

BUILDING COMMUNITY

How can you create a learning environment where each child feels important, both as an individual and as part of the larger group? Here are songs and activities to foster mutual respect, cooperation, shared responsibility and other hallmarks of a supportive classroom community.

“Somos El Barco” (Spanish: “We Are the Boat”) *CD track 5*

“Courage” *CD track 6*

“All Work Together” *CD track 11*

“Walking on My Wheels” *CD track 15*

“You’ve Got to Be Carefully Taught” *CD track 19*



I WILL BE YOUR FRIEND

Classroom Connections

Ask students to define the word *community*. What are the benefits of being part a community? What are the challenges? How do individuals need to behave in order to function well as a group? Following your discussion, provide each child with a photocopy of the puzzle pattern on the facing page. “Community” is written on the center puzzle piece. On each of the surrounding pieces, students should write a word identifying a value or behavior that is necessary to create a supportive classroom community. After filling in the words, children can decorate their puzzles using crayons, markers or paints. Next, have students glue the patterns to oak tag and cut apart the pieces. Provide each student with an envelope in which to put her or his puzzle pieces. Divide students into pairs, and have partners assemble each other’s puzzles. Encourage students to talk about why they chose the words they did. Discuss ways they can put their ideas for building a caring classroom community into action.

Use the puzzle motif to create a bulletin board display that further develops the theme of community. Discuss the ways in which class members depend on one another. Draw a jigsaw-style puzzle pattern on poster board. The puzzle should have the same number of pieces as there are people in your classroom, including yourself. Write the name of one class member on each of the puzzle pieces. Cut the pieces apart and place them in a shopping bag or other container. Invite everyone to pick a piece from the bag. Each person should write one way in which the individual named on the puzzle piece makes a positive contribution to the class. Reassemble the puzzle, gluing the pieces to a bulletin board titled “We’re All Connected.”



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