

# The Wright Family

**Intended age group:** Upper elementary through high school.

**Time Needed:** 5-7 minutes.

**Learning objectives:** Participants will perform an activity that forces them to divide their attention between two tasks, and will link the experience with three (or more) Pillars.

**Materials needed:** One penny per participant, one copy of “Wright Family Vacation” (see next page)

## Overview:

Distribute one penny per participant, and have them stand (or sit) in a circle. Tell them that as you read the story to them, they are to listen carefully for two things: what is going on in the story, and for the words *right* and *left*. If they hear the word *right* (or any of its homophones), they are to pass their penny to the right. If they hear the word *left*, they must pass their penny to the left.

Read the “Wright Family Vacation” story. Start slowly so everyone can catch on to what they’re supposed to do. But then read at a regular pace. Everyone will be scrambling to pass their pennies towards the end, when the frequency of *right* and *left* increases.

## Suggested discussion questions:

- What was the story about?
- Why don’t you know details?
- How is this like students who come to school preoccupied and can’t (or won’t) focus, or teachers who listen to students with one ear while doing other tasks?
- What Pillars are involved in this activity?

## Classroom application:

This is a fun way to remind students that they should always pay attention to the task at hand or to the person in front of them, and set other matters aside. A scattered focus can impact trustworthiness (if you aren’t paying attention, you might forget about a promise you made); respect (giving someone half your attention is disrespectful); and responsibility (not paying attention leads to misunderstandings — either not hearing something the first time it’s said, or remembering the details incorrectly — which can result in botched assignments or missed deadlines).

Story and activity adapted from Tom Jackson’s *Activities That Teach*, available from [www.activelearning.com](http://www.activelearning.com).

# Wright Family Vacation

One day the Wright family decided to take a vacation. The first thing they had to decide was who would be left at home since there was not enough room in the Wright family car for all of them. Mr. Wright decided that Aunt Linda Wright would be the one left at home. Of course, this made Aunt Linda Wright so mad that she left the house immediately, yelling, “It will be a right cold day before I return!”

The Wright family now bundled up the children, Tommy Wright, Susan Wright, Timmy Wright and Shelly Wright, and got in the car and left. Unfortunately, as they turned out of the driveway someone had left a trash can in the street, so they had to turn right around and stop the car. They told Tommy Wright to get right out of the car and move the trash can so they could get going while there was still daylight left. Tommy took so long that they almost left him in the street. Once the Wright family got on the road, Mother Wright wondered if she had left the oven on. Father Wright told her not to worry, because he had checked the oven and she had not left it on. As they turned right at the corner, everyone started to think about other things that they might have left undone.

No need to worry now, they were off on a right fine vacation. When they arrived at the gas station, Father Wright put gas into the car and then discovered that he had left his wallet at home. So Timmy Wright ran right home to get the money that Father Wright had left behind. After Timmy had left, Susan Wright started to feel sick. She left the car saying that she had to throw right up. This, of course, got Mother Wright’s attention and she left the car in a hurry to go right after Susan Wright. Shelly Wright wanted to watch Susan Wright get sick, so she left the car right away, too. Father Wright was left with Tommy Wright who was playing a game in the backseat.

With all of this going on, Father Wright decided that this was not the right time to take a vacation, so he gathered up all of the family and left the gas station as quickly as he could. When he arrived home, he turned left into the driveway and said, “I wish the Wright family had never left the house today!”