

Lesson Plan #1—Social Studies

Title: Learning the Value of Rules-A Paper Clip Game



Introduction:

The paper clip game serves as a good device for discussing the need for, and importance of, rules in society. It acts as a springboard for developing a working definition of law and understanding the importance of law. It serves to overcome an often negative perception of law.

Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- Identify four components of good rules (law): purpose, notice, consistency, and fair application.
- Equate the lack of good rules with feelings of confusion, frustration and anger.
- Recognize the need for good rules to achieve order and a goal.

Session time: 30 – 40 minutes

Materials:

- Paper clips
- Black board or chalkboard

Methods: Guided discussion, cooperative learning, interactive participation, written response

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into rows, making sure that one row has more students and that one row has more males (or females).
2. Give each student in the front row five paper clips. Then tell them to begin. *(Students will exhibit confusion, not knowing what to do. Eventually someone will start doing something.)*
3. After a brief period, stop the game. Tell them they may only pass one clip at a time. The object is to pass the clips backward and then forward and the first row to finish wins. Start them over again.
4. After a brief period, stop the game. Tell them the clips must be passed back over the left shoulder and passed forward over the right. Start them over again.
5. After a brief period, stop the game. Explain that there are too many people in one row and they should have twice as many clips to pass and that there are more females in one row, so they should have less clips to pass. After making these

adjustments, start the game over again.

6. Allow the game to now proceed to the end and debrief the students on their feelings and observations. List the student generated responses on the board.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER: Subsequent discussion of student responses should be related to society's need for rules of conduct, their purpose, their consistency and their fair application in order to avoid confusion and frustration and achieve goals. Specific examples or rules and laws may be used to further illustrate the points made.

Note: This lesson is included in the workshop, *How to Make the U.S. Constitution Come to Life*, in the *SIPDC Catalog of Professional Development Opportunities*.

