Title of Lesson: What does it mean to be a responsible community member?

Level: Elementary

Overview: Using a “first day of school” scenario, students are introduced to what a community is, how communities work together to improve, and how to be a responsible community member. It concludes with students being asked to create an action plan to make their school community a better place.

Length: Several class periods over 4 or 5 days

Colorado Civics Standards 2nd grade
1. Responsible community members advocate for their ideas.
2. People use multiple ways to resolve conflicts or differences.

Evidence Outcomes-- Students can:
-list ways that people express their ideas respectfully.
-identify how people monitor and influence decisions in their community.
-describe ways in which people can take an active part in improving their school or community.
-identify and give examples of civic responsibilities that are important to individuals, families, and communities.
-describe characteristics of a responsible community member.

Activities and Procedures:
2. Kid-Friendly Inquiry Questions:
   What are ideas that help people live together in a community?
   How does a responsible person support his or her community?
   How does a family contribute to their community?
   When a community has concerns that affect many people, how should people act?
3. Pre-Test: Using a KWL Chart, collect student classroom responses to identifying characteristics of community members and community. Revisit the graphic organizer to add new learning and/or questions throughout the lesson. Finish the lesson with the graphic organizer and discuss and/or adjust characteristics of community members and community.
4. Creating a “Citizen Journal” can provide students with a place to collect information and write out their thoughts.
5. Prepare a classroom “Civics Wall” to showcase student work.
6. Introduce scenario and character: “Boys and girls, today I would like you to listen to a story about “Matthew” and think about our “inquiry questions” while I read. When I finish reading about Matthew’s experience, we will discuss what we heard and what we understand about his day. Read scenario to students. Have students “turn and talk” at
their table to discuss Matthew's problem. Bring group together for a guided discussion of student observations.

7. Guided Discussion: What does it mean to be responsible? How does Matthew show responsibility on his first day of school? Why is being responsible important to Matthew? How does this make a difference to other people in Matthew’s community and groups Matthew belongs to like his family, friends, school, etc?
   a. Matthew is a member of his second grade class. Does Matthew belong to any other groups? Family? What responsibilities do we have in the groups we belong to? Give examples.
   b. How does Matthew feel about his first day of school? Who should Matthew talk to about his experience and how he is feeling? Why?
   c. How could Matthew’s actions affect his classmates, or how might his actions matter to them?

8. Ask students to **Think-Pair-Share** the following questions: How do you feel about Matthew’s experience? What would you do? Why? Partner Pairs can present their ideas to the rest of the class.

9. Ask student to reflect on: When I have a problem or an idea I ...

10. Closure: Discuss how communities are groups of people living together. These people are called citizens. When the citizens have problems or ideas that affect the community, they use the local government to share those problems. In Matthew’s family it was important for Matthew to get to school safely by following the rules that the family had about crossing the busy street to school. Matthew shares his problem with his family because he depends on their support to help solve problems.

**Day 2:**

1. Briefly summarize Day 1 lesson outcomes. We learned that Matthew is a member of his family. His family has certain rules. Like Matthew, kids follow the family rules.
2. Think about: What is a rule? Why are rules important? How are rules made?
3. Think--Pair--Share with table partners. Talk about what Matthew did on his walk to school that shows he is being responsible. Create a Word Splash Chart titled: **Responsibility**.
4. Discuss with the whole group: Why are family rules important? How is Matthew being responsible on his first day of school? Who helped Matthew follow his family’s rule? What is the crossing guard’s job? If the crossing guard is not responsible about his job, who is affected and why? What does it mean to be responsible?
5. Introduce the Crossing Guard job, or invite the community volunteer in to share. Discuss how the Crossing Guard got his job. What are his responsibilities? Why is his job necessary or important and why? *For information on Safety and School Crossings in various municipalities, use the following link to demonstrate how cities have various departments to handle many types of concerns which result from living in a community or a city: https://dola.colorado.gov/legis/municipalities.jsf
6. Turn and Talk--What are some rules in your family? How did your family decide these rules were necessary? Whole Group: Revisit the Word Splash chart on Responsibility. Ask students: What is the purpose of a rule? (Possible answers include: Rules keep us safe. Rules help us be organized. Rules prevent problems, etc.).
7. In the Citizen’s Journal today, reflect on these thoughts: I am responsible when...
   Whole Group: Bring the group together to have students share some of their family
   rules and how the rules were established.

8. Closure: Responsible citizens make contributions to their communities by helping each
   other improve ways of living and working together. Citizens in a community use their
   local government to share concerns or ideas for their community. In Matthew’s
   community a crossing guard makes sure kids can cross busy streets safely. Matthew
   demonstrates how a responsible citizen follows the rules and listens to his family.

Day 3:
1. Opening: Today, we will explore ways students and communities handle problems. Let’s
   return to Matthew’s experience on his first day of school. Why does Matthew say,
   “Today was the worst day of his life”? Establish the problem or concern that Matthew
   experienced.

2. Think-Pair-Share: Ask students to define two important options for solutions for
   Matthew's problem. Partner pairs can write their options on an index card. Teacher
   collects all cards and shares the cards with the whole group. Teacher: “Let’s hold on to
   your solutions for Matthew’s problem and look at a bigger community group that we all
   belong to.”

