Why Communities Have Rules

Grades K-2
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We highly recommend that teachers preview programs before showing them in the classroom.
When children find a rule standing in the way of their doing what they like, their immediate response is to pronounce the rule unfair. Children can have a hard time understanding why their parents and teachers not only make rules but require that they be followed.

First defining a rule as something that tells us what we can and cannot do, *Why Communities Have Rules* uses age-appropriate language to make clear to the youngest students the reasons for rules and the importance of following them. Even our communities have rules, the program tells viewers, rules called laws that serve to make a community safe and ensure that its people are fair to each other and respect each other’s rights. And like a community, it continues, a classroom works best when everyone follows its rules.

*Why Communities Have Rules* then goes on to enumerate the basic rights people have, including the right to be treated like everyone else, and shows that punishment may be the result when people fail to follow rules or laws. It also explains the role of the Constitution in ensuring people’s rights, and offers easy-to-understand examples of laws that had to be changed because they were either wrong, as in the case of slavery or denying the vote to women, or superseded by technological advances.

To extend the program’s scope and usefulness, this Guide provides discussion questions, suggested activities, reproducible activity sheets, and a list of books suitable for Grades K to 2.
Learning Objectives

This program is designed to help the youngest students:

• learn that rules tell us what we can and cannot do.

• recognize that rules keep us safe, help us get along, and keep things fair.

• be aware that parents make the rules at home, while teachers make the rules at school.

• learn that communities have rules called laws.

• understand the rules of behavior that ensure the rights of others.

• learn that punishment may be the result if a person does not follow rules or breaks a law.

• be aware that sometimes laws are wrong and need to be changed.
First observing that we all have to follow rules, the program’s host opens the program by defining rules as things that tell us what we can and cannot do. We follow rules, she tells viewers, for three reasons: rules keep us safe, they help us get along, and they keep things fair.

She then asks, “Who makes up the rules?” At home, your parents do, she explains. They make rules about picking up toys, wearing a helmet when bike-riding, and holding their hand before you cross the street, all meant to keep you safe. At school, the host says, teachers make up special rules meant to be fair as well as safe, like raising your hand and waiting to be called on, waiting your turn to use the slide, and asking permission to leave the room.

Communities also have rules, comments the host. Called laws, they are made up by people in government. Examples are the laws requiring people to stop at stop signs and red lights, to put their trash in street waste containers, to wear a seatbelt when riding in a car, and to walk on people’s property only after asking them first.

Another use for rules is that they ensure that we are fair to each other and respect each other’s rights, the host says. Explaining that rights are things we are all free to do, she lists such rights as the right to live and be safe in our persons and property. Other rights, she adds, are the right to say what we want and the right to be treated like everyone else, no matter whether you’re a boy or girl, the color of your skin, or where you come from.

One of our most important rights is the right to vote, she goes on. Calling a vote a choice that counts, she says that grown-ups in the community vote on the leaders—presidents, mayors, and governors—who will make the laws. But even the people who make the laws have to obey them.

When people do not follow rules or laws, the host says, punishment is the result. If you break the rules in school, she explains, you may have to miss recess or go to
time out, adding that people in a community get punished, too, if they break a law. A person who has broken a law gets taken to a place called a court, where he or she gets a chance to explain. If the court decides the person didn’t break the law, he or she gets to leave. If the court decides the person broke the law, he or she gets punished. The punishment might mean paying money, or it could mean going to jail.

The host then goes on to discuss the Constitution, in which our early leaders included all the rights we have, as well as our first laws. Some laws, like not hurting others, have always been followed, she adds. But sometimes leaders decide that a law is wrong, it’s not fair or it doesn’t keep people safe.

Examples of wrong laws in the past were not allowing women to vote, and forcing people to work as slaves, so new laws were written: women got the vote and slaves got their freedom. People in a community, the host explains, can work to change laws and get people to vote for leaders who will effect a change.

Technology is another way new laws come into being, says the host. Noting that technology means using science to make life easier, she compares the wagons people used in colonial times with the cars we use today, for which new laws were needed. New laws ensure that technological advances will be used fairly and safely. She uses as an example a new playground for which new rules can be made to make sure everyone who uses it is safe and shares a turn.

