

# 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 they 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

### **Citizen Ants** (Suggested for all grades) - **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. If you would like, you can have the class 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! (Edible Object Talks, Susan Lingo)

### **Citizen-tators** (Suggested for grades 3 -5) – **Option for Dilworth 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classes**

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

Explain to the class that citizenship is about taking responsibility to make your community better. The potatoes (or "tators") will show just how different citizens can be. Some citizens are always telling others what to do, instead of helping. This bossy person is called a dic- tator (show large potato). Another citizen may not act like a know-it- all, but has a lot of comments to say about everything. They also aren't very helpful. This citizen is a comment- tator (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-tators. Just as much a problem are those who wish to only be spec- tators (show potato with specks). Spectators 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. (Hold up the potatoes as you talk about them.) 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!" (Object Talks for Any Day, by Verna Kokmeyer)

### **Picture This.** (Suggested for all grades) – **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.

### **Citizen Quotes** (Suggested for grades 4 -5) – **Option for Dilworth 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes**

**Materials:** Blank strips of paper and a 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

Next: Pass out strips of paper and have the students 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.

### **Recipe for Citizenship** (Suggested for all grades) - **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 this 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.

**The Citizen Chain** (Suggested for grades K-2) – **All Dilworth Kindergarten Grade Classes**

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

Have them each draw or write a good citizen action on their strip of paper. 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.

**The Citizen Machine** (Suggested for grades 3 -5) - **Option for Dilworth 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes**

**Materials:** None

Ask the students to work in groups of 4-5 to invent a good citizen "machine", example: Acme Trash Collector 1000. Each person in the group must play a part in the function of the machine. Allow students to demonstrate their machine for the class and explain why their machine would be important to the community.

**Citizenship Rap** (Suggested for grades 3 -5) - **Option for Dilworth 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classes**

**Materials:** None

Teach the students a citizenship rap or have them work in groups to come up with their own. Allow each group to perform their rap 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!