

Lesson 1: Our Community Helpers



Grade Level: K-5

Objective: Students will identify community helpers and understand their roles in promoting “general welfare” as described in the Preamble of the Constitution.

Focus Skills:

- **Identifying and Applying Civic Knowledge** Students learn about the roles of community helpers and how they contribute to the concept of "general welfare" as outlined in the Constitution.
 - **Engaging in Civil Discourse** Students practice sharing ideas, listening to others, and reflecting on the contributions of community helpers during discussions and the classroom interview activity.
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Materials Needed

- Chart paper or whiteboard and markers
 - Simplified version of the Preamble: “We the People ... promote the general welfare...”
 - Text: “Our Community Helpers” (provided)
 - Drawing paper and crayons/markers
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Lesson Outline

Introduction (5 Minutes)

- **Discussion Prompt:** Begin by asking, "Who are some people who help us in our community?"
- **Engage:** Write student answers on the board (e.g. firefighters, doctors, teachers, postal workers, police officers, sanitation workers).
- **Connection:** Explain how these community helpers keep our community safe, healthy, and running smoothly.

Reading Time (10 Minutes)

- Read aloud: "**Our Community Helpers**"

"In every town and city, there are special people who help us every day. They are called community helpers, and they play important roles in making our lives better! Firefighters help keep us safe from fires. Police officers protect us from harm. Doctors and nurses help us feel better when we're sick. Teachers help us learn new things every day. We can also think of postal workers, who bring our mail, even on rainy or snowy days. Sanitation workers, like those who collect our garbage, keep our streets and neighborhoods clean and fresh. These community helpers make sure our towns are safe and healthy places to live!"

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. Who is a community helper you think is very important? Why?
2. How do these helpers make our lives better?

Constitution Connection (10 Minutes)

- **Introduce the Constitution:**

- Explain that the Constitution is like a big rule book for our country.
- Share: "It helps keep everyone safe and treated fairly, just like rules in school."

- **Define the Constitution in Kid-Friendly Terms:**

"The Constitution is a plan for how our country works. It tells us how leaders are chosen, how laws are made, and how people are treated."

- **Focus on "General Welfare":**

- **Share the simplified Preamble:** "We the People... promote the general welfare..."
- Explain: "general welfare" means keeping everyone safe and healthy, just like our community helpers do.

Activity: "General Welfare Helpers" (15 Minutes)

- **Introduce the Activity:**

- Ask students to draw a picture of their favorite community helper and how they help others.

- **Drawing Prompt:**

- Ask students to draw a picture of their favorite community helper and show what they do to help others.
- For younger students (K-1), consider showing visuals such as a clip (["What is a Community Helper"](#)) from *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* to provide examples of community helpers.
- For older students (4-5), ask them to include a sentence explaining the role of their chosen community helper.

- **Share:**

- Invite students to explain their drawings and describe how their helper promotes "general welfare."

Closing and Connection (5 Minutes)

- **Review Key Points:** Community helpers keep our neighborhoods safe, clean, and healthy. They show us what it means to care for others.
- **Reflection Prompt:** "How can we show appreciation for the community helpers around us?"

Suggested Booklist: Our Community Helpers

- My First Brain Quest First Words: Community Helpers
- We are the Builders by Deepa Iyer
- Night in the City by Julie Downing

Lesson Extension: "Meet Our Community Helpers" - Classroom Interview Activity

Overview

This learning extension activity allows students to connect with community helpers through a classroom visit and creates opportunities to learn more about what they do. Students can practice "interviewing" by preparing questions and listening carefully to responses.

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. **Explain the Activity:** Tell students they'll have the chance to meet a community helper and ask questions.
 2. **Discuss Questions:** Ask the class what kinds of things they're curious about, guiding them to think about the helper's job, tools, daily tasks, or reasons they like helping others.
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Preparation (5-10 minutes)

1. **Brainstorm Questions Together:** As a class, brainstorm a few simple questions to ask the community helper (e.g. "What do you do every day?", "What is the best part of your job?", "How do you help people feel safe?").
 2. **Assign Roles:** Assign each student a role, such as Question Helper, Note-Taker, and Listeners.
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Classroom Interview with Community Helper (20 minutes)

1. **Arrange a Visit:** Invite a community helper to visit the classroom, in person or virtually (e.g. consider a School Resource Officer, or a firefighter, social worker, nurse, or sanitation worker).
 2. **Student Questions:** Encourage each "question helper" to ask one of the brainstormed questions.
 3. **Note-Taking and Observation:** Have the "note-takers" draw or write about what they learned while listening.
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Group Sharing and Reflection (10 minutes)

1. **Share Observations:** Each group shares what they learned or drew/wrote with the class.
2. **Reflection Prompt:** Ask students, "How does this helper make our community a better place?" to spark discussion.

Assessment:

- Participation in discussions and activities.
- Quality and creativity of drawing.
- Quality of interview questions and reflections.