

**Great American Child Teaching
Companion**



**Great American
CHILD**

Categories:

Who Am I?

Expectations

Milestone

Word of the Year

Nutrition

Exercise

Art

Poetry

Music

Great American Biography

Chores

Finance

Scorecard

Week 1 or Day 1: Who Am I?



Activity:

Giving the students a series of unscripted questions showing each student how unique he or she is.

Calculating the odds of being exactly alike.

(e.g. If you ask them 10 Yes/No questions, the amount of possibilities for answers are 1024. If you bring in food, colors, games, height, weight, hair color - what are the possibilities?)

Goal:

By having them answer these questions and finding the differences and similarities they can begin to understand how we are connected, but also all unique.

Possible questions:

For All:

How tall are you?

What day where you born?

What time of day - (do they know)?

Favorite color?

Favorite book?

Favorite singer or band?

Favorite movie? (Please avoid TV questions)

Do you like math, science, spelling, reading, etc?

What sport do you play? What is your favorite sport?

Favorite foods?

Who is your hero(s)?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

For Older:

Favorite car?

How would you vote on certain political issues?

(Is this the same as your parents or your own belief?)

Where do you want to go to college?

What career do you want to have?

If you could live in any country or (city) where would it be?

Favorite band or type of music?

Week 2 or Day 2: Rules



Activity:

Group activity to come up with rules that make sense to everyone of a certain age.

After setting the rules that provide the optimum atmosphere for a class environment, discuss whose job it is to enforce the rules. The teacher (yes), a designated class sheriff(?), a group of students (?) discuss why it is important for this enforcer to do his or her job.

Discuss:

The benefits of having rules.

The dangers of not following the rules.

The importance of putting an honest enforcer in place.

The climate of a class (or society) where rules are followed vs. the opposite.

The need to have clear and realistic rules.

The importance for consequences if rules are not followed.

Goal:

To give the students a clear understanding of order in society and to demonstrate how all students will be better suited to succeed if rules are followed. To empower the students to vote and approve some of the rules and decide what they feel like optimum learning environment is.

Possible Rules:

Obvious:

Silence while the teacher is teaching.

Respect for each other and the teacher.

Be on time.

Keep classroom clean and orderly.

Do your homework.

Possible "silly" rules, but fun for students:

Wear something red on Tuesdays.

Stand at attention when the teacher enters. (Boys when girls enter. Girls when boys enter.)

Raise your left hand to answer a question / raise your right hand if you need help or have a question.

Week 3 or Day 3: Milestone

Activity:

Chosen depending on the age, but a game related to each age's milestone.

Goal:

To encourage the students to go beyond their classroom, their city or their country. To think of the world as their work place and playground. To learn respect for all things.

3rd Grade: Language

Take up to 10 languages of your choosing. On index cards write the words for "hello", "goodbye", "my name is", "please", and "thank you".

Go over these words with everyone first and then pass them out and have pretend conversations with them. Keep playing until everyone gets a good handle on what the words are and which language they come from.

Have students come to the front of the class and ask them questions such as:

What is the Spanish word for "please"?

What language is "prosim" from and what does it mean?

How would you introduce yourself to a person from Brazil?

For the rest of the year, pick a language for the day in which they have to use certain words from that language in class

"Monday is French day, so please use (or get bonus points for using) "bonjour, au revoir, mon nom est, please, and merci" in class today".

Landmarks:

1st Grade: Books

2nd Grade: Making Friends

3rd Grade: Language

4th Grade: Astronomy

5th Grade: The Great Outdoors

6th Grade: Cleanliness/Grooming

7th Grade: Chivalry

8th Grade: Volunteering and Mentoring

9th Grade: The Other Person (relationships)

10th Grade: Finance

11th Grade: Driving

12th Grade: It's Your Universe

Week 4 or Day 4: Word of the Year

Activity:

Spend the class talking about the importance of the word of the year – age appropriate.

Make up scenarios where that particular word is useful to the students.

Goal:

To promote civility and camaraderie among the students.

3rd Grade: "Please"

Simple game to start adding in a little courtesy with your students.

On certain days, no one is allowed to enter the class, sit down, get up, ask a question, or ask for anything else unless they use the word "please."

This will get silly very fast, but it is only on certain days and by overusing the word one day, it will begin to become part of their regular vocabularies.

You can also use "please" in different languages and have them get rewards or bonus points for using it.

Write on the chalkboard all the different times it would be appropriate to use the word "please" in the real world.

