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Teaching Guide: Citizenship

for grades K-5

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This page is from the teaching guide for the video *Citizenship* in the video series *The Six Pillars of Character™* featuring the *Popcorn Park Puppets™*. Even if you aren't showing this video there is a lot of material here you can use to create a lesson. Feel free to modify it to suit your needs.



HOW TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN

- Do your share to make your school, your community, and the world a better place. .
- Take responsibility for what goes on around you.
- Participate in community service.
- Help take care of the environment.
- Be a good neighbor.
- Treat other people with respect and dignity.
- Follow the rules of your family, your school, and your society.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

CHILDREN LEARN:

- That good citizens do their part to make their community a good place to live.
- That they have the power to make a positive difference in the world.

THE VIDEO STORY



Citizen Nubbs has a bright idea.

Nubbs becomes a hero to his friends by helping them

'DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you are using the video, ask questions 1&2 before viewing.

1. What is a hero?
2. Who is one of your heroes? Why, what makes that person a hero?

Questions to ask after showing Act I

3. What happened in the video so far?
4. Why did Nubbs pick Captain Planet™ as his hero? How do you feel about Nubbs' choice? Who did Nubbs' friends pick as their heroes? How do you feel about their choices?
5. What does Captain Planet™ mean by, "the power is yours"?
6. Burna says "we're just kids, and kids have no power." Do you agree that kids have no power? Why, or why not?
7. Burna says kids are supposed to play, and adults are supposed to do all the important stuff. Do you think Burna is right? Why, or why not?
 - What important stuff can kids do?
8. Nubbs wanted to plant trees in order to help the environment. How do trees help the environment? (*Clean the air, release oxygen, provide shade, prevent erosion, etc.*)
9. What did Nubbs' friends think of his idea about planting trees? What were their objections? (*Can't plant enough to make a difference, it's a lot of work, it might rain, where would they get the trees?*)
10. Do you think Nubbs' idea to plant trees is a good one?
 - Do you think that kids can really accomplish anything like that? Why or why not?
 - Would you go along with Nubbs' plan?
11. In the song, Nubbs sings, "Maybe their help is too much to ask. Maybe it's just too big of a task." Do you think what Nubbs wants to do is too big of a task? Why?
 - Is there a way Nubbs could make the task smaller? Would it still be worth doing?
12. How is Nubbs feeling at the end of Act I? Why do you think he feels this way?
13. Nubbs' friends think he should drop the idea and give up. What do you think he should do? What do you think he will do?

Questions to ask after showing Act II

tap into their power to make an important difference in their community. When Nubbs leads his friends in a successful effort to transform an ugly vacant lot into a beautiful grove of shady trees, they all experience the satisfaction and the benefits that come from being good citizens.

[Click Here
to Learn About the Video
Series](#)



The Six Pillars of Character

- **Trustworthiness**
- **Respect**
- **Responsibility**
- **Fairness**
- **Caring**
- **Citizenship**

Color these
characters!

Click on the Popcorn Park Puppets below to get blackline masters you can

14. Socrates called Nubbs a good citizen. What reasons does he give for saying that? *(Because Nubbs cares about more than just himself. He cares about his community, he cares about the world, and he tries to help.)*

15. Why did Socrates ask Nubbs where big cities come from? *(To make the point that big things are the result of lots of individual people doing their share.)*

16. Socrates helped Nubbs see that big things, like cities, are the result of a lot of individual people each doing their share. What does that have to do with Nubbs' tree planting project?

- Do Nubbs and his friends have to plant a million trees to make a difference? What do they have to do to make a difference? *(Plant however many trees they can.)*

17. How much of a difference will Nubbs and his friends make if they don't plant any trees at all?

18. Nubbs got an idea when Diotima asked him, "what if your tree project could give your friends a way to be just as powerful as their heroes?" What do you think Nubbs' idea is? Do you think he can convince his friends to help? How could he do that?

Questions to ask after showing Act III

19. In the first part of this video, Nubbs wanted to plant a million trees. Was that realistic?

- In Act III he wanted to plant a grove of shady trees in an ugly vacant lot. Was that more realistic? Was that a good idea? Why, or why not?

20. How did Nubbs convince his friends to do the tree planting project? *(He showed them that they had the power to transform an ugly vacant lot into a beautiful grove of shady trees.)*

21. What problems did they have to solve? Did each of them have an important job? What did each of them do? *(Nubbs organized the project. Groark and Burna got volunteers from the neighborhood to help. Essie got the garden center to donate the trees, Muggsy got permission from the owner of the lot to plant the trees.)* What would have happened if any of them had not done their job?