As the program concludes, the host notes that just as the rules in a new playground mean that everyone shares fairly, the rules in a community require that everyone has to share rights and also responsibilities, which are the jobs that everyone has to do. Laws keep us safe, she says, and make sure that everyone is treated in a fair way.
Discussion Questions

1. What are rules for? Why should we follow them?

2. What do rules do?

3. Is it important to wear a helmet when you ride a bicycle? Why or why not?

4. Why is it necessary that you hold a parent’s hand while crossing a street?

5. Discuss some of the rules you have in your classroom. Why is it important to follow them?

6. What are some rules every community has?

7. Why is it a rule that everyone must wear a seatbelt when riding in a car?

8. What are some of the rights people have that are discussed in the program?

9. Why is it necessary to respect other people’s rights?

10. What is an important right that grown-ups have? Do the people who make the laws have to follow them? Why or why not?

11. What happens when people break a rule? What happens when someone in your class breaks a rule?

12. What is the purpose of a court hearing for a person who may have broken a law?

13. What happens when the people who make the laws decide a law is not fair or doesn’t keep people safe?

14. What are some laws that were wrong in the past and had to be changed?

15. How does technology work to change laws?
Suggested Activities

Language Arts; Communication

Lead students in a discussion of what rules are for. Ask them, what could happen if you don’t pick up your toys? If you don’t wear a helmet while bike-riding? If you don’t hold your parent’s hand before crossing the street? Then invite children to discuss the fact that like a community, a classroom works best when everyone follows the rules.

Art; Creative Expression

Give each student a large cutout of a railroad car. Ask students to think of a rule that must be followed in the classroom or in the school, and write or dictate the rule they come up with on the cutout. Invite children to illustrate their work. Hang the cutouts on the bulletin board or on classroom walls.

Reading; Creative Expression

Choose one or more books from the Suggested Reading section and read them aloud. Distribute sheets of paper and crayons and invite students to illustrate the rule discussed in the story, writing or dictating a few sentences about what they have drawn. Older children can choose their own book, write a brief report, and illustrate it as well. Ask for volunteers to design book covers, gather students’ work together and bind the pages between the covers into a book for students to look through when they have time.

Language Arts

Invite students to look for examples of breaking the rules in the television shows they watch. Have them write up or draw a description of one of these scenes and bring it to class. Invite each student to discuss their example for the rest of the class.
Suggested Activities

Art; Language Arts

Provide students with old magazines and ask them to find and cut out, and then paste on a sheet of construction paper, a picture of a child or grown-up who is following a rule. Invite students to make up a story about the picture for the rest of the class.
Think about all the rules you have to follow every day. Write or dictate some of them on the lines below. Next to each rule, write or dictate where you have to follow it—in school, at home, riding your bike, or in a car.

<table>
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<th>Rule</th>
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Where I Live
In the program, you learned about three important reasons to have rules. Write or dictate these reasons below:

Reason 1

Reason 2

Reason 3
In each of the boxes below, draw a picture of one rule to follow that keeps children safe. Under each picture, write or dictate what the rule is.
In each of the boxes below, draw a picture of a rule to follow that makes things fair for everyone. Under each picture, write or dictate what the rule is.

Rule: _____________________________
Rule: _____________________________
Rule: _____________________________
Rule: _____________________________
Was there ever a time you did not follow a rule that a parent or teacher made? Write or dictate what the rule was and what happened when you didn’t follow it. Then draw a picture about it.

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________
Sometimes laws have to be changed because they take away rights people should have. The Golden Rule is, “Always treat people the way you want to be treated.” Write or dictate how you would follow the Golden Rule. Draw a picture about it.
Think about the things you learned in the program. Imagine that you are going to write a book about following rules.

Write the title of your book on the cover.

Decorate your cover with any design you wish.

List the names of five chapters you would include in the Table of Contents:

Chapter 1

_________________________________________

Chapter 2

_________________________________________

Chapter 3

_________________________________________

Chapter 4

_________________________________________
Why Communities Have Rules

Chapter 5

Where I Live

Activity Sheet 1
Books for Grades K to 2


Allard, Harry. *Miss Nelson is Missing*. Houghton Mifflin, 1977. When the kids in Room 207 take advantage of Miss Nelson’s good nature, she disappears and is replaced by a martinet.