Example:

1. When asking for help.
2. When wanting to borrow something from someone.
3. When asking for food at the table or from someone in the cafeteria.
4. When asking someone to stop doing something.
5. etc.

Words:

1st Grade: Thank you

2nd Grade: Sorry

3rd Grade: Please

4th Grade: Respect

5th Grade: Grace

6th Grade: Honor

7th Grade: Character

8th Grade: Tolerance

9th Grade: Mercy

10th Grade: Temperance

11th Grade: Patience

12th Grade: Fortitude

Week 5 or Day 5: Nutrition



Activity:

Have them put together a good breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Using index cards that have 1 food item on them, pass them out among the students and let them partner up to make a good day's worth of meals.

Example:

Breakfast cards: (words in parentheses not on cards)

1. Eggs - (protein)
2. Whole Grain Toast (good carbohydrates)
3. Blueberries (vitamins and minerals and good carbs)
4. Almonds, cashews, pecans, etc. (protein and good fats)
5. Oatmeal (protein and fiber)
6. Yogurt (protein and calcium)
7. Whole Grain Cereal (protein and good carbs)
8. Apples (vitamins and good carbs)
9. Waffles with syrup (bad carbs - too sugary)
10. Doughnuts (bad carbs - too sugary)
11. Skip breakfast (bad idea all around - no energy for the day)

They should get together in groups to make a good breakfast with at least 3 components. They should get points based on the "completeness of their breakfast - one that includes protein, good carbs, fiber and vitamins. The 3 "bad" choices should also try and group up for "what not to do".

Goal:

To teach all children that the most important decisions that make each day involve the food they choose to put in their bodies. Food is fuel. Your body is your only vessel on Earth and you only get one body. Why would you put anything in it that might damage it?

This will also make them better students for you, the teacher. Children who don't eat well, as you know, are mentally and physically tired and easily distracted. It will also encourage them to rethink their breakfasts.

Week 6 or Day 6: Exercise



Activity:

Invent a sport.

With the group of students, make up a new sport that can involve anything or multiple things (water, running, throwing, etc.).

They will then have to put a training regimen together that includes how they will become good at this sport.

The regimen must include:

Cardiovascular training

Muscle training

Stretching

Mental Edge

Older Grades can devise a plan to make the sport professional:

What kind of field or arena?

Who would sponsor the sport?

What kind of fan base?

How will they pay the athletes?

What will ticket prices be?

What cities would be best to host a team?

It can then be related to how everything in life is a sport, whether it be an actual sport, working in the yard, doing a desk job. It all has to involve physical fitness.

Goal:

To teach the students that physical fitness is important in all aspects of life. The sport that is created can be related to any career. Emphasis on being physically fit leading to a more complete and longer life.

Week 7 or Day 7: Art



Activity:

1. Profiles

Have all the students sit in groups of 4 with each desk turned to the right facing the person on the right. This should create a profile (of the left side of the face) for everyone to draw of their neighbor. Give them 15 minutes to draw. Then turn the other way and draw a profile of the person on their left (right side of the face). Give bonus points or rewards for the person who draw the "best" and those who take it seriously.

2. Triple Play

Set up in groups of 3 (or 2 or 4 if needed) and give the students a designation of top sheet, middle sheet or bottom sheet. Then separate the individuals in each group as far away as possible. Have the "tops" draw an abstract sketch that leads to a shape of a small tube at the bottom of their page which will lead to the "middles" drawing a work that leads to a tube at both the top and bottom of the page which will lead to the "bottoms" drawing another sketch that leads from the tube at the top of their pages. Bring them together and have them "connect" their drawings. Give awards for best and weirdest.

3. Landscape

Simply have them look out the window and draw the landscape or have them draw the room or take them somewhere in the school and draw a picture of something they choose. Give awards.

Goal:

To make them appreciate the details of life. To also help them understand how hard it is to create a work of art, but ultimately how rewarding it is. Ask for complete attention, quiet and focus on details while they work.

Week 8 or Day 8: Poetry/Writing



Activity:

1. Poetry Lines

Have them stand in groups of 2 or 4 and create poems on the spot. The first person in line starts it simply, the second follows, the third has to rhyme the first person and the fourth has to rhyme the second person. Then have the students rotate positions until they have been in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th position.

E.g.

1st person - There was a dog named Harry.

2nd person - He liked to climb the tree.

3rd - His face was kind of scary. (rhyming the first line)

4th - But he was beautiful to me. (rhyming the second line)

2. One Word Story

Have the whole class sit or stand in a circle. Pick a direction and have the whole class tell a story one word at a time. Each student gets only one word and then it goes on to the next person, so the whole class has a hand in making up a weird story. Go around the room a few times until they get in the flow, but only allow 5 seconds per word.

