

TEACHING GUIDE



For use with
Program 6

CITIZENSHIP

In the Children's Video Series



THIS PROGRAM TEACHES CHILDREN:

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

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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.

THE STORY

ACT 1

Nubbs' optimism turns to self-doubt when his friends shoot down his idea of saving the earth by planting trees.

ACT 2

Dispirited and disillusioned, Nubbs goes to a gazebo in the park, called *The Thinking Place*, where he has an imaginary dialog with two park statues - Socrates and Diotima. The statues help Nubbs think clearly and realistically about his goals, and encourage him to provide the leadership necessary to make his project happen.

ACT 3

Empowered with new insights, Nubbs succeeds in convincing his friends that they have the power to make a positive difference in the community. Together, they pull off a triumphant tree planting project and experience the satisfaction of being good citizens.

**Use Popcorn Park videos
to facilitate character education,
social and emotional development,
and critical thinking in your students.**

Character Education: means helping students *know* what is right, *care about* what is right, and *do* what is right. These videos and their follow-up activities promote all three aspects of the process.

- **Knowing:** Popcorn Park videos portray issues of right and wrong in terms of concrete behaviors which young children can recognize and understand.
- **Caring:** These videos depict good character in a context that makes it desirable to young children, i.e. the reward for having good character is that we have better friendships.
- **Doing:** Popcorn Park videos emphasize that character is expressed in what we do, not how we think or feel. The stories are designed to inspire action.

Social and Emotional Development: The stories in these videos are rooted in interpersonal relationships. The videos, together with the discussion questions and other follow-up activities, will help your children:

- Understand and identify feelings.
- Recognize the difference between thinking, feeling, and acting.
- Understand how their actions affect other people's feelings.
- Develop empathy - the ability to take someone else's perspective.
- Handle their relationships with other people in a positive way.

Critical Thinking: These videos explicitly encourage thinking as a means of problem-solving, and help kids learn to think through situations where personal feelings present an obstacle. Some of the critical thinking skills modeled in these stories are:

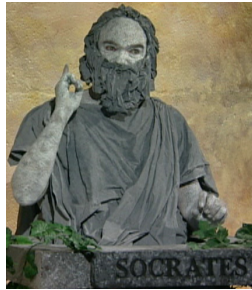
- Thinking clearly and honestly about a problem.
- Sorting out issues.
- Using questions to drive thinking and problem-solving.
- Asking the right question.

The Thinking Place

The second act of each video takes place in *The Thinking Place*, a gazebo in the park populated by two statues - Socrates* and



Diotima** - who come alive in the presence of anyone with a thorny problem and a good imagination. The story's main character arrives here confused and conflicted, bringing to life the two statues, who coach him/her in critical thinking and problem solving. Their guidance empowers the character to do the right thing in Act 3.



Socratic Method

True to his nature, Socrates' approach to thinking is, well, Socratic. He never tells anyone what to do, he just asks questions. Lots of good questions. And by asking the right questions he artfully guides the character to a clear understanding of what

must be done. But that only solves half the problem.



Emotional Intelligence

As we know, there is a difference between knowing what to do and having the will or ability to do it. Often, emotional and interpersonal concerns are actually the biggest part of the problem, and this is where Diotima comes in. Diotima deals with

the human dimension and sparks the insight that eventually helps the character carry out the right decision.

***Socrates** is credited with being the first person to apply serious critical thinking to questions of morality and conduct.

****Diotima** was a legendary Greek priestess and teacher who taught Socrates the connection between love of people and love of wisdom.

For guidance on conducting Socratic discussions in your classroom, please visit www.goodcharacter.com/popcornpark.

How to Use This Video

Popcorn Park videos are structured in **three acts**. We strongly recommend that you **stop the video** after each act and conduct a class discussion (the breaks between acts are clearly marked in the video). Pages 7-8 of this guide provide **discussion questions** that will help you engage your students in **meaningful reflection** about what they have just seen, exercise and train their thinking skills, and give you a way to assess and reinforce their understanding of the important ideas before proceeding. Breaking the video up in this way may be especially advisable for the younger grades. It is not necessary to show the entire video in a single day.

In addition to the discussion questions, this guide also provides **writing assignments, group activities**, and a **parents' take-home page** to maximize the impact and usefulness of the video. **You may have to rephrase some of this material to suit the age level of your children.**

- If you would like to teach your kids the **songs** from these videos, you'll find the lyrics (and much more) on our character education website at [<www.goodcharacter.com/songs.html>](http://www.goodcharacter.com/songs.html) The song lyrics are also in a PDF file on this DVD.
- This video series was produced in association with **Character Counts!** For more "Six Pillars" related activities and materials, please visit their website at [<www.charactercounts.org>](http://www.charactercounts.org)
- The **Character Education Partnership** outlines *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* on their very useful website at [<www.character.org>](http://www.character.org)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask before showing the video.

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

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. 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?

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

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

23. 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?

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

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

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

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?

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

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

PARENTS' PAGE

Dear Parent,

Your child has just viewed a video entitled "***The Six Pillars of Character: CITIZENSHIP***" featuring the **Popcorn Park Puppets**. This video 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 this 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.
- 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.

goodcharacter.com

**Free Character Education Resources at
www.goodcharacter.com**

This content-rich website offers free character education resources, organized by topic and grade level, for K-12 teachers, coaches, and youth group leaders. You'll find curriculum materials, discussion questions, writing assignments, group learning activities, opportunities for student action, and lots of teacher support material. Many teachers have found this to be an excellent place to start for immediate implementation of a character development unit for any grade level.

This video series was produced in association with
CHARACTER COUNTS!™

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



CHARACTER COUNTS!
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