

*Community
and Character*

**Thankfulness
In
Action**

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your
destiny.

Frank Outlaw

August Character Connection Theme: Community and Character

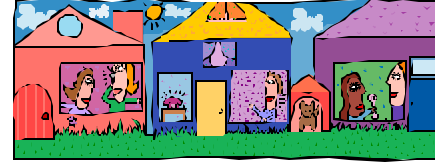
Definitions

Community is a group of people living in the same locality and under the same government. It is a group or class that have common interests.¹

Character is the combination of qualities that distinguish one person, group or thing from another. It is the combined ethical structure of a group. It is moral or ethical strength or reputation.²

Here are some ways to be a good member of the community:

- *Do your share to make your school and community better.
- *Be a good neighbor.
- *Cooperate.³
- *Stay informed about community events.
- *Learn about and obey city ordinances.
- *Learn the history of the community in which you live.
- *Care for the environment



Businesses, schools, police, families, government and religions work together to form a community of good character. Each person's character shapes his/her future as well as his/her community.

Quotes

"If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself.." --D.L. Moody⁴

"The true test of character is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don't know what to do." --John Holt⁵

"You cannot dream yourself into a character; you must hammer and forge one for yourself." —Froude⁶

"To be worth anything, character must be capable of standing firm upon its feet in the world of daily work, temptation, and trial; and able to bear the wear and tear of actual life. Cloistered virtues do not count for much." – S. Smiles⁷

"Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community." --Anthony J. D'Angelo⁸

Activities

** Make a class flag symbolizing the positive character traits that you would like your class to stand for.

**Loosely tie each student's right elbow with his neighbor's left elbow. Now, working together, draw a mural of the community, labeling various members and their responsibilities. *Talk about the ways in which a community works together for the good of all.*

** Fill ¼ of a glass container with honey. Next, carefully fill the container to the half way mark with colored vegetable oil. Then add water to the ¾ mark. Let the liquids separate. Then drop objects (a raisin, grape, metal bolt, Lego) and see on which layer they will float. *Talk about how different liquids can float different weights. Different people also have diverse responsibilities and make unique contributions in a community.*

**Decide on 10 important character traits. Assign students to ask their parents which character trait they feel is most important in business, in the family, in sports, etc. Make a graph of responses.

¹ from The American Heritage Dictionary

² from The American Heritage Dictionary

³ adapted from Six pillars of character, Definitions for Young People, Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, page 5

⁴The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 80

⁵ <http://www.quoteland.com/quotes/topic/19.html>

⁶ The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 81

⁷ The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 80

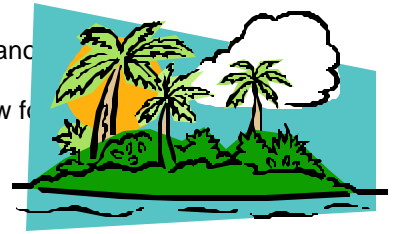
⁸ <http://www.quoteland.com/quotes/topic/21.html>

**As a class, select and perform a service project that would benefit the community.

**Invite a community member (sheriff deputy, city councilman, United Way representative, etc.) to speak about ways students can be good members of society.

**As a class, memorize this quote from “For Whom The Bell Tolls” by John Donne (c.1571-1631)

No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a man of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.



Stories

Who Travels the Road Best?

A king built a new road. He decided to hold a contest among his subjects to see who traveled the new road the best. The king promised a rich reward to the winner. His subjects were intrigued by the contest, but could get no information from their king as to what “best” meant. At the appointed hour and place, men, women and children appeared in racing gear, on fine horses, and in wagons with entertainment. Some raced in record time, others enjoyed the scenery as they went, and still others traveled on unique wheeled vehicles. The king greeted each at the end of the road. All commented on the fine engineering of the highway and the beauty of the roadside. But they also complained of a large pile of discarded construction material hindering their path at one spot in the middle of the road. Toward late afternoon, most of the travelers had completed their journey. Yet, still the king waited.

Just before the sun set, a lone straggler limped to the end of the road. He held a bag to the king. “I stopped to clear some construction material from the road. I found this bag at the bottom of that pile of construction debris. Here, sire. This must be yours.”

The king opened the bag, showing its golden contents to all, then said, “No, this is *your* reward, for he who helps others along the way, travels the road of life best.”

How can we help others in our community?