Berenstain, Stan, and Jan Berenstain. *The Berenstain Bears Get the Noisies*. Random Library, 1999. Brother and Sister Bear are just too noisy, until Papa Bear utters the one word that can quiet them down.


Lionni, Leo. *It's Mine!*. Dragonfly, 1996. When the island they are fighting over nearly sinks, three frogs come to the conclusion that they would be better off sharing.

Suggested Reading


Rouss, Sylvia A. *No Rules for Michael*. Ken-Bar Publishing, 2004. After Michael decides that school would be more fun if there were no rules, he and his classmates learn an important lesson: without rules, chaos breaks loose.
WHY COMMUNITIES HAVE RULES

HOST
Why do we have to follow rules? We follow rules because they are made to keep us safe, help us get along and keep things fair.

Who makes up the rules?
Well, in your home, your parents make up rules for you to follow.

Do you have to wear a helmet when you ride your bike? That’s a rule. Do you have to hold an adult’s hand before you cross the street? That’s a rule, too. Your parents make rules to help keep you safe.

Teachers make up special rules for the students in their classrooms. Do you have to raise your hand and wait to be called on before you say something? That’s a rule.

Do you have to walk in the hallways? That’s a rule, too.

Your teacher makes these rules to keep your classroom fair and safe.

People in our government make up rules for everyone in our communities to follow.

Community rules are called laws. For example, it is a law that when people drive cars, they have to stop at stop signs and red lights.

It’s a law that people in the community have to clean up after themselves.
HOST
It is a law that you wear a seatbelt when you ride in a car. Seatbelts keep you safe.

It's also a law that you cannot go on someone else's property without asking them first.

The government makes these rules to keep us safe, to help us get along.

Rules help make sure we respect each other's rights. Rights are things we are all free to do.

We all have the right to free speech. That means in the community we can say what we want.

We have the right to be treated just like everyone else. It doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl or what color your skin is or where you come from. We all have the same rights.

One of our most important rights is the right to vote. A vote is a choice we make that counts. Grown-ups in the community vote on who will make up the rules for everyone.

These people are called leaders. They make the laws that everyone has to follow.

Leaders try and make the laws fair. Everyone has to follow the laws, even the people who make them.

Sometimes people do not follow the laws and the rules.
HOST
What happens in your class if someone does not follow the rules?
They get punishments. Punishments are things you have to do when you break the rules. In school, you may have to miss recess or go to time out.

When people in the community do not follow the law they are punished too.

To make sure people follow the rules, communities have police.

If the police think someone has broken a law, they take them to a place called a court. Going to a court is one of our rights. In a court people get a chance to explain what they did. If the court decides they didn't break any laws, they get to leave. If the court decides they broke a law, they get a punishment.

Paying money is one punishment. Going to jail is another punishment. Jail is a place where people have to stay until their punishment is finished.

When this country was started, the first leaders wrote down all the rights they thought Americans should have. It is called the Constitution.

There are some laws we have always followed. Other laws change over time.

Sometimes leaders decide that a law is wrong. The law is not keeping people safe or being fair to everyone. If enough leaders feel the same way, they can change the law.

Many years ago there was a law that women in this country were not allowed to vote. Many women got together to demand the right to vote.

Many leaders decided that keeping women from voting was wrong. They made a new law saying that women could vote.

Why Communities Have Rules
HOST
Many years ago there was a law saying that people could own slaves. Slavery means to keep people against their will and force them to work. Many people thought that slavery was wrong.

Many leaders also thought that slavery was wrong. So they changed the law. The new law said that no one could own slaves anymore.

Sometimes we need new laws because of new technology. Technology is a word that means ‘things that use science to make life easier’.

At one time people used to travel in wagons. Then cars were invented. The leaders needed to make new laws to keep people safe.

Today we have lots of technology. Leaders need to make new laws about new technology so that people will use technology fairly and safely.

If your school gets a new playground, there will be new rules about how to play fairly and safely.

The rules in the community work the same way. Everyone has to share. They share rights. They also share responsibilities. Responsibilities are jobs that everyone has to do.

Laws tell us about our rights and our responsibilities. They keep us safe, and make sure that everyone is treated in a fair way. And that's important for every community.

THE END