3. Triple Play

Similar to the Art, Have 2 or 3 students group up. One person starts to write a story. They get one sentence or paragraph and then hand it to the next student who adds to the story how they wish. It can go as many rotations as possible and then have the students read their combined stories allowed.

Goal:

To promote the art of thinking and writing creatively. To teach the students how to work in groups and to show them how collectively weird and creative they can be together - weird in a good way.

Week 9 or Day 9: Music



Activity:

1. Soundtrack

Every child gets to bring in his/her favorite piece of music. They get to play a snippet of it for the class - no more than 1 minute. The class votes on favorites according to each category. Put together a soundtrack based on the class favorites. The soundtrack will contain 1 song from each category. It would be ideal if a CD could be made and given to the students to download. If no one brings music in from a certain category, have music on hand to play and let them choose from those pieces.

Categories:

Rock

Hip/hop

Rap

Country

Classical

Blues

Gospel

Choir

Wildcard categories (up to 3)

2. Symphony/Rock Concert

Groups of 4 make up a symphony with each person either a woodwind, brass, percussion or strings. They could also make up a rock band with each person being either a bass guitar, drums, keyboard, or vocalist. The teacher plays a song and then the groups have to duplicate it using only their voices. They can decide which part they want to play. Give an award to the best. "And the Grammy goes to..."

Goal:

To work together in groups and to give them a wide variety of music to choose from. They will learn to appreciate the creativity of all kinds of music - not just their favorite.

Week 10 or Day 10: Great American Biography



Activity:

Each student writes their biography for when they are 75 years old. The focus is on what they want to do when that is significant and why the world will remember them.

Students will then exchange the biographies and have another student read the it in front of the class.

For the younger ages, maybe have each student come in front of the class and tell the group what they want to be when she/he grows up and how she/he intends to get there.

Then discuss what kind of hard work will be necessary to achieve the goal. Make this positive. "If you play guitar for 2 hours a day for the next 10 years, that will be 7300 hours of practice - you will be special by then." "If you want to be President, you need to learn about history and work hard in school."

Goal:

To teach them to dream big and plan to make a mark on this world. It will teach them something about goal setting. It will be an activity they can always look back on and be reminded of that dream. Also - to make them understand that hard work lies ahead for all dreams and that all the greatest Americans and human beings worked harder than the others to become great.

Week 11 or Day 11: Chores



Activity:

Each student is given a chore to complete in the classroom for the week. It is an assignment. They must also write down a chore they will be doing at home to help out and the parents will agree and sign off on it.

They perform the chores and a "manager" will check off to see if each chore is done.

Possible chores:

Take roll

Begin class with a clap or a lights off/lights on alert

Clean up the room (multiple students)

Collect homework

Etc.

Goal:

Much like rules, it will empower the students to help out and police their own surroundings. Emphasize the importance of the chores being done and the crucial role of the overseer. Talk about what would happen if the overseer let his/her friends do a bad job on their chores.

Week 12 or Day 12: Finance



Activity:

Have each student bring in a penny/day, nickel/week, or quarter/month - or some variation of that. Collect the money in a jar and have a student(s) help to keep the running tally. Decide what the money will be used for and plan a budget according to the goal.

E.g. "If we collect \$2/week, in 12 weeks we will have enough to buy a reading lamp for the corner." Or, "if we collect \$3/week, we will have a party in 2 months in which we get to buy our own food."

They would also be asked to decide to give away 10% of the jar to a charity. Even if it is a couple of dollars, they will at least begin to understand the need for giving back.

Each student could take a turn being treasurer for the class and the daily or weekly collection could be part of the chores.

Of course, if some children cannot afford to participate, they could at least help with the process or donate items that would be equivalent to money.

Goals:

To begin the process of making children financially responsible.

To teach them the difference between "needs" versus "wants."

To make sure they understand that saving up for something you need or want is much better than going into debt for it.

Week 13 or Day 13: Scorecard



Activity:

Put together a journal or planner that helps them keep track of all their daily and weekly activities.

Categories:

Exercise
Eating Well
Homework
Reading
Music
Writing/Journaling
Chores
Etc.

Teach them to organize a plan to check off each activity as it is done. The scorecard keeps them motivated to complete it

Goal:

To teach the students time management and how to be more complete. It will also promote the opportunity for the students to be more responsible for their own schedule and help them come up with activities away from TV and video.