

Finding Common Ground (Grades K-5)



Overview: Students will explore the benefits of finding common ground with others in their community. This lesson promotes good citizenship.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- experience finding common ground with others.
- discuss how collaboration and community are impacted by citizens finding things in common.
- journal about how they can connect with others in their communities.

Directions:

- Identify an area to play this game. Specify where “out”

will be (to keep group together even though they are out).

- On a signal, have everyone walk around and mingle saying, “mingle, mingle, mingle”—until the leader shouts a number.
- When the number is announced, everyone must get into a group of people of that number. For example, if the leader says “3” then students should be getting in groups of 3.
- Anyone not in a group is “out”. All members of any group having more or less than the specified number are “out”.
- After playing one round, the leader will call out a new number and add the following characteristics as the number is called:
 - People:
 - of the same age
 - in the same grade
 - who live in the same city
 - with the same shoe size
 - with the same eye color
 - who love to eat the same food
 - who like the same kind of ice cream
- Keep playing until you get down to one or two people and then discuss.

Discussion Prompts:

- Ask students:
 - Was harder to find a group after you started grouping by things in addition to than numbers.
 - Did you learn things you have in common?
 - Did you feel more like you belonged when you learned about what you have in common with other students?
 - How did it feel when you couldn't find something in common and were out of the game?
 - Do you think it is possible to have nothing in

common with someone?

- When working in a group, is it easier when you have something in common?

Journal:

- Encourage students to journal about how they can find common ground with others. Ask students to think how they can find things in common with others in their school, home, teams, clubs, neighborhoods, etc. Ask students to think about questions they could ask if they are having a hard time finding something in common.

Citizenship is one of the Six Pillars of Character. [Click here](#) to learn about the Six Pillars of Character.

Digital Citizenship (Grades 6-12)



My teacher is so rude. I only got suspended because she does not have a sense of humor.

4:17 PM · Aug 14, 2019 · [Twitter for Adroid](#)

18k Retweets 5000 Likes



Overview:

Teaching students to think about their digital citizenship through the lens of integrity is important in this digital world. This lesson will give students an opportunity to discuss ways to engage an active conscience to model integrity as digital citizens.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- explore their digital footprint.
- discuss why it is important to protect your identity and reputation online and offline.
- utilize Rules of an Active Conscience to determine what to post on social media.

Materials:

- Rules of an Active Conscience tool
- Social Media: To Post or Not To Post handout

Lesson:

Journal: (5 mins)

- Google yourself.
- Write down what you noticed about your digital footprint.

Whole Group Discussion (15 mins)

- Share what you noticed about your digital footprint.
- Why is it so important to be a good digital citizen in today's world?
- Share headlines of digital footprints impacting citizens:
 - Harvard rescinded 10 offers of enrollment for students who posted explicit and racist pictures on social media.
 - Woman tweeted a racist post about her trip to Africa when she boarded the plane. She was fired by her boss before the plane landed.
 - Students photoshopped an unflattering picture of a teacher and posted it on the Internet. The students involved were suspended, legal charges were filed, and the students faced five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.
 - A woman posted a picture of herself dressed like a Boston Marathon Bombing victim to Instagram for Halloween. She was fired because of the insensitive nature of the post.
 - Students posted a meme making light of gun violence at school and they were arrested. Students who liked the post were suspended.
- What you share on social media matters. It can impact you today and in your future plans and career. Your digital footprint exists and can be used against you when you least expect it. Something you find funny or impulsively post can get you fired, arrested, or fined.
- Discuss in small groups how the Rules of An Active Conscience can help you decide what to post on social

media.

Small Group Discussion (15 mins)

- Read each Social media post on the To Post or Not To Post Handout and determine which of the Rules of Active Conscience it breaks.
- Share your findings with the teacher.

Exit Ticket:

- Generate a social media post that meets the Rules of Active Conscience.
 - Use the following site to create a fake account post: <https://zeoob.com/> if students do not have one they can use.
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Positive Impact (Grades 6-12)

Overview:

A critical component of citizenship is doing what you can to engage with your community. Everyone has the power to use their interests and passions to make a positive impact on their community, the country, and the world. In this lesson, participants will reflect on how their interests and passions can be used to make their community a better place to live, work, and go to school.

Character education objectives:

- Study how Amanda Gorman's passion for poetry allowed her to positively impact her country.
- Students will explore how their own interests and passions can make a difference in their community.
- Put the citizenship Pillar into action by crafting a

plan to use their interests and passions to positively impact their school or community.

