



LESSON 10: Environmental Stewardship & Civic Responsibility

OVERVIEW

Students will learn what it means to be part of a community through class discussion and analysis of two children's books, "The Lorax," and "Stone Soup." Students will then demonstrate how to be a good citizen in their community by identifying and carrying out a volunteer project that addresses a community need.

Learning Targets

- Students will define a community as a group of people with common interests which includes the places that they go to school, work and play.
- Students will evaluate how even a single person can make a difference in making our community a better place to live.
- It is up to everyone in our local community to take responsibility and action to make our community a beautiful place. Even students can help to make our community cleaner and more beautiful.

GLEs

See attachment

Materials Needed

- Sticky notes
- 5" x 9" cards for activity
- "The Lorax" book, by Dr. Seuss
- "Stone Soup" book, by Marcia Brown
- Internet access
- 8" x 11" paper
- Colored pencils, crayons and/or markers

Background Information

Defining Community

Communities take a variety of forms. For example, you belong to the community of the town you live in. You may also belong to a community of educators and a community of bird watchers. A community is a group of people with that may have common interests, geography, characteristics, or history with each other. Location-based communities, or communities of place, are defined by geographic or political boundaries and may include neighborhoods, cities, countries, etc. Organizationally-based communities include political and economic associations, interest and hobby groups, professional associations, churches, etc. Some communities, like religious and ethnic associations, also help define identity. It's important to note that people can be a part of many different communities at the same time, and that a single community may serve more than one role for its members.

Functions of Community/Measuring Strength

Strong communities provide its members with shared connections that build trust and reciprocity, networks of interaction, and can help them to solve problems. More active civic participation and volunteering both contribute and are themselves features of community strength. Strong communities will also use and conserve natural resources in sustainable ways.

Environmental Stewardship – Building Community

Caring for your natural environment can help build community because the environment affects us all. Litter and environmental awareness is an issue that is deeply local, but global in scale. It engages a wide range of ages and involves numerous academic disciplines.

Volunteering

Volunteering is one way to strengthen community. Volunteering allows someone to share their time, talents, and energy for the good of the community. There are a wide variety of opportunities to volunteer. To connect with a Keep Louisiana Beautiful affiliate to find out about opportunities in your area, visit <https://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/affiliate-map/>.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness about litter issues and sustainability practices is another way to build community. There is a wide variety of ways in which to raise awareness. Students can do this in their schools with anti-littering campaigns, while anyone can contact their local print or broadcast media or conduct a survey of littering or recycling rates.

Additional Civic Engagement

There are other ways in which communities can work together to help solve litter and environmental problems such as voting, fundraising, or becoming a member of a group dedicated to addressing litter problems. Communities can also petition their local governments for municipal recycling programs, and let businesses and corporations know that being environmentally sustainable is important.

Source

- https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/no.3.pdf

ACTIVITY

Part I (Suggested for grades K to 4)

1. Write the word "community" on the board, along with its definition: a group of people with common interests and likes. Give each student a sticky note and ask each student to make a quick, one-minute drawing showing what they might see, hear or feel in a community. Call on each student to briefly explain his/her drawing and place the sticky note on the board.
2. Put up the 5" x 9" word cards or a poster with the following words:
 - sharing** - dividing or distributing portions
 - caring** - showing interest or concern
 - trust** - confidence or faith in a person or thing
 - interdependence** - depending on one another; mutual dependence
 - common resources** - resources that are not owned, but left open for free use by all

3. Ask students to come up individually and choose a sticky note that is not their own to place under the word that it best depicts. As students place their sticky notes, they will need to explain with a sentence what it tells about the icon, where it will be placed, and why, e.g., "I will place this picture of _____ under _____ because it shows _____." If some of the word cards have few or no icons placed with them, have the class brainstorm and create a few more sticky note pictures that best depict the word cards.
4. Read "Stone Soup" either as a class or in groups.
5. After reading the book, ask students what they think the major ideas of the story are. Use this discussion time to build on the idea of community that students have been exploring.
 - a. Considering the story, why do you think particular villagers were at first unlikely to share their own ingredients? How does this compare to us?
 - b. What do they think life was like in the village before making the stone soup? After?
 - c. Have you ever been in a position to help someone in need?
 - i. Describe the situation.
 - ii. What was the outcome?
 - iii. How did you feel when it was over?

