

Jackie Hain
Subject: Social Studies – Character Traits of a Good Citizen
Grade Level: 1st Grade
Anticipated Time: 35 minutes

What?

Social studies in first grade focuses on the environment and provides students with a broad introduction to the physical world. These two lessons will fit in a unit on citizenship, particularly in the school and the environment surrounding the school. Using the school as a smaller scale and model of the world, students will be introduced to the importance of authority, rules, citizens, civic engagement, and how these are the roots for values and principles of American democracy. This lesson is going to introduce, define, and provide a foundation on citizenship so students will be able to come up with their own pledges on how they can be good community citizens later in the unit. Students will know what a citizen is and examples of how they can help contribute to making their community and city a better place.

How?

At this age children are ego-centric, so it is difficult for them to conceptualize the bigger picture. This lesson will include a recorded discussion of what it means to be a “citizen” as well as an opportunity for citizen involvement around the school. This is a good way for kids to think about civic engagement and potentially start asking those at home to get involved.

Why?

The environment is the natural next step in increasing children’s awareness of themselves and others and the world around them. A gradual introduction of new layers will help students truly understand and grasp the world in which they live. A standard social studies curriculum starts with children looking at themselves, then their family, class, school, community, then city, state, country, world. Children need a range of experiences to help them develop necessary social skills for productive citizenship in the community and world. Because it’s important for students to understand the reason for rules and authority, children will look at their school as model of the bigger picture. People need to work together and get along. It is never too early to have children work together because this skill will translate to when they are adults. When adults do not get along, it can lead to violence and crime. The purpose of this unit is to start building active and responsible citizens who can contribute to society and get along with others by clearly and respectfully communicating their ideas and viewpoints. Students at this age learn best from hands-on activities. They seem to be much more engaged when hands-on activities are implemented. Able to learn about others in the world, they can use this new social awareness to benefit the community. I want my students to grow up and be successful, productive, contributing members of society, so providing concrete examples of good citizenship will allow them to start thinking about what they can do personally.

<p>Goals/Objective(s): Students will be able to identify themselves as a citizen of the community – something bigger than themselves and their house. SWBAT suggest and discuss qualities of a good citizen in small and large group.</p>
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PA Standards for Civics and Government:

5.1 Principles and Documents of Government

5.1.1.E: Describe students' responsibilities in the school and community.

5.3 How Government Works

5.3.F: Identify and explain behaviors for responsible classroom citizens and possible consequences for inappropriate action

Materials and Preparation:

Chart Paper/Sentence strip

Bold Markers

4 small bowls of snacks

1 large empty bowl

5 index cards

Snack bags

Being a Good Citizen by Adrian Vigliano

Classroom arrangement and management issues:

This will take place in the classroom – the discussion and lesson will be on the carpet.

4 small bowls of snacks will be pre-ready (out of children's site), along with 4 index cards so the teacher can easily write four characteristics that were determined by students. Distribution of trail mix will go by row, starting with the "model" row. Allergies for the classroom will need to be taken into consideration.

Plan: Students will come and sit on the carpet for this lesson's entirety.

"The hook" (10 minutes)

- Write "citizen" on a sentence strip and label anchor chart. Introduce as a WOW word, a word that is being discussed for the first time.

*Citizen: a person who lives in a city or town; a member of a state

*A citizen has many different characteristics, a good citizen is someone who works hard to make their community a better place

*Our goal is to be good citizens who contribute to our school, community, city, and state.

*This classroom is a community and we should strive to have a classroom full of good citizens.

"The body of the lesson" (20 minutes)

Let's brainstorm some characteristics of a good citizen on the white board. A good member of this class or a good member of the city:

- Teacher will give them: *Honesty* is one of the characteristics of a good citizen. What does it mean to be honest?

- Teacher will give them: *Respect*. A good citizen is respectful. What does it mean to be respectful?
- If necessary, teacher will give them: Always doing your best. A good citizen always gives their best. What does it mean to always do your personal best?
- Other suggestions: responsible, helping others, unselfish, loyal, proud, intelligent, educated, self-control, self-confidence, fair, hard-worker
- See how many examples we can get as a class. Then choose four off the list and compare to trail mix: pretzels, M&Ms, raisins, popcorn. (or maybe bake something and show how all the ingredients come together to make something great)
- Have four small bowls with these four snacks. Have the words (1) honesty, (2), responsible, (3) respectful, (4) fair [compassionate, courageous]
- Have a different student pour each ingredient into the larger bowl. Make the connection: pretzels are good, but they are better with M&Ms, raisins, and popcorn combined! Each of these snacks would be good by themselves, but together they make an even better snack. This is like being a good citizen. It is good to have one of these characteristics, but it is even better to have all of them.

“Closure (if appropriate)” (5 minutes)

Review what is a citizen.

What is the point or the reason for being a good citizen?

How can we be good citizens in our school? In our city? In our country?

Tell students to go home tonight and start thinking about things that they can do in their communities to make it a better place. Explain to students that they can think about things in their classroom, school or town. Students should come to school tomorrow with some examples in mind.

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Comment: They could even talk with their parents.

Assessment of the goals/objectives listed above:

Is the child asking relevant questions?

Is the child making meaningful contributions to the conversation?

Can student use their own words and tell what they learned?

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Comment: How will you keep track of these.

Anticipating students’ responses and your possible responses:

Not understanding characteristics. This part of the lesson, the teacher is not looking for how individuals can be citizens or what citizens do, but rather, the qualities and the character traits of a person. Potential response, “remember we are looking for character traits, descriptions, not actions (yet).”

Accommodations:

Build on what any child says – work with their suggestions about what they think a citizen is.

Use those who are being good models or those who need to stand up because they are antsy to put snacks in the big bowl.