Materials:

- Amanda Gorman's 2021 Presidential Inauguration speech
- Written text of Amanda's poem
- Goal Map tool

Lesson Plan:

Discussion Prompt: With a partner, share your interests and passions. Examples could include: music, animals, sports, video games, reading, and so on.

Activity: At the conclusion of the partner discussion, introduce students to Amanda Gorman, the young woman who wrote and delivered the poem "The Hill We Climb" at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration Ceremony.

Watch Amanda Gorman's speech at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration (5:47)

Optional – have students read the written text of her poem.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss the following questions in pairs, small groups, or as a full group.

Discussion Questions:

- Which of the Six Pillars of Character does this poem/speech align with? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think Amanda wrote this poem?
- How did Amanda use her passion for poetry to positively impact her community and country?
- How could you use your passions and interests to make a positive difference in your community?

Ask students to write down how they could use one of their passions or interests to make a positive impact in their

community. Then, direct them to use the Goal Map tool to create a plan to put their passion to work.

For example, if a student is passionate about caring for animals, they could use that passion to volunteer at the Animal Rescue League. Action steps to put that plan into action could be:

1. Locate an animal shelter in need of volunteers
2. Fulfill any requirements necessary for being a volunteer at their facility
 - Fill out application
 - Ensure my availability and skill set matches their needs
3. Schedule time to volunteer
 - Make sure I have transportation to and from the facility

Follow-Up: Several weeks after the completion of this lesson, ask students to share whether they have put their plan into action. If so, how much progress have they made on their plan? How are they positively impacting their community? If not, why?

Goal Setting (Grades 6-12)

Setting and reaching goals is an important skill every student needs to develop to become a more productive citizen. However, students do not always understand the difference in goal setting and goal achievement, nor do they grasp the steps it requires to achieve their goals. So, this lesson will walk students through the steps and supports needed to set and attain their goals

Digital Citizenship (Grades K-5)

Our citizenship does not stop at the physical space we occupy. Citizenship has expanded to the communities we have created online. Being a digital citizen is important for students as they complete school work and socialize in the digital space. This lesson is designed to give students tips on being a safe digital citizen.

Six Pillar Coloring Pages

Download these PDFs and get started coloring!

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

When the Six Pillars Conflict



At CHARACTER COUNTS!, we often refer to the Six Pillars of Character as universal values. In other words, they are values that transcend race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and even time. Put another way, nearly everyone can agree that more trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship would be good and even necessary for our individual, community, and societal growth.

Though the Six Pillars are universal, they are not absolutes. Like anything else in society, what the Pillars look like, sound like, and feel like can change due to context or circumstance. What is considered perfectly respectful behavior at a football game would not be considered respectful in a boardroom, for example. How we define what each pillar looks like and sounds like in unique circumstances is particularly important when Pillars appear to be in conflict. One definition of citizenship may include following the rules, respecting the law, and so on. And yet, Rosa Parks is often highlighted as an example of fairness, for her protest on the bus in which she technically broke the law – an unjust, unfair, and racist law, but a law nonetheless. Does that mean she's a bad citizen? Or, a student may argue that she was

showing caring by letting her friend copy homework so her friend wouldn't get in trouble, while a teacher might argue that the student was being irresponsible and untrustworthy by letting her friend cheat.

The tendency in these moments is to ask, "which Pillar is more important?" but that's the wrong question. The right question is, "in this time, given these circumstances, what does it mean to put the Six Pillars into action?" When one asks this question, Rosa Park's action is not only a demonstration of fighting for fairness, but citizenship, as she tries to make her community a better place for everyone, regardless of race.

Of course, some may view the constant need to negotiate what the Six Pillars look like in different circumstances as soft or unprincipled, but maybe it's the opposite. The intentional, deliberate conversation about what the Six Pillars look like for us, in this situation, is exactly the kind of conversation, sometimes hard conversation, we must have if we're going to work together successfully. Yes, the Pillars are universal, but what we want them to look like for our students, school, community, family, and society is ultimately up to us.

Learn more about character education.

Six Pillar Animal Coloring Pages

Download these PDFs and get started coloring!

Trustworthiness – Camel

Respect – Lion

Responsibility – Elephant

Fairness – Giraffe

Caring – Kangaroo

Citizenship – Bear

Quotation database

Database of character education quotations.

Opportunities

There are opportunities even in the most difficult moments.
Character education quotations.