

# Dilworth Elementary Character Education Citizenship (February)

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**Pre-teach:** Greet the students and tell them you will be discussing the character trait citizenship with them today. Ask the following questions and call on different students for answers. Below each question are examples of the type of responses you are looking for. You may need to rephrase students' answers or guide them along.

(Ask) **What does citizenship mean?**

1. Being responsible and respectful to people, animals, and the environment.
2. Caring about your community and country.
3. Being informed about the needs within your school and community.
4. Doing your best to make your home, school, and community a better place.

(Ask) **What are ways you can show good citizenship?**

1. Follow the rules and obey laws at school, home and in your community.
2. Respect authority, e.g., parents, teachers, police officers and other community helpers.
3. Participate in activities to improve your community and the environment, e.g., pick up litter, recycle, and plant trees and flowers.
4. Be a good neighbor and volunteer to help others.
5. Donate food or clothing to help someone in need.
6. Learn about the candidates running for public office and participate in kids' voting. Encourage others to vote too.
7. Use kind words and good manners in all situations.

(Ask) **Why is citizenship important?**

1. We need good citizens to make our school and community better for everyone.
2. It is our duty and obligation as American citizens to do our part.

**Book:** Read and discuss a book that teaches a lesson about citizenship.

**Activity:** Complete an activity to go along with your lesson. You may choose to incorporate an activity at any time during your lesson. (Activity suggestions attached.)

(Ask) **What do you think our school and community would be like if people were not good citizens? What if people did not obey rules and respect one another?**

1. Everything would be total chaos: We would not be able to learn anything at school, crime would take over in the streets, traffic accidents would be everywhere because people would not follow traffic signals and speed limits, discarded trash and garbage would fill the streets, etc.

(Ask) **Do you think you have the power to make a positive difference in your community?** Yes

**Closing comment:** Let's take the Citizenship Pledge: As a citizen, I will care for and respect others. I will take responsibility for improving my community, and I will strive to help my fellow citizens do the same.

**"When all of us work together, we become good citizens and our country becomes stronger."~  
Donna Forest**

## Citizenship Activities

### The Citizen Chain—All Dilworth Kindergarten Classes

**Materials:** Strips of paper Cut strips of paper and pass out one to each student.

Have each student draw or write a good citizen action (see page 1 of this handout for examples) on their strip of paper. Gather all of the links. Staple the links together and form a “citizen chain” to display in the classroom. Explain that in a community we are all connected and must work together to make it a great place to live. Talk about how long the chain is, and how it’s made up of many links, or jobs, each of which is something we are capable of doing.

### Citizen Ants—All Dilworth 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** Chocolate graham cracker crumbs, chocolate cake sprinkles, zip-lock baggies, and plastic spoons.

Cooperating and helping one another in order to get something done is a great way to learn about citizenship. Did you know that even the tiniest creatures cooperate with one another? Ants work together to build colonies, gather food, build tunnels, and care for their young. Every ant takes responsibility to perform its special job in order to create a nice ant community to live in.

Have the class wash hands, then work together to make an “edible ant farm.” Form an assembly line and have four groups responsible for different tasks:

- Group #1 is responsible for dumping graham cracker crumbs into a large bowl.
- Group #2 fills sandwich bags half full with crumbs.
- Group #3 adds a small spoonful of chocolate cake sprinkles “ants” into each bag.
- Group #4 zips up the bags.
- Any remaining students can be responsible for passing out the finished bags and plastic spoons.

Conclude your activity by reminding the students that even ants know the importance of citizenship. When we take responsibility to do our part and care for our community, we can make it great! (From *Edible Object Talks*, Susan Lingo)

### Recipe for Citizenship—All Dilworth 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Classes

**Materials:** Your favorite cookie recipe (cookies for students, optional)

Pass out a copy of your favorite cookie recipe to the students. (You also may want to include a sample cookie for the students to eat while you talk). Discuss the ingredients used to make the cookies and the importance of following the recipe to ensure a delicious cookie.

Ask the students to consider how the cookies would taste if you didn't follow the recipe. Perhaps left out the sugar or baked them for too long? Why is it important to follow the recipe?

How is following a recipe like obeying laws in our community? Ask students to consider what their community would be like without rules and laws. Would it be safe? How do rules benefit our school and neighborhood? Just like we need to follow a recipe to make delicious cookies, good citizens follow and respect the laws at their school and in their community.

**Citizen-taters—All Dilworth 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classes**

**Materials:** You will need a very large potato (Dictator), a very small potato (Commentator), two matching potatoes (Imitators), a potato with large specks on it (Spectator), and a sweet potato ("Sweet" and Good Citizen).

Explain to the class that citizenship is about taking responsibility to make your community better. The potatoes (or "taters") will show just how different citizens can be.

- Some citizens are always telling others what to do, instead of helping. A bossy person like this is called a **dictator** (show large potato).
- Another citizen has a lot of comments about everything but doesn't help or participate, only criticizes and talks. This citizen is a **comment-tater** (show small potato).
- Then there are those who only want to do just what everyone else is doing (show identical potatoes). These citizens are **imi-taters**.
- Just as much a problem are those who wish to only be **spec-taters** (show potato with specks). They watch everyone else do what needs to be done, but they don't get involved.
- The sweet potato looks a lot like other potatoes (hold up the sweet potato.) But, inside, it is a different color and it has a sweeter taste. A good citizen is like this sweet potato. A good citizen may look the same on the outside, but inside has a "sweet" and kind heart full of respect and concern for others in the community.

