about a friend to whom you would be loyal forever?



Drawing Loyalty

Draw a picture of an animal you think of as loyal.



Poster Points

- ❶ Stand by your friends.
- ❷ Friends are forever.
- ❸ A friend through all kinds of weather.
- ❹ Side-by-side.



Quotable Quotes

“In thy face I see the map of honour, truth and loyalty.” William Shakespeare

“The best mirror is an old friend.”
George Hebert

“A true friend loves you enough to support you and to confront you.” Anonymous

*“Words are easy, like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find.”*
Richard Barnfield

“Only the person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others.” Erich Fromm

“No medicine is more valuable...than a friend to whom we may turn for consolation in time of trouble — and with whom we may share our happiness in times of joy.”
St. Aelred of Rievaulx

TUKUMA AND HIS FATHER-IN-LAW

Tukuma was Nansi's father-in-law. One day in a fit of expansiveness he made a solemn promise to Broo Nansi. "Father-in-law," he said, "when you die, I shall be buried with you."

"Do you mean that, Tukuma?" Nansi asked.

"I do Broo Nansi. That is to show the amount of esteem that I have for you." Now Tukuma had no idea that Broo Nansi would die soon when he made that promise.

It so happened that Broo Nansi took ill and died, and the time came for Tukuma to fulfill his promise. Since he had made the promise aloud, several of the villagers had witnessed it. He could not go back on his word, but he had no intention of being buried alive with his father-in-law. He decided to talk with his friend, Lizard, who is very clever.

"You are in a bad spot, my friend," said Lizard when Tukuma told him the problem, "but I can help you. Here is what we will do. I will go ahead to the cemetery and when they come to put you into the grave with Broo Nansi, I shall speak from the top of a tree saying: 'The dead shall not be buried with the living.' The people will think that it is the voice of God and they will let you go." Since Lizard was a man of his word, Tukuma agreed.

On the day of the funeral, Lizard hurried to the cemetery and climbed a tall tree next to the place where Broo Nansi was going to be buried. It was a hot day and the gentle swaying of the tree soon put Lizard to sleep. Tukuma waited for the voice to come which would put a stop to his being buried alive, but nothing happened! He risked a glance to the top of the tree and discerned Lizard fast asleep. While the attention of the mourners was fixed on the burial ceremony, Tukuma threw a stone at Lizard to wake him up. Lizard only shook himself and turned over on his other side. Tukuma threw another stone, and another, and another. Just as they were getting ready to put Tukuma in with Broo Nansi, Lizard was struck by one of the stones.

He woke with a start and roared out, "The living shall not be buried with the dead!" The people were so frightened that they rushed through the burial and dashed out of the cemetery. As they ran they said to each other, "Such a powerful voice could only belong to God. What a lucky thing it is we did not bury Tukuma with Nansi!" And they ran and never looked back.

As for Lizard, he liked the top of the tree so much that he can be found there on any hot day enjoying a daytime snooze.



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*An initiative of The Virtues Project,
Governor's Children and Families Council
coordinated by the Community Foundation
of the Virgin Islands,*

and

*Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education*

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