

Character—One Person Can Make a Difference

Type of Teacher Tool: Individual or Small Group Activity

Targeted Grade Level(s): 3-5

Targeted Curriculum Areas: Character/Social Studies, Writing

Learning Objectives:

1. The student will develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and behaviors of a volunteer.
2. The student will read and discuss a story about a volunteer who made a difference.
3. The student will complete a news article.

Social Studies Missouri Learning Standards

1.E. Character traits and civic attitudes of significant individuals

Describe the character traits and civic attitudes. (2nd-5th)

5.D. Theme 3 Evaluate laws, events, and perspectives to determine the extent to which individuals and groups could participate in, and realize, the promise of American ideals. (6th-8th)

Writing 2.B. (3-5) Write informative/ explanatory texts that:

- a. introduce a topic or text being studied
- b. develop the topic with simple facts, definitions, details, and explanations
- c. use specific, relevant words that are related to the topic, audience, and purpose
- d. use the student’s original language except when quoting from a source
- e. use transition words to connect ideas within categories of information
- f. create a concluding statement or paragraph

Model Standards for Academic, Social, Emotional, and Character Development

Critical Educational Outcomes—Josephson Institute

C6. CARING Students understand that caring — including the virtues of compassion, kindness, benevolence, altruism, charity, generosity, and sharing — is the heart of ethics. They strive to demonstrate a concern for the wellbeing of others by displaying compassion for those in pain or in need by providing support in the form of donations and/or personal service

Videos/Resources/Materials Needed:

1. Character 51: Making a Difference—Maria Matias and Prom Dresses for All
2. Character 53: Making a Difference—The South County Foster Closet Story
3. Character 55: Making a Difference—The Story of Dawn Putnam and Moms on a Mission
4. Character 59: Making a Difference—Stories of Volunteering with Be the Change
5. Character 64: Making a Difference—Building School Community Through Inclusion
6. Character 65: Students Speak: Why Inclusion is Important in Schools
7. Character 71: Making a Difference—Dean Purdy and the Space Museum
8. Character 73: Making a Difference—Blessing Baskets in Ghana
9. Character 74: Making a Difference—The Story of Fred Domke and Bridge Bread Bakery
10. Character 77: Making a Difference for Pets and Pet Owners

11. Book: Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney (Other possibilities: Adventures of Sparrow Boy by Pickney, Good People Everywhere by Gillen, Kindness to Share from A to Z by Snow, Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed by Pearson, Picture Book of Rosa Parks by Adler, or Ruby Bridges by Cole)

Teacher Instructions:

1. Have students choose one (or more) of the above videos to watch.
2. Discuss ways to make the community a better place. Read Miss Rumphius (or one of the other books). Discuss the way the character changed her/his world.
3. Discuss any challenges the character faced, the successes the character had, the strengths of the character, how they would feel if they did what the character did, and what other next steps the character could take
4. Have students write a short news story describing the who, what, where, when, and why of the character's accomplishment.

Extension Activities: For younger grades, read Have You Filled a Bucket Today by McCloud. Draw a picture of a way to fill a bucket. For older grades, read a biography about Mother Theresa. Write about how she changed the world.

Assessment/Evaluation Option

Make a rubric with who, what, where, when, and why sections and check that each part is included in the news article written.