Don't be bossy like the dictator, or all talk and no action, like the commentator. Don't be an imitator, just doing what everyone else is doing, or a spectator that simply watches others work. Be the sweet potato, full of sweet kindness and concern for your community! (From *Object Talks for Any Day*, by Verna Kokmeyer)

**The Citizen Machine—All Dilworth 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes**

**Materials:** None

Ask the students to work in groups of 4-5 to invent and name a good citizen "machine." For example: Acme Trash Collector 1000. Each person in the group must play a part in the function of the machine. Ask them to outline their good-citizen roles (see page 1 of this handout for examples). Allow each group to demonstrate their machine's function to the class and explain why their machine would be important to the community.

**Picture This—All Dilworth 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes**

**Materials:** Pictures and/or stories from a newspaper of local everyday heroes that have demonstrated citizenship

Often times a community living section will highlight people that have made a difference in your town. Ask the students to think of other citizens whose actions have made their school or community better.

**Additional Citizenship Activity Options**

Feel free to add one of these activities to your lesson.

**Flowers in a Garden** (Suggested for grades K-1)

**Materials:** None

Ask the students to pretend they're flowers and plants growing in a garden. The flowers should follow your directions as you ask them to:

1. Grow tall, but stay rooted right where they are.
2. Sway in the breeze.
3. Droop in the rain.
4. Bask in the sun.
5. Bloom with arms up and out like petals and leaves.

## Additional Citizenship Activity Options (continued)

Now ask the students:

- What kinds of actions do people do that can harm flowers and plants? (Pollute water, throw litter, pollute the air)
- Why is it everyone's responsibility as good citizens to protect the air, water, and plants in the environment?
- What can one citizen do to protect the environment?

You may also ask the students to draw a picture of something citizens can do to protect the environment.

(Adapted from *Character Education Activities for K-6 Classrooms*, Sandra Peyser and Miriam McLaughlin, Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation. 1997.)

**Skit: Use Your Voice to Vote** (Suggested for grades K-3)

**Materials:** None

Discuss with the students why we vote. Voting allows citizens to let the government know what they think, value, and believe. Until fairly recently, minorities and women couldn't vote in our country. It is a privilege citizens of some countries still don't have.

Separate the class into three equal groups. Then designate one group as the government, one as voters, and one as a group of people who choose not to vote. Ask a "voting" student to express a concern to the "government" (taxes are too high, there's too much violence in some communities, teachers deserve higher pay, or other). Allow the government to consider it and propose a solution. Then ask a nonvoter to turn with his or her back to the government and whisper a concern. Explore how this is like choosing not to use your voice to vote. Ask the students: Is it fair to complain about how things are in government if you haven't voiced your concerns by voting?

**Citizenship Song** (Suggested for grades 2-4)

**Materials:** None

Teach the students a citizenship song (to a familiar tune, such as Twinkle Twinkle Little Star or Row, Row, Row Your Boat) or rap, or have them work in groups to come up with their own. Allow each group to perform their original creation for the rest of the class.

Sample rap:

We are good citizens, you know it's true. We are good citizens in all we do. We work hard and respect every rule, helping the community and our school. We listen, share and always care. We show good citizenship everywhere!

**Skit: The Head, Heart, and Hands of a Good Citizen** (Suggested for grades 2-5)

**Materials:** Cards with a characteristic of a good citizen written on each (see below)

Ask for several groups of 3-4 volunteers. Hand each group a card listing a characteristic of a good citizen of the world. (See below.) Ask each group to think up a skit to demonstrate a quality of a good citizen without saying it outright. See if the rest of the class can figure out what the quality is, raising their hands when they know.

- Has empathy for others and their problems
- Believes people should be treated fairly
- Feels responsible for helping others
- Compromises and finds solutions by working with others
- Respects others' rights

(Adapted from: TeachUNICEF, U.S. Fund for UNICEF's Education Department. *Exploring Our Roles as Global Citizens: An Educator's Guide (Grades 3-5)*. By Elizabeth O. Crawford, Ph.D. The University of North Carolina Wilmington. 2013. [http://teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/units/global\\_citizenship\\_gr\\_3-5\\_final\\_7-13.pdf](http://teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/units/global_citizenship_gr_3-5_final_7-13.pdf))

**Citizen Quotes** (Suggested for grades 3–5)**Materials:** Blank strips of paper and a piece of poster board

Write this quote on the board and discuss what it means: "You are on the pathway to a successful life when you do more for your community than your community does for you." ~Unknown

Pass out strips of paper and have each student write their own citizenship quote. Have each student share his/her quote with the class. Glue all of the quotes on a poster board and display them in the classroom.

**How Can We Be Global Citizens?** (Suggested for grades 4–5)**Materials:** None

Sometimes an issue feels so large, it can be difficult to know where one person, one class or family, or even a school or community would begin to help resolve it. Ask the students to think of a global issue that concerns them (clean water, adequate food, medical treatments for curable illnesses, etc.). Ask them what steps they would take to help with an important global issue like the one they've brought up. Are the steps below enough? What other steps would they add?

1. **Make a start.** What do we already know, or think we know, about the issue? Why should we be concerned?
2. **Learn more.** Which resources could help us learn more? How would we know the sources were trustworthy?
3. **Evaluate.** What have we learned? How and why have some of our ideas changed? How would we explain the importance of this issue to someone who didn't know about it?
4. **Take action.** Determine what is already being done. What could we do at home, at school, or in the community to raise awareness, funds, or to help solve the problem? (What resources would we need? Would we need permission from others? Etc.)

(Adapted from: TeachUNICEF, U.S. Fund for UNICEF's Education Department. *Exploring Our Roles as Global Citizens: An Educator's Guide (Grades 3–5)*. By Elizabeth O. Crawford, Ph.D. The University of North Carolina Wilmington. 2013. [http://teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/units/global\\_citizenship\\_gr\\_3-5\\_final\\_7-13.pdf](http://teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/units/global_citizenship_gr_3-5_final_7-13.pdf))