

# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

for use with  
Program 6

## The CITIZENSHIP Connection

In the Video Series



Created and Produced by  
Elkind+Sweet Communications, Inc.  
in association with Character Counts!  
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## HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

**Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups, or view it at home.**

This video, along with the facilitator's guide and website, is designed to help teachers engage students in classroom discussion and other activities leading to deep, meaningful reflection about the kinds of people they are and want to be.

### **Have a great discussion!**

Thoughtful, reflective discussions are essential to getting the most out of these videos. You will find some very fruitful facilitation techniques, including **Socratic Method**, at our special character education website at <[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)>. The questions in this discussion guide begin on page 7.

*www.goodcharacter.com* provides a wealth of helpful material including questions, assignments, and activities for special topics such as **sports**, **workplace readiness**, and others. Please utilize this very valuable resource.

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## WHAT IS CITIZENSHIP?

**In this program citizenship means:**

- 🍏 Doing your part for the common good.
- 🍏 Doing your share to make your school, your community, and the world a better place.
- 🍏 Taking responsibility for what goes on around you.
- 🍏 Participating in community service.
- 🍏 Taking care of the environment.
- 🍏 Obeying the law.

## PROGRAM CONTENT

**M**alik, a thirteen year old middle school student, is presenting his classroom video blog on citizenship as a character virtue. Through a combination of skits, group discussions, commentaries, and short documentaries, Malik’s blog takes us on a quest to find out what makes someone a good citizen, and specifically, what kids can do to be good citizens. In the end, Malik concludes that being a good citizen is mostly about doing our share to make our communities better places to live. And to demonstrate that kids have a significant role to play, he shows us two very inspiring documentaries: one about a twelve year old girl who discovered lead in children’s toys, and one about a teen volunteer group that serves their community in suburban Chicago.

### **Part I—Skit**

#### **What Makes a Good Citizen?**

Malik begins his blog by saying he is going to ask a “panel of experts” about what makes someone a good citizen. He interviews several kids on the street and gets the following responses:

- Voting
- Paying taxes
- Holding public office
- Serving in the military
- Obeying the law
- Doing your share for the common good.

Malik, then, walks us through this list as he tries out each item, himself. He finds out that he can’t vote until he’s eighteen, has to have an income to pay taxes, is too young to hold public office or join the military, and ends up getting caught for jaywalking while explaining to us that he always obeys the law. He wonders aloud, is citizenship only for adults?

Malik gets to the last item on the list—do your share for the common good—and wonders what that means. His answer comes in the form of a short

documentary about a 12 year old girl who discovered lead in children's toys and did something about it.

## **Part II—Documentary**

### **Michelle's Story: Lead In Toys**

At the age of 12, Michelle Loke heard about lead poisoning from toys on the evening news. So she decided to do a science project that involved testing toys for lead content. She went to local theaters and stores and bought up a variety of these toys, which she tested for lead in her school's science lab. What she found was terrifying: huge amounts of lead in small toys that young children were likely to put in their mouths.

We learn from the manager of the Wisconsin Poison Center about the toxic effects of lead on young children's brain development.

Michelle felt it was her responsibility to get the word out and do something about the problem. She visited her U.S. Senator, who took the issue to the Consumer Products Safety Commission. She also wrote letters to the stores that had lead tainted toys asking them to stop selling them. One store owner tells us that he was shocked to find out that he was selling dangerous toys, and he removed them from his shelves and took the issue to his wholesale provider. He tells us that "we all have to look out and try to do the right thing."

Michelle concludes that young people do have the power to make an important difference, and that when we see a problem that needs fixing, we should do something about it instead of leaving it up to others.

**Back to Malik:** Michelle did something for the common good. By uncovering a dangerous problem and doing something about it, Michelle helped out her community, and that is what good citizens do. So I guess there is a place for us kids after all.

But Michelle had a specific cause she really cared about. What if you don't have a particular cause? What if you just want to be a good citizen and do something for your community? Where do you start?

### **Part III—Documentary:**

#### **Carrie and Katie / Lisle Teens with Character:**

Carrie and Katie are sisters living in Lisle, Illinois (a Chicago suburb), who started a volunteer organization called Lisle Teens with Character (LTC). LTC is a student-run group that provides opportunities for kids from fifth grade through high school to get out there and help their community by participating in various service events. As they describe it, it is a group for “kids who love to do volunteer work and have fun at the same time.”

The documentary shows us how LTC works and several examples of the community service they perform. Many of the local service organizations turn to LTC for help.

The documentary ends with the girls saying: “To me what makes a good citizen is that someone with that special spark in their heart to get out and help their community. . . It's our responsibility. We are the young generation. If we start now with one person by one person, eventually it's going to start a ripple in the pond of continuous events.”

**Back to Malik:** You might find a group like that in your community. Or maybe you'd like to start one. But either way, there are plenty of ways to help out.

### **Part IV—Group Discussion:**

#### **What Kids Can Do.**

- Step up, help out, people need it.
- It doesn't have to be big, you don't have to save the world, you're small, I know I can't save the world. But kids don't have to do that. They can do little things.
- You can give leftover food to homeless people with no blankets, nothing.
- Donate your clothes to shelter.

