Government Why is it Important?

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Understanding the importance of participating in an election begins with an understanding of the importance of government and how it impacts our lives. This lesson helps students understand how government impacts their lives, why we need government, and why electing good government leaders is important.

One purpose of government is to provide basic services. Begin a discussion by talking about services provided by local government in the community. You may want to show pictures from your community such as parks, schools, police stations, fire stations, etc. Explain how these services are provided for by their local government.

In government's responsibility to provide basic services, it must collect taxes and decide how to use those taxes. You may use the school as an example to explain how government, using taxpayer dollars, pays for the building of schools, the tables and chairs, books and other supplies as well as salaries for teachers.

As citizens we have a responsibility to elect government officials that have the skills to understand what our communities need, and how best to meet those needs.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Understand why government is important.
2. What decisions are made by government that impact their lives.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Pictures of your community
2. For Activity
    a. Two large pieces of poster board

b. Cardboard cut into two inch width strips by twelve to fourteen inch in length
c. Shoe or cereal boxes for buildings
d. Art supplies such as glue, tape, crayons, scissors etc.
e. Decorative items such as ribbons, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, rocks, leaves, etc.

ACTIVITY

This activity allows your students an opportunity to plan out and build their own community. Divide the class up into teams and allow the students to choose what they will be responsible for, such as planning and building roads, building a police station, school, or park.

1. Tape the two pieces of poster board together to create a building surface for your community.
2. Allow students to design and build the projects they are responsible for. Decorate the inside and outside.
3. Assemble the community on the poster board.

After the community is assembled make a welcome sign for all the visitors. Ask the class if anything was missed in the planning and building of the community. Have each group explain the purpose of their project and share with the class where their project is located in the real community.