

Character and Life Skills: Kindness

Lesson Title: Town Hall Meeting

Grade Level: 3-5



Project and Purpose

Students will:

- Prepare for and participate in a classroom town meeting that includes the principal and any other school personnel regarding ways to prevent bullying in their school.
- Summarize the results of a meeting in a letter thanking the principal for his or her participation in the meeting.

Essential Question

How can we show kindness in our school?

Materials

- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers
- Paper, construction paper, card stock, poster board

Procedure

Introduction

1. Begin this activity by asking your students to define the term "town hall meeting." Explain to your students that a town hall meeting is a gathering at which the people who live in a particular area like a town or a city discuss issues that affect them.
2. Continue by asking students to explain what a town hall meeting for their school could be like. Who would participate? Why? Where would it be held? What topics would be covered? How could we ensure everyone had an equal say? (Students might explain that the meeting would be similar to a town hall meeting except the participants might include students, parents, teachers, and administrators, and the participants would discuss issues that are important to their school.)
3. Ask students to share some examples of the issues and problems that might be addressed at a town hall meeting held in the school. Make a list.

Direct Instruction (I do)

1. Explain to your students that the class will hold a town hall meeting to discuss bullying and violence in their school. In addition, they will invite the principal to participate in the meeting.

2. Describe how a town meeting works:

- A facilitator calls the meeting to order and asks the members to take their places (sit down). The members are expected to be respectful to everyone in the group including the speaker and kind to each other.
- A leader stands before the town membership and speaks briefly on a topic.
- The town members who wish to ask questions line up to the side of the group and wait their turn. The facilitator helps organize the people in line.
- While the leader answers the question, the member returns to his/her place in the assembly.
- There should be no more than five people lined up at any time to ask questions. If everyone has questions, then a facilitator (you, the teacher) distributes numbers to create an order in which the questions will be answered.
- At the end of the meeting, the facilitator adjourns the meeting.

Guided Exploration (We do)

1. Divide students into groups of four or five and tell them that their task is to come up with the following:

- At least one suggestion of how to prevent bullying
- At least one suggestion for how to increase kindness in their school
- At least one question to ask the principal or other school staff members in the meeting on this topic

Students work with their groups to brainstorm a list of suggestions and questions for the principal.

2. During this time, teacher floats to each group to monitor the discussions.

3. When groups have completed the tasks, have students share their suggestions and questions. Create a list where everyone can see.

4. If needed, brainstorm a few more ideas aloud.

Note: Teacher should write down the suggestions and questions to present to the principal before the meeting so he/she has time to prepare.

5. As a class, have students compose a letter inviting their principal to the meeting.

Independent Practice (You do)

On the day of the meeting, allow each group to ask its question(s) and present its suggestion(s). Encourage other groups to respond to the suggestions and questions when appropriate and in a positive manner.

Conclusion

Conclude the activity by asking your students to write a thank-you letter to their principal restating something positive they learned from the meeting. This can be done individually or in their small groups. Once they are finished, have a quick discussion about what was learned at the town hall meeting regarding bullying and kindness. How is writing a letter to the principal an act of kindness?

Vocabulary

allegiance (n.)

Definition: loyalty to a leader, country, belief, etc.

Context: when we recite the Pledge of Allegiance, we are promising our loyalty to our country.

bullying (n.)

Definition: the act of threatening to hurt someone or frighten him or her, especially someone smaller or weaker

Context: The safety monitors at Juan's school help prevent bullying by telling teachers when they witness cruel behavior.

dedicated (adj.)

Definition: having the desire and commitment to work very hard to accomplish a goal or task

Context: Ashley practices her soccer drills every day because she is dedicated to becoming a better player.

helpfulness (n.)

Definition: reaching out to others; care or help provided to a person to make his or her life easier

Context: Because of Krystal's helpfulness, many of the children she tutors are improving their grades.

honor system (n.)

Definition: an agreement between members of a group to obey certain rules, although no one checks to make sure the rules are being followed

Context: Even though Ricky knew no one was watching, he upheld the honor system by paying for the candy bar instead of stealing it.

kindness (n.)

Definition: being nice to others; the state of being caring, compassionate, helpful, etc., toward someone

Context: One way that Shakira demonstrates kindness is by reading to younger students after school.

loyalty (n.)

Definition: sticking by someone; the quality of remaining faithful to your friends, principles, country, etc.

Context: Choosing to help his grandparents instead of watching the football game is proof of Jaime's family loyalty.

thankful (adj.)

Definition: grateful and glad about something that has happened

Context: Marla is thankful her brother wasn't injured in the car accident.

town hall meeting (n.)

Definition: a gathering at which the people who live in a town discuss subjects or problems that affect their town

Context: Mayor Grimes plans to discuss the rising crime rate during our next town hall meeting.