

# **THE LEGEND OF THE CHINESE NEW YEAR:**

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Use these questions to help facilitate discussion during or after the story. The answers given are not the only answers, they are just a starting point. Tailor your classroom discussions to make connections to challenges and classroom behaviors you'd like to improve.



### **What did the Rat do to win the race?**

*He found the biggest, strongest animal and asked for help. At the very end, he jumped ahead of him to win the race.*

*He also left the cat behind so he would have less competitors.*

### **What was smart about the Rat's strategy?**

*Because he was the smallest of the animals, he was going to have a hard time winning. By teaming up with another animal, he could use that animal's strengths to help him win.*

### **What did the Rat forget to practice?**

*Gratitude, friendship, etc. The Rat became so focused on winning; he lost several friends.*

### **How was the Rabbit able to get across the river?**

*He was resourceful and used the stones and a log. Instead of asking for help, he looked around at the tools he had available and found solutions on his own. After he had done most of the work, he got lucky and the Dragon gave him a little push to the finish line. Isn't it interesting how more luck seems to show up the more effort and persistence we put in?*

### **The Dragon could have very easily won the race. Why didn't he?**

*He made rain for the people and animals. He also helped the rabbit get to shore ahead of him. Being kind and helpful was more important to him than getting first place.*

### **What are some ways we could practice being like the Dragon?**

*Let others line up ahead of us. Share our toys. Let others join in games. Etc.*

### **How did the Goat, the Monkey, and the Rooster get across the river?**

*They used teamwork. They each had different skills and things to offer and that made them more successful together than they would have been apart.*

*A great analogy for this part of the discussion is a football team (especially since the Chinese New Year is usually very close to the Super Bowl). Every player on a football team has vastly different roles and skillsets. Kickers and linebackers look quite different from each other, but that's what makes them uniquely qualified to perform their role on the team. If everyone tried to be the Quarterback, the team couldn't function. It's everyone understanding their own strengths and respecting and valuing the strengths of others that make a winning team.*

### **Why was the Dog so late?**

*He had a bath along the way.*

### **What did the Dog remember to do?**

*To have fun and find joy in the present moment. If we get too focused on the destination, we forget to enjoy the journey it takes to get there. Winning can be a lot of fun, but if we make ourselves miserable and exhausted like the Tiger or we are rude to people along the way like the Rat, is it really worth it?*

## **CHARACTER TRAITS OF THE 12 ZODIAC ANIMALS**

People of all ages enjoy discovering their Chinese Zodiac animal. Any system of astrology, eastern or western, is not a science but a set of symbols and stories that give us new perspectives to better understand ourselves and our relationships. We can use the images of these animals as anchors to help remind us how we can strive to improve our character.

Discover everyone's animal and then discuss how they feel that description matches them. Ask, how can we practice being more like the positive traits of our animals?

**RAT**- Intelligent and quick thinking. Uses these talents to help others. Hard workers.

**OX**- Dependable and trustworthy. Make good leaders. Loyal to friends and good listeners.

**TIGER**- Courageous and strong. Stand up for their friends. Warm and honest.

**RABBIT**- Gentle and compassionate. Creative and make good decisions. Strong socially.

**DRAGON**- Confident and passionate. Strive for excellence. Generous towards others.

**SNAKE**- Good communicator and courteous. Make good decisions. Like to help others.

**HORSE**- Resourceful, enthusiastic, and energetic. Work at self-improvement. Lead groups well.

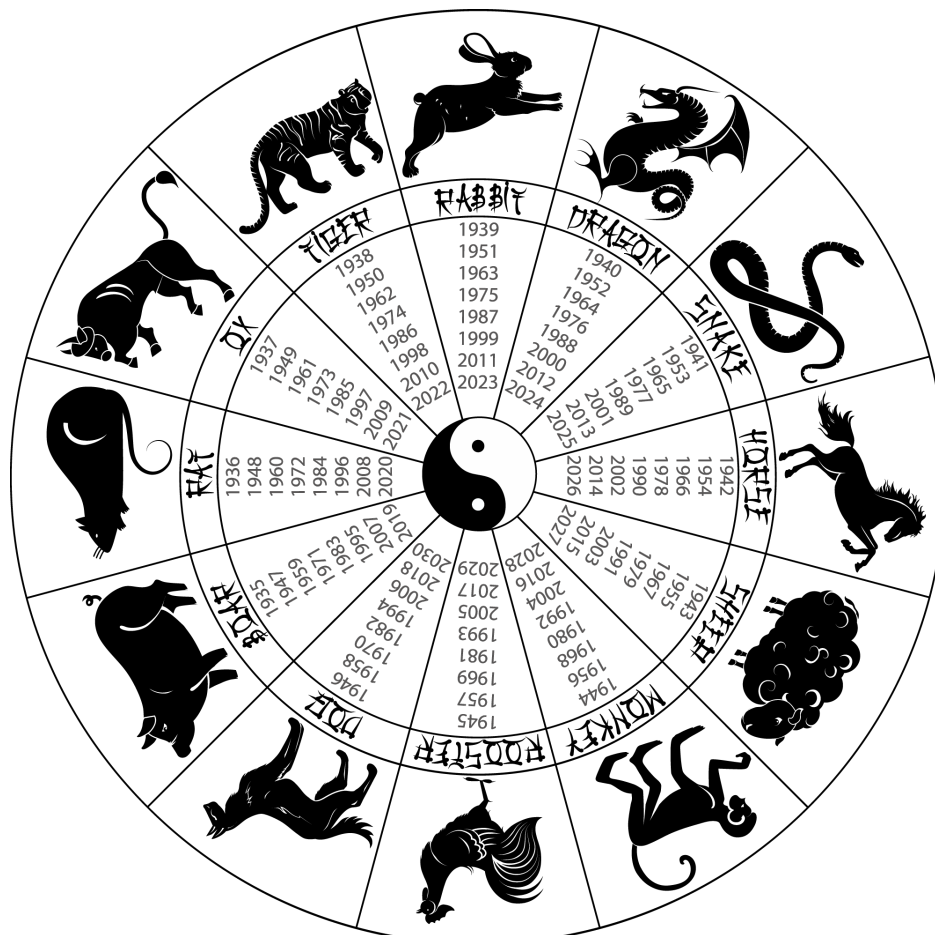
**GOAT**- Artistic and good natured. Good team players. Offer support to help group success.

**MONKEY**- Good problem solvers with many talents. Adaptable and humorous. Gets along well with others.

**ROOSTER**- Observant and resourceful. Good at keeping others organized. Persistent personal achievers.

**DOG**- Friendly and faithful. Strong empathy towards others. Finish things they start.

**PIG**- Generous and supportive. Gives to others first. Practical and thinks things through.



Note: Remember, the Chinese New Year is sometime in the end of January or beginning of February. If you have a January or early February birthday, this chart may not be accurate for you. There are many calculators online that can help you find your exact year (and even the element that goes with that year!).