

CHARACTER EDUCATION

"Good Citizenship" Grades 5-8

DEFINITION:

Treat others the way you want to be treated. Carry out duties and responsibilities to school, community, and country by being a caring, contributing, and respectful person who obeys laws and rules.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

- Bring a photo album to school to create a Citizenship Book. Have students work together to decorate the cover and title the album, "Good Citizens in Our Community". Then have students collect newspapers, magazine articles, or pictures throughout the month that show good citizenship. Have students share their article or picture with the class before it is placed in the decorated photo album.
- Read aloud biographies and have students recognize enduring qualities of good character and citizenship. Ask students to note when they see these characteristics in others.
- Discuss the qualities of people on postage stamps as it relates to citizenship. Create postage stamps of students showing good character.
- Research and write a history of your city or neighborhood or community as a class. Identify individuals and organizations who made important contributions or who had a big influence in its development.
- Have students find an example of someone demonstrating good citizenship from a newspaper, magazine, TV show, or movie. Encourage students to write a letter of appreciation to this person describing what she/he did and how they felt about it.
- Ask students to think of some kind of volunteer work they might like to do. Have students describe the work/project and tell why they think they would like it. Who would it help and in what way?
- Take students on a walk around the school. Challenge them to notice things that they could improve on the school grounds or in the building(s). When you return, list students' suggestions for improving the school and hold a discussion. What do you like about your school? Why is your school important? How can you show good citizenship toward your school grounds and building? How can you show good citizenship toward students and faculty? Why is it important to show good citizenship at school?

- Ask student to journal on the month's character quality.
- Create an Acrostic for GOOD CITIZENSHIP.
- Create baseball trading cards for each quality and have students trade them from month to month.
- Discuss famous quotes, focusing on good citizenship, and ask students to create their own.
- Have students interview persons in the school who "make it run". Discuss how each one is a vital link in making our school community run. Have students create thank you notes for these school personnel.
- Release red, white, and blue biodegradable helium balloons. Have each child attach a message of ways to respect others.
- Have students decorate the halls with flags, banners, and ribbons.
- Have local veterans come up to speak to the class.
- Have students write about someone they consider to be a hero.
- Place students in groups to brainstorm a list of dos and don'ts for citizenship. Ask for specific examples of each behavior they identify. Have one group take the "do" examples and one group take the "don't" examples. Let students turn examples into role-play situations. Role-play poor citizenship, then good citizenship.
- Prompt each student to brainstorm a list of his or her talents, and then write about how they can use these talents to contribute to good citizenship.
- Have your students visit this website www.goodcharacter.com and click on "Opportunities for Action." There they will find examples of opportunities to become involved in community service projects and other activities relating to citizenship and civic responsibility. In groups, students will use these ideas and examples to help them create a "Plan of Action". Each group will present the plan to the class.
- Brainstorm ways students can be more tolerant and accepting of each other. Write them on the board. Then have the children work in small groups to create posters about accepting others. Display the posters in the classroom or hallway.

SOURCES:

<http://www.education-world.com>

<http://www.goodcharacter.com>

Daily Character Education Activities, Grades 4-2 Carson-Dellosa, 2004

Character Education Ideas and Activities, Grades K-3 Carson-Dellosa, 1998

Jackson, Tom, M.Ed. *More Activities that Teach*. Red Rock Publishing, 2003.

Jackson, Tom M. Ed. *Still More Activities That Teach*. Red Rock Publishing, 2002.