“Cinderellas going to prom, tornado or not ‘Godmothers’ donate dresses to rival students.”⁹

Sarah McCormick bought a royal blue gown to wear to the prom. Then a tornado hit Del City, twisting her neighborhood to shreds. Rain leaked through holes in Sarah’s roof and the royal blue gown was ruined. When rival Edmond North high school student council heard that some Del City girls had lost everything, they sprang into action. Never mind that it was only last fall that they screamed from opposite sides of the football field. Student Council President Marilyn Klopp commented, “A lot of people might say there’s other important things to worry about, but for us, the prom is so important.” A plea was made for gowns and tuxedos. Del City girls were bussed to Edmond to try on dresses, and pick out shoes and jewelry. Returning to what was left of home, Sarah McCormick carried her new prom dress in a plastic bag and hope in her heart. Somehow the world was magical for at least a little while because others in the community cared.

Orem Skate Park: A Community Working Together

One spring, Gabriel Dominguez and several friends were frustrated about the lack of skate parks in the area. They decided to get organized and together (a total of 60) visited the Recreation Advisory Commission for Orem City. “With enough people and enough numbers you can get things done,” commented Dominguez. His friend, Kevin Radebaugh commented, “We just kept going to more and more meetings.” Kevin said, “You have to be persistent if you want to get things done.” Their efforts brought a committee of skaters, parents, and city staff together to work on the design of a premier skate park.¹⁰ In a similar manner, Provo’s skate park

⁹ From an article by AP writer Kelly Kurt, [Deseret News](#), Saturday, May 8, 1999

¹⁰ “Teens discover speaking out works” by Anne Golden, [The Daily Herald](#), May 10, 1999

started as one boy's eagle project. *A few teens involved a few others and soon a project that benefited an entire community was in place. No one is too young or unimportant to make positive changes in their city. What are the needs in our neighborhood? What character traits are important in working with community workers and leaders?*

Writing or Discussion Topics

****William Clark was born on August 1, 1770. Meriwether Lewis was born on August 18, 1774. Together they led the Lewis and Clark Expedition that explored new territory from the Missouri River to the Pacific Coast.¹¹ Find out more about the group's members and their expertise. *Imagine that you are leading an expedition. What experts would you invite? What character traits would be important to the group's success? What talents and abilities make up our community? What character traits are important to our community's success?***

****A June 14, 1999 article in the Lindon Times Newspaper reported that a skylight window and door handles to a new toilet facility at the Crouse Reservoir were vandalized. "This vandalism cost the anglers the equivalent of 50 fishing licenses," said Ron Stewart. "These funds could have been used to raise fish in the hatchery, or to increase fishing opportunities. *What do good character traits have to do with good community facilities and opportunities? What other incidents can you recall where the actions of one contributed to the inconvenience of many? What is the responsibility of a good citizen who was aware of such an incident?***

*****"Good character is human nature in its best form.—It is moral order embodied in the individual.—Men of character are not only the conscience of society, but in every well governed state they are its best motive power; for it is moral qualities which, in the main, rule the world." (quote by S. Smiles)¹² *How do the laws of our society reflect our values? Do laws shape our values?***

****Dolphins are social animals and gather in groups. Often they work as a team to hunt. First, they herd a school of small fish into a tight group. Then the dolphins circle the fish to keep them corralled. Each dolphin takes a turn feeding in the middle. Sometimes female dolphins circle around their young, making a "playpen" for their calves. Dolphins often swim together in a v-shape formation with the young protected at the center. If a dolphin is weak or sick, healthy dolphins swim along either side, supporting it with their flippers so it can breathe.¹³ *What are the roles that we play in our community? How do we work together? How do we protect and help those who are less able?***

Role Plays

****Carrie and Corie are walking home from school. Hungry, Carrie reaches into her backpack for a granola bar. She unpeels the wrapper, takes a bite of the granola bar and nonchalantly drops the wrapper to the ground. *What should Corie do?***

****Frank is walking home and notices several pieces of notebook paper blowing against the fence. *What could Frank do?***

****Joey and Blake are hiking the Mount Timpanogos Trail. They are enjoying the last of the spring flowers, the squirrels and mountain goats. Rounding a bend they come upon a huge rock with graffiti and names scrawled on it. *What could Joey and Blake do? What are other hiking rules that safeguard the natural treasures of our community? What could Joey and Blake do when they see vandalism on community or school property?***

Book List

The Library by Sarah Stewart, Illustrated by David Small Farrar, Staruf, Giroux

The Gardener by Sarah Stewart, Illustrated by David Small Farrar, Staruf, Giroux

The Paper Dragon by Marguerite Davol, Atheneum, 1997

The Best Town in the World by Byrd Baylor, Illustrated by Ronald Himler, Aladdin books, 1982