22. Why did Nubbs' friends make him their hero? Do you think Nubbs is a hero?

23. Who is your hero? Is your choice different now than it was before you watched the video?

24. How did Nubbs and his friends feel about what they accomplished? Have you ever felt that way? What did you do that made you feel that way?

print out for your children to color.



Groark



Burna



Nubbs



Essie

25. What makes your neighborhood or community a nice place to live? What could you do to make your neighborhood or community a better place?

26. By improving the vacant lot, Nubbs and his friends performed a community service. What does good citizenship have to do with community service?

27. What do you think a good citizen is? In what ways are you a good citizen? What is a bad citizen?

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. What does it mean to be a good citizen? Have your class brainstorm a list of do's and don'ts for citizenship. Ask for specific examples of each behavior they identify. Compare their list with the one at the top of this page.

2. Take the rules from #1, above, and turn them into role-play situations. The kids can act them out themselves or use puppets. Role-play poor citizenship, and then, good citizenship. Have the group critique each of the role-plays.

3. Have your older students go to an internet search engine (e.g., Google) and type in "kids making a difference." They will find countless inspiring examples of how young people have made their communities and the world a better place. Have them select stories they like and present them to the class and tell why they chose them. Do these stories give them any ideas about things they might like to do? If your students are pre-readers, do the search yourself and select stories to read to them.

4. Have your students visit this website <www.goodcharacter.com> and click on "Opportunities for Action." There they will find opportunities to become involved in community service projects and other activities relating to citizenship and civic responsibility.

5. Have the class identify needs in the school or community, and plan a service project to meet those needs. For guidance in planning a service project, visit www.goodcharacter.com and click on "service learning."

6. Have a class discussion about heroes. Have kids select their heroes and write about them. Introduce the idea of heroes as people who do things to help others. For ideas about how to expand this activity visit www.giraffe.org/k12_3.html

7. Are you doing a really cool eco-project at your school? If so, visit Captain Planet™ Foundation's website, and the Captain may be able to

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assist in providing the seed money to get your project growing. Go to:
www.captainplanetfdn.org

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. In the end, Burna admits that kids can make a difference, and she gives Nubbs a hero medal.

- Do you think Nubbs is a hero? Why?
- Is he also a good citizen? In what way?

2. Write about someone you consider to be a hero.

- What is the main reason you think this person is a hero?
- What are some other good things about this hero?
- What qualities do you admire in this person?
- What obstacles did s/he overcome?
- Did s/he take any risks?
- How has s/he made a difference, and to whom?
- How does this person make you feel?
- Does this person inspire you in some way?

3. Identify a problem in your community that needs to be fixed.

- What is the problem?
- Why is it a problem (what bad things happen because of this problem)?
- What needs to be done to fix the problem?
- Whose responsibility is it to fix the problem?
- What good will come of fixing the problem?

Write all this in letter to the editor of your newspaper.

4. From a newspaper, magazine, TV show, or movie, find an example of someone demonstrating good citizenship. Write a letter of appreciation to this person, describing what s/he did and how you feel about it.

5. Think of some kind of volunteer work you might like to do. Describe it and tell why you think you would like it. Who would it help, and in what way? For some volunteer ideas, visit <www.goodcharacter.com> and click on "Opportunities for Action."

6. What does it mean to be a good citizen? In what ways are you a good citizen? Give some examples of things you've done that show good citizenship. What things could you do to be a better citizen?

7. Research and write a history of your city or neighborhood or community. Identify individuals and organizations who made especially important contributions or who had a big influence on its development. Publish your book and present it to the library. Make sure the kids understand that things got the way they are because people (citizens) made that happen. For very young children, tell them stories about

people and events that shaped the present.

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(Copy this block and send it home to the parents.)

FOR PARENTS

Dear Parent,

Your child has just viewed a video entitled ***The Six Pillars of Character: Citizenship*** which encourages children to do their share to make the community a better place, and shows them that that even kids their age have the power to make a difference.

Here are some things you can do to reinforce the message of this video and our related learning activities.

- Ask your child to tell you about the video program and what he or she learned from it.
- Ask you child to show you the page entitled "How to be a Good Citizen." Discuss the guidelines for citizenship listed on this page. Perhaps post them in a place where your child will see them often.
- Have a family discussion about what things you can do together to take more responsibility for the environment (recycling, using less water and energy, buying non-polluting products, etc.). Make a plan and do it.
- Participate in a community service project with your children.
- Watch a television program together, and talk about ways in which the characters were either good citizens or bad citizens.
- When you do things that demonstrate good citizenship, be sure to point it out to your child. Your child will learn a lot from watching what you do.

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