



Twelve Gardens of Stewardship

Online Curriculum Example from 'Learning to Give'

Garden of Citizenship

Lesson: The “Right” Ideas

(Grade levels 6 – 8)

Purpose:

This lesson will clarify that true rights must be guaranteed by the **Bill of Rights**. Students will examine the importance of protecting these rights, as well as decide if and when it is appropriate to limit rights. This lesson will also provide the opportunity to examine how nonprofit organizations, such as the Catholic Church, preserve and promote guaranteed rights.

Duration:

Two 45 minute class periods.

Objectives:

The learner will:

- Describe the **Social Contract** between citizens and their government and give an example of how nonprofit organizations and the government carry out this contract.
- Identify and describe five rights guaranteed to citizens in the **Bill of Rights**.
- Evaluate whether desired actions are constitutionally guaranteed rights.
- State reasons for protecting guaranteed rights.
- Explain his/her views regarding reasonable limits for guaranteed rights.
- Describe the role of nonprofit organizations in preserving and promoting guaranteed rights.

Materials:

- Banner with penciled statement (see bold type in **Instructional Procedure**)
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- *Role Play Reflections* (**Attachment One - Follows**)
- *School/Home Connection: Rights and Responsibilities* (**Attachment Two - Follows**)

Instructional Procedure(s):

Anticipatory Set:

As a whole group, ask students to generate a list of rights they possess. Write the ideas they brainstorm on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or on chart paper. (Leave the list visible for later reference.)

- Explain to the students that many years ago a French thinker said that people, who lived on their own and were free to do as they wished, decided to join together. These people agreed to give their rights to do whatever they wished in exchange for living in a society where everyone's natural rights are protected. This was called a **"social contract"** between the citizens and their government. This was how societies/communities started. People/citizens agree to be governed and, as a part of the government's responsibility, it must guarantee certain **rights** to its people/citizens.
- Getting back to present society, tell the students, "For the purpose of this lesson, we will focus on five basic rights guaranteed to you by the Constitution." Define a **"right"** for the students as a power or privilege to which a person is entitled.
- Arrange the students into five cooperative groups, giving each group a piece of chart paper or transparent overhead sheet with **"The Constitution and the Bill of Rights,"** and one of the basic rights written at the top:
 - Right to freedom of expression
 - Right to freedom of religion
 - Right to be treated equally
 - Right to be treated fairly
 - Right to vote
- Ask each group to describe the **right** (define in own terms), give examples, and tell why it is important to protect this right. As the groups are working, the teacher may want to be sure they have a complete description of the rights:
- **Right to freedom of expression**—you may freely express your thoughts, ideas and feelings as well as hear and learn about the thoughts, ideas, and feelings of others.
- **Right to freedom of religion**—Your right to believe in and practice any religion of your choice. You also have the choice not to believe in and practice any religion at all.
- **Right to be treated equally**—The government must treat all groups equally regardless of race, sex, or religion.
- **Right to be treated fairly**—The government must make and enforce laws in a fair and reasonable manner.
- **Right to vote**—Everyone who is eighteen years or older may vote.
- Have the recorder of each group share the description, examples, and importance of the right with the class. Encourage others to add to and/or ask questions of the information presented.
- Pose the question, **"Is it, or when is it, appropriate to limit these rights individuals are guaranteed by the Constitution?"** The teacher may pose prompts for discussion such as limiting the right to vote based on passing a competency test, requiring vaccinations even if people object due to religious beliefs, etc. Emphasize the role of the **Bill of Rights** in protecting individual rights and limiting the government.
- Unroll a banner with the statement written in pencil, **"Each person's rights reach only to the boundaries of someone else's rights."** Read the statement and ask students to express their individual and personal interpretation of this

statement. Stress the importance of respecting others' thoughts and ideas and their right to express them. Emphasize the role of these rights in the classroom (*freedom of expression, right to be treated equally, and the right to be treated fairly*). Then have students color and decorate the banner with supporting illustrations before displaying it in a prominent location.