The Signmaker's Assistant by Tedd Arnold, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1992



September: Conflict Resolution

October: Courtesy

November: Dependability

December: Friendship

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¹¹ "August", World Book Encyclopedia, 1988, page 890-891

¹² The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 80

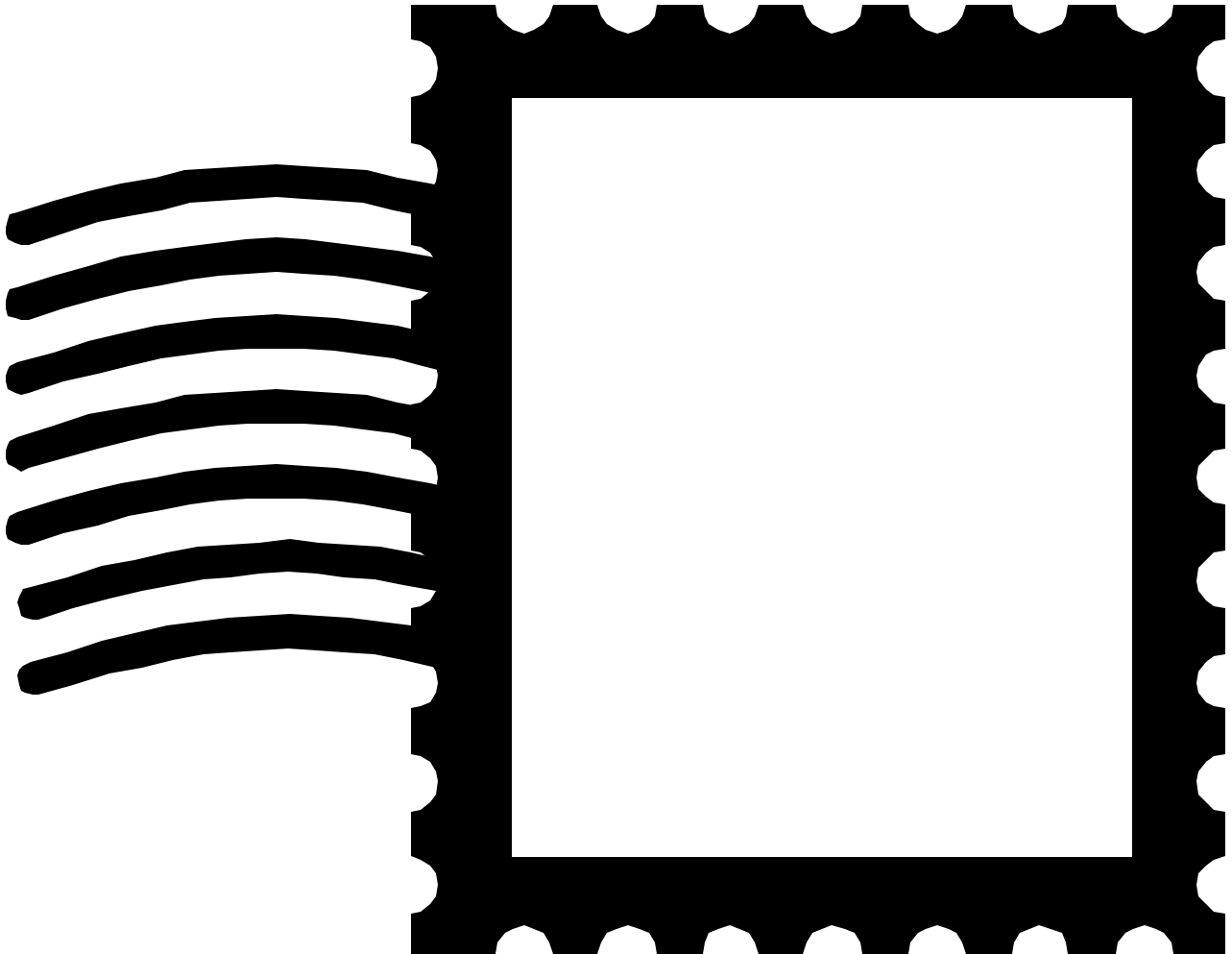
¹³ Dolphins and Porpoises, Zoobooks



Name _____

Community and Character

Imagine that 20 years have passed. You are now a very famous person in your community. People look up to you because of your excellence in character and your contributions. In fact, they have nominated you for a postage stamp representing your community. Draw what you would look like and write a paragraph describing your character, accomplishments, and contributions to the community.



To become the person that tomorrow I hope to be, today I will

_____.