3. Show Government Chart. Citizens can present their problems or concerns using the
   local government in their community. Ask students to describe the role students,
   teachers, and principals play in solving school problems. Have them compare this to
   governments, residents of a city, city council members, and government employees’
   problems.

4. Ask students for connections to the scenario of Matthew’s experience. Ask students,
   “What do you do in school or in your class, if you have a problem?” Who could you talk
   to? How would you approach discussing the problem? What is the best way to solve
   your problem? At school? At home? With a friend? Ask students, “Who is responsible
   for the safety of the citizens at busy intersections?”

5. Closure: In Citizen Journal, have students reflect on the following: “Today, I learned...”
ASSESSMENT: School Improvement Team

Role: School Improvement Team
You have been appointed to the School Improvement Team. Your task is to create an action plan to make your school a better place. Form a group of 2 or 3.

Choose one teammate to be the writer, and he or she will do all the writing for your team’s assignment. This person makes the project legible and easy to understand.

Choose one teammate to be the presenter or spokesperson for your team. He or she presents your team’s project.

Choose one teammate to be the clerk for your team. He or she checks the work; he or she makes sure everyone is keeping the “end in mind.”

Your entire team is responsible for the completion of the R.A.F.T. project.

Audience: Teacher, School Cabinet, and Principal
The audience for your project is your teacher. If your team is successful, your project may move to the principal for final consideration.

Form: Action Plan
Your task is to find one idea for improvement in your school community and create an action plan for making a change.

Action Plan must be word processed on the computer. You must have at least three pieces of evidence to support your plan.

Use the “Tips for Action Plan” information sheet to write your Action Plan.


Tips for writing an Action Plan:
What is an Action Plan? An action plan is a written proposal to bring a change in your community based on evidence. EVIDENCE + WRITTEN PROPOSAL = ACTION PLAN.

Use the following tips to guide your work:
1. Write one or two sentences that explain your idea to make your school community better.
2. Write at least three or more reasons why your idea works.
3. Explain how the idea can be put into action: What needs to happen first, second, and third?
4. Be sure to list the evidence you collected to support your idea and show how your idea works.
5. Can you state the idea for your action plan briefly and clearly? The written proposal includes evidence that supports your position.
6. Do you have at least three pieces of evidence to support your idea? This evidence can be surveys, photos, articles, interviews, etc.
7. Have you collected enough information to explain how the idea could work?
Scenario: Matthew the First Day of School and His New Shoes

“Matthew, time to get up and get dressed!” hollered Mom from the kitchen. The sun was pouring in the window, “Today is going to be a good day,” thought Matthew. He quickly jumped out of bed. Matthew got dressed and put on his new sneakers with the Velcro ties and the cool hiking tread on the soles. He could smell the bacon and the warm pancakes with blueberry syrup that Mom always made for special occasions. Today qualified as a special occasion; it was the first day of school and second grade! Matthew was so excited to start the day; he remembered at the last second to grab his new backpack off the end of his bed and hurried downstairs. Sitting and enjoying each bite of the yummy breakfast, Matthew listened while his dad firmly reminded him about the walk to school. The family rule was to walk, to stay on the sidewalk, and to always look both ways before crossing the street. After a quick brushing of the teeth and a hug from Mom and Dad, Matthew was out the door and on his way to school. It would be a short walk, two blocks, but it seemed like he would never get there. Matthew remembered his dad’s final words about walking to school. Matthew knew it was going to be a great year. He would have a new teacher and a new classroom. Most importantly, all his friends from first grade would be there, too!

As the bell rang, the kids ran to line up next to their teachers’ signs that read “First Grade,” “Second Grade,” and so on. Matthew hurried with his best friend Juan to line up next to Mrs. Brown, the Second Grade teacher. Everyone was excited to begin the day. It was hard to stand in line and be still and calm. Finally, Mrs. Brown said, “Follow me, boys and girls.” As Matthew was walking, he looked down at his new tennis shoes, the ones with the cool treads and thought, “This is weird. My shoe feels like it is stuck to the sidewalk when I lift my foot.” He couldn’t stop to check what the problem was because he was following right behind Mrs. Brown. As they entered the classroom, Mrs. Brown greeted each student and shook his or her hand and said, “Good Morning!” As Matthew walked to his desk, Mrs. Brown noticed that Matthew was walking funny. His shoe was sticking to the carpet with each step. She came up to Matthew and stopped him and asked to see the bottom of his shoes. Matthew stopped and lifted his leg over his opposite knee, and they both looked to see what the problem was. Gum! A big wad of pink bubble gum was stretched across the treads of Matthew’s new sneakers from the toe to the heel! Worst of all, Mrs. Brown was not happy. Matthew removed his shoe and went out to the hallway to begin pulling the gum off his shoe. Matthew was thinking, “How could this happen? There should be a rule about throwing your gum on the ground. This is the worst day of my life!”

Later that evening, Matthew was sharing about his day and explained to the family what happened at school. After some thought, Dad said, “Matthew, we know how you feel about what happened, but how does this problem affect the people in your class? Does this problem happen to other kids at school? If you could solve this problem so it would not happen to anyone again, and your actions would improve your school, what would you suggest needs to happen? What can you do to make this a win-win experience?”