

Lesson 4: Being a Good Neighbor

Grade Level: K-5

Objective: Students will explore the concept of being a good neighbor by learning about kindness, respect, and cooperation, and connecting these values to the Constitution.

Focus Skills:

Engaging in Civil Discourse Students discuss and reflect on kindness and cooperation, practicing respectful communication and learning to value diverse perspectives in their community.

Assessing American Democracy Through the connection to "promoting the general welfare" in the Constitution, students assess how the ideals of democracy are rooted in building strong, supportive communities. They learn how being a good neighbor upholds democratic values like inclusion, respect, and collective responsibility.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper or whiteboard and markers
 - Printed copies of the story "*A Good Neighbor*" (text provided below)
 - Simplified explanation of "*promoting the general welfare*" from the Constitution
 - Blank templates for "Good Neighbor" certificates
 - Art supplies
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Lesson Outline

Introduction (5 minutes)

Discussion Prompt: "What is a neighbor?"

- Encourage responses about people who live nearby or those encountered daily (e.g., classmates, community members).

Follow-Up: "What do you think makes someone a good neighbor?"

- List responses on the board, focusing on ideas like kindness, respect, helpfulness, listening, and working together.

Reading Time (10 minutes)

- Read *A Good Neighbor*. Emphasize themes of kindness, sharing, and inclusion.

"A Good Neighbor"

Being a good neighbor means being friendly and kind to the people around us. Good neighbors help each other, share, and listen. Good neighbors know that sharing is important! They share things like

toys, books, and even snacks. When we share, we show others that we care and want to make them happy. For example, if a neighbor has a fun game, they might invite you over to play. Or if you have extra cookies, you can share them with your neighbors. Sharing creates a sense of community and makes everyone feel included. Everyone can be a good neighbor, no matter how old they are. Whether you're a child or an adult, you have the power to make a positive difference in your community. Small acts of kindness can inspire others to do the same, creating a chain reaction of goodness!

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why is it important to be a good neighbor?
2. Can you share a time when someone was a good neighbor to you?

Constitution Connection (10 minutes)

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

- Explain that this phrase means taking care of each other and working together to make our community better.
- Ask: "How do kindness and cooperation help our community?," and "How can we promote the general welfare in our classroom?"

Activity: Good Neighbor Certificate (15 minutes)

Distribute blank certificate templates and art supplies.

For Younger Students:

- Encourage them to focus on drawing pictures that show their honoree being a good neighbor (e.g., sharing, helping, or showing kindness).
- Teachers or helpers can assist in writing a sentence based on what the student describes.

For Older Students:

- Ask them to design certificates with a short paragraph (3–5 sentences) explaining why their honoree exemplifies being a good neighbor.
- Example: "I am giving this certificate to Sam because he always helps me with math problems and includes me in games during recess. He shows kindness and makes our class better for everyone."

Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

- Invite students to present their certificates.
 - Younger students can show their pictures and say a sentence about their honoree.
 - Older students can read their paragraphs aloud.
- Discuss:
 - "What did you enjoy about creating the certificates?"
 - "How can we practice being good neighbors in our school and community?"

Assessment:

- Observe participation during discussions and certificate creation.
- Evaluate the thoughtfulness and effort in the certificates.

Suggested Booklist: Being a Good Neighbor

- **When We Are Kind** by Monique Gray Smith
- **Just Help!: How to Build a Better World** by Sonia Sotomayor
- **All Are Neighbors** by Alexandra Penfold

Lesson Extension: “Good Neighbor Week”

Overview

Extend the lesson by hosting a “Good Neighbor Week” in the classroom. Each day, students can be encouraged to perform acts of kindness or helpfulness to their peers, staff, and people at home. At the end of the week, they can share their experiences and how their actions helped the community.

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Explain the Activity:** Introduce the concept of "Good Neighbor Week." Explain that students will engage in daily acts of kindness and helpfulness, focusing on making their classroom and community a better place.
 - **Discuss the Importance of Kindness:** Facilitate a brief discussion on why being a good neighbor and helping others is important. Ask students how small actions can make a big difference.
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Planning Acts of Kindness (10 minutes)

- Have students brainstorm different acts of kindness they can perform throughout the week. Write their ideas on the board. Encourage suggestions that are simple yet impactful, such as:
 - Helping a classmate with their homework
 - Writing thank you notes to staff members
 - Assisting with classroom chores
 - Doing a chore at home without being asked
 - As a class, decide on specific themes or focuses for each day of the week (e.g., "Thank You Thursday" for expressing gratitude).
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Daily Kindness Activities (Ongoing)

Introduction to the Kindness Chain (5 Minutes)

- **Explain the Idea:** Tell students they’ll create a “Kindness Chain” to show how their acts of kindness add up to something big. Each act of kindness will be represented by a colorful paper link.
- **Make the Connection:** Compare the chain to a community, where every person’s kind action helps strengthen the bonds between people.

Preparing the Kindness Chain Materials

- Provide pre-cut strips of colorful paper (1 inch x 6 inches works well) and markers or crayons.

- Set up a dedicated space in the classroom where the chain will grow throughout the week (e.g., a bulletin board or a corner wall).
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Daily Kindness Activities + Chain Building (10 Minutes/Day)

1. **Perform Acts of Kindness:** Encourage students to complete their planned acts of kindness each day.
 2. **Document the Kindness:** At the end of the day, students write or draw a brief description of their kind act on a paper strip.
 - Example: "I helped a friend pick up their dropped crayons" or "I said thank you to the lunch staff."
 3. **Add to the Chain:** As a class, staple or tape each strip to form a growing chain.
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End-of-Week Celebration (15-20 Minutes)

1. **Showcase the Kindness Chain:** Display the completed chain to demonstrate the collective impact of the students' actions. Discuss how long the chain grew and what it represents.
 2. **Reflection Activity:** Facilitate a discussion where students share their favorite acts of kindness and how those actions made them feel.
 - Prompt: "What did you learn about being a good neighbor this week?"
 3. **Creative Wrap-Up:** Have students decorate a "Good Neighbor Week" certificate or create a class poster with the theme *"Our Acts of Kindness Make Us Stronger Together!"*
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Group Discussion and Reflection (10 minutes)

- Facilitate a class discussion on the importance of community and helping others. Ask students:
 - "How did your actions create a positive impact?"
 - "What did you learn about kindness this week?"
 - "How can we continue to be good neighbors in the future?"
 - **Reflection on Kindness:** Discuss how these acts contribute to building a supportive and inclusive classroom environment.
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Assessment

- **Participation in Activities:** Observe student engagement during the daily kindness activities and sharing sessions.
- **Reflection Journal:** Review the reflection journals for insights on students' understanding of kindness and its impact.
- **Class Discussion Contributions:** Assess students' contributions to the class discussions regarding their experiences and the importance of being a good neighbor.

Good Neighbor Award

for