- Refer to the list of rights students generated at the beginning of the lesson. One by one, ask them to evaluate whether or not they are true rights based on what they have learned about guaranteed rights in the **Bill of Rights**. Direct students to defend the true rights and explain why the others are not guaranteed rights derived from the **Bill of Rights**.
- Explain that the government is not the only group in our society that protects the rights of citizens or provides services for them. There are other groups, which are not part of the government, that work to help and protect the rights of the people. These are called **nonprofit organizations**. In our society, government does not provide for all the needs of its people. (If it did, this would make our taxes too high and would put the government in our lives too much) Some of the needs of people are handled by the government as well as by nonprofit organizations. An example would be the care of children without parents. Both the government and nonprofit organizations provide orphanages and foster homes (Catholic or Lutheran Social Services, for example).
- Nonprofit organizations are also called **"independent sector."** This means that they are not part of the government or private business. Nonprofit organizations can be religious or non-religious. Since the First Amendment says that "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion" (**separation of church and state**), this means that religious groups cannot be part of the government. That is why they are in the independent sector. Just as in the example above, both religious and non-religious organizations can provide care for the people/citizens of a society.
- Provide an opportunity for students to discover how nonprofit organizations preserve and promote rights by taking a look at their mission statements. The teacher may guide students through the Internet search if a computer lab is available. If not, the teacher may print a hard copy of the pertinent information for students to view. Access www.guidestar.org and enter a zip code for your corresponding local community. Then select an organization or type one in (NAACP, MADD, United Way, etc). Click on **"Missions and Programs"** to access the statement. Have students indicate the right which they believe is being preserved and promoted by the organization. Second, direct students to highlight words which relate to "how" the organization preserves and promotes the right identified.
- If time and Internet access permit, now go directly to the organization's Web site and check on career opportunities in the organization. Compare these career opportunities with those in the government or business sectors. Are the opportunities the same or different in the various sectors?

Assessment:

Students will engage in a role play and reflection of guaranteed rights. The teacher will assign one of the five guaranteed rights to each of the five groups so that all five basic rights are represented. Each group must create and act out a role play which demonstrates that right being violated or honored. Distribute Role Play Reflections (Attachment One). Following each role play, students will answer the questions for the four role plays, not including their own. Finally, to completely assess all objectives, the teacher should incorporate the following discussion questions as they relate to the role plays:

- This group showed (name the right) being violated. Why is it important to protect that right?
- When might it be appropriate to limit (name the right) demonstrated in this role play?
- What nonprofit group might work to combat the violation of (name the right) shown in this role play?
- What nonprofit group might work to preserve and promote (name the right) shown in this role play?

School/Home Connection:

This activity is intended to provide an opportunity for students to reflect upon and apply their understanding of rights. Give each student a copy of Philanthropy: Rights and Responsibilities (Attachment Two). This activity has two parts. The first part will encourage dialogue between parents and students, reinforcing the learning which took place in class. Part two will provide students an authentic opportunity to defend a personal action they believe to be a right, convincing their parents that it relates to a guaranteed right in the Bill of Rights.

Bibliographical References:

We the People. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1988.

Lesson Developed By:
Lisa Ludwig
Cedar Springs Public Schools
Cedar Springs Middle School
Cedar Springs, MI 49319

The Stewardship website, Learning to Give, offers a wide variety of lesson plans which may be used to incorporate the Twelve Gardens of Stewardship into your curriculum. Though philanthropy is the filter for many of these lesson plans, you will find a large number of appropriate choices and useful ideas to adapt to your needs. Visit LearningToGive.org.

ATTACHMENTS ONE AND TWO ARE ON FOLLOWING PAGES:

Role Play Reflections

What was the right shown in this role play? Was the right violated or honored in this role play? How did this group show the right being violated or honored in this role play?	What was the right shown in this role play? Was the right violated or honored in this role play? How did this group show the right being violated or honored in this role play?
What was the right shown in this role play? Was the right violated or honored in this role play? How did this group show the right being violated or honored in this role play?	What was the right shown in this role play? Was the right violated or honored in this role play? How did this group show the right being violated or honored in this role play?

School / Home Connection
Rights and Responsibilities

Dear Family,

I have been learning about rights guaranteed to me in the Bill of Rights. In Part I of this activity, I would like to describe five basic rights guaranteed to us. In Part II of this activity, I would like to propose an action which I will defend as relating to one of those rights. It is my hope to convince you to grant me permission to have that right. I hope you enjoy doing this assignment with me. It is due on

_____.

Sincerely, _____ *Student's signature*

Objectives:

The learner will:

- Identify and describe five rights guaranteed to citizens in the Bill of Rights.
- Evaluate and defend desired actions and choices as they do or do not relate to guaranteed rights.

Part I—My Rights Guaranteed in the Bill of Rights

List the five rights guaranteed to you by the Bill of Rights in the space provided. Then describe them to your parents. As you explain each one, your parent will write down your descriptions.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Part II - In Defense of an Action - Is it "Right?"

This is an action for which I hope you will grant me permission:

I think this action is defended by the right, _____

because _____

After you have read my thoughts expressed above, let's talk about it.

Parent comments: _____

Parent signature: _____