

Working for the Common Good

Grade Level: Upper Elem.
Time: 1-2 hours

Objectives:

- Identify and define the “common good”
- Be able to apply the concept of “the common good”.
- Identify examples of how people can work for the common good.

Curricular Connections: Civics, Language Arts

Materials: None

Procedure:

- 1) Write the following questions on the chalkboard and discuss in a large group:
 - Is there such a thing as the common good?
 - What does the common good mean?
 - Why does it matter?
- 2) Have students work in groups of 3-5 students. Each group should discuss these questions and report out highlights for the class:
 - Describe a situation in which you think you should try to help others instead of just doing what you want for yourself.
 - Explain a situation in which you think you should do something for yourself instead of trying to help others.
 - Sometimes people disagree about what is the best thing for everyone. Describe a situation where this might happen. How do you think such disagreements should be settled?
 - Describe some things your government (local, state, federal) does to help everyone in its jurisdiction? What other things could it do? Why?
- 3) Extension ideas:
 - Have students analyze nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and Aesop’s fables to determine if they promote the common good. (See for example, the Greedy Dog, Jack Sprat, Humpty Dumpty, Little Red Riding Hood, etc.)
 - Ask students to write a report on a television show that encourages young people to work toward the common good.

Reflection: Have students discuss examples of the common good found in their school or classroom.

Assessment: Students can journal about this concept.