Part II (Suggested for grades K to 4)

1. Read "The Lorax," either as a class or in groups. As an alternative, you may watch the original movie at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V06ZOQuo0k>.
2. After reading the book, ask students what they think the major ideas of the story are.
3. Have students think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. Why do you think the Once-ler did what he did?
 - b. What changes in the environment did we observe?
 - c. What was the environment like before the Once-ler started making "Thneeds"? What was it like afterward?
 - d. What was the author's message concerning what one person can do to save or destroy the environment? What connections do students see between this and being a good citizen?
4. Have students prepare a sequence for the key events in "The Lorax". Have students draw a diagram or flow chart showing the connections between characters in the story (Swomee-Swans, Bar-ba-loots, the Lorax) and the natural resources (Truffula trees, clean air, clean water). Discuss with students as necessary.
5. Either alone or in small groups, have students write and illustrate a sequel to "The Lorax". The sequel might explain how the Truffula tree made a comeback through replanting and proper care. The sequel could say what the new managers of the Truffula Tree Company are going to do to maintain environmental quality and at the same time make Thneeds. Note that your students' sequels do not have to have a positive outcome.

6. As they are writing their stories, have students also prepare a sequence of key events in their sequel and create a diagram or flow chart showing the connections between characters in the story. Do any new characters or natural resources emerge in the sequel? If so, how do they affect the outcome of the original story?

Part III (Suggested for grades 3 to 4)

1. Tell students that you would like them to look around and think of needs at the school and in the community that could be addressed by a group volunteer project. This can be done in groups, as a class or individually. Some examples of volunteer activities may be playground beautification, landscaping, tree planting, litter cleanups, etc.)
2. After the students select a project, have them execute the project by completing the following tasks:
 - a. Create a survey to assess the needs of the target group
 - b. Brainstorm ideas for publicizing the event
 - c. Contact local businesses or organizations to solicit aid/support
 - d. Design posters and brochures to publicize the event
 - e. Contact media for coverage and publicity
 - f. Set deadlines and develop a schedule for completion of all project components
 - g. Write thank you letters to community members, businesses or organizations that participated in the project

(Note: This is a general list of tasks. It can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the selected project.)
3. Once the class project is completed, have students reflect on their volunteering by writing and or drawing about their story of service.

CALL TO ACTION

1. Using the Project Front Yard Litter Quitter Pledge below, have the class recite the pledge to keep their community beautiful:
2. "I will demonstrate pride in my community by picking up the litter around me ... to create a clean room, clean home, clean front yard, clean neighborhood, clean city, clean state, clean country and a clean world"
3. Contact your local garden club or Keep Louisiana Beautiful affiliate to assist with volunteer efforts such as tree planting or litter cleanups.
4. Write a letter to your community mayor, asking how your class can get involved with any Clean City initiatives in your community.
5. Lots of families receive a large amount of advertisements and other junk mail that they do not want. You can stop the mailings and reduce waste by writing to the following address and requesting that they take your name off of their distribution list:

Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service
P.O. Box 900
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Keep Louisiana Beautiful** <http://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/>
- **Keep America Beautiful** <https://www.kab.org/>
- **Download a free copy of the Project Front Yard Activity Book, by going to:** http://www.lafayettela.gov/Presidents/SiteAssets/LCG_PFY_YardleyActivityBook%20PRINTABLE%20small_FINAL%20VERSION.pdf
- **Kids Cards for Trees:** <http://actrees.org/files/Publications/NW2011KidsCards.pdf>
- **Tree Facts:** <http://actrees.org/resources/about-trees/tree-facts/>
- **Planting Trees for Kids:** <http://education.usgs.gov/kids/plantatree.html>.
- **To get free trees for your school go to** <http://www.arborday.org/>
- **Louisiana Native Tree Guide:** <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/NR/rdonlyres/C6007A92-A5F2-4B6A-9598-1487CABFB9CD/18167/pub2926NativeTreeGuide.pdf>
- **Visit the websites:** www.seussville.com/loraxproject
- **Lorax Classroom Activity Packet:** <http://www.seussville.com/activities/9780394823379.pdf>
- **Lorax Printables** http://www.seussville.com/activities/SEUS11_Lorax14_ActBklt_FINAL_0.pdf
- **Recycling and Trash Signs for your classroom:** http://www.seussville.com/activities/Lorax14_EarthDayEduKit_Signs_WEB.pdf
- **Part II lesson material adapted from Project Learning Tree's "Who Speaks for the Trees."**