- Help elders,
- Clean up the community
- You feel better by helping others.
- When I was little in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I went to the kindergarten to help them read. Even the teacher said we made a difference.
- I helped an older woman cross the street because she couldn't see very well.
- Some people help for the reward but sometimes when you help someone, you're just happy. That's your reward. Because you did the right thing.
- If people just think, "Let's do something great today, let's help the homeless, let's feed somebody, If everyone thought like that, the world be a better place."

### **Part V—Conclusion**

**Back to Malik:** "Let's do something great today." That's a great thought. So, whether it's a big thing like getting rid of the lead in toys, or a small thing like helping someone cross the street, we can all contribute to making our world a better place.

In other words, we can all be good citizens just by doing good things. Like everything else in life, it's all up to us!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### *Questions to ask before you begin the video:*

What makes someone a good citizen? What makes someone a bad citizen?

### *Questions to ask after the video:*

1. How did Michelle's story (lead in toys) make you feel? What did you learn from it? What motivated her to do what she did? Is it realistic to think that the average kid could do something like that, or is Michelle just a special case?
2. Do you know people in your life who you think are good citizens? What things do they do that make you to see them that way?
3. In the video the kids talk about doing your share for the common good. What is "the common good"? Who is responsible for it? Why, or in what ways?
4. Several young people said they feel it is their responsibility to get involved in the affairs of their community. Do you agree? Why, or why not?
5. Malik and others say that you don't necessarily have to do big things in order to be a good citizen. They mention some little things. What are some more examples of little things kids can do to contribute to the common good and make the world a better place?
6. How did the Teens with Character story make you feel? What did you learn from it?
7. Do you know of any groups like Carrie and Katie's Teens with Character group? How do you think they are making a difference?

8. What do you think the Carrie and Katie meant when they said, “ With one small step, it can grow and grow and grow.” Can you think of other examples where that saying might be true?

9. Some of the kids in the video suggested that helping needy people is an important part of being a good citizen. Do you agree? Why, or why not?

10. What sorts of things have you done that make the world a little bit better?

11. Do you think you are a good citizen? In what ways?

*For additional questions, or for questions relating to **special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc.**, visit [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)*

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. 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?
2. Write about someone in your life you feel is a good citizen. What qualities does this person have that makes you see him/her that way? Which of those qualities do you have?
3. Research a person or a group of people that are working for the common good and making the world a better place. Describe what they are doing and how they are making a difference.
4. Come up with a list of some things you might do in the next year that would demonstrate good citizenship. Pick one and describe the steps you would take to carry it out.
5. Think of some kind of volunteer work you might like to do. Describe it and tell why you think you would like it. If you have done volunteer work in the past, describe what it was like and what you got out of it.
6. Write a story about a young person who came up with a way to make the world a better place.

*For additional assignments, or for assignments relating to **special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc.**, visit [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)*

## GROUP 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 on page 2 of this guide.
2. Do a group research project on an individual or group in your community that is working to improve the lives of others. Interview this person. Come up with a list of questions to ask ahead of time. Report back to your class or invite that person to come speak to you and your peers.
3. Bring in on-line articles or newspaper articles about people who demonstrate good citizenship. Share it with your class.
4. Start your own volunteer group. Come up with a name and elect some leaders to help coordinate it. Find an adult to help you with your group.
5. Volunteer at a local shelter, food bank, or senior center. Report back to your group on what you feel you contributed and what you received in return.
6. Have someone from your local government come to your class or group to talk about their job and what it has to do with serving the common good.
7. Have your students visit our special content website [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com) where they will find opportunities to become involved in activities and issues relating to citizenship. Click on either "Opportunities for Action" or "Service Learning". Have each member of a group choose a non-profit listed and research what the mission statement is of that organization. How does that mission contribute to the common good?
8. Choose a service-learning project from [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com) and work on it as a group.

**goodcharacter.com**

[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)

**This content-rich website is loaded with free resources to help you do the job!**

*Please visit this website to find:*

- \* **Facilitation techniques** for conducting meaningful, productive classroom discussions, including **Socratic Method**.
- \* **Additional discussion questions, writing assignments, and learning activities.**”
- \* **Opportunities for your students** to become involved in activities and issues relating to the topics in these videos.
- \* **Links** to key character education organizations and resources.
- \* **Articles** and other writings on educating for character.
- \* Special discussion guide supplements for use with **sports programs, workplace readiness programs**, and other areas of special interest.
- \* **The Daily Dilemma** - an ongoing series of moral and ethical discussion starters from the case files of Charis Denison.

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This video series was produced in association with  
**CHARACTER COUNTS!**<sup>sm</sup>

The CHARACTER COUNTS! coalition is a consortium of the nation's largest and most influential educational and youth-serving organizations united in one over-riding mission: strengthening the character of America's youth.



**CHARACTER COUNTS!**  
(310) 846-4800  
[www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)

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