



TARGETING PROBLEMS IN MY COMMUNITY

(One week, 20 minutes or so each day)

OBJECTIVE

The students learn about different problems in the local community, choose one, and brainstorm ways they can make a difference.

MATERIALS

Local newspapers; *Let's Make a Difference* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Collect local newspapers for the class to peruse.
- ✓ Arrange for a speaker to come to the class. (Refer to Day 3 in the "Instructions" section.)
- ✓ Copy the *Let's Make a Difference* handout for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Day 1 – Bring in copies of local newspapers for the class to share. Ask students to look through the newspaper to identify local community problems. With students' input, make a list of these problems on the board. Have students continue to monitor local papers for articles about these problems. If possible, clip and post the articles on a bulletin board.
- ✓ Day 2 – For homework, ask students to talk to their parents about what they think are the biggest problems in their community. In class, have students share and add any ideas to the list on the board.
- ✓ Day 3 – Invite someone from the community to come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems. This could be a public official such as the mayor, a city council member, or someone who works for an umbrella social service organization such as United Way. Ask the speaker to talk with the class about current community problems. Encourage students to ask questions about the problems to learn what solutions might be effective. Be sure to have the speaker address how voting impacts this problem as well as any upcoming legislation or elections that might have an effect.
- ✓ Day 4 – Have students vote on the problem they would like to address. Before voting, give students the opportunity to advocate for any of the ideas listed on the board. Encourage students to consider the following criteria before voting: a) Which problem is of most concern to you? b) Which problem has the biggest impact on our community? c) On which problem could we potentially make the greatest impact? Rather than have each student vote for just one problem, consider using an alternate voting strategy such as voting for all the ideas in which you are interested, or voting for your top three choices.

**TARGETING PROBLEMS IN MY COMMUNITY** (continued)

- ✓ Day 5 – In pairs or small groups, have students fill in the *Let's Make a Difference* handout on the following page. They should complete the facts section first and then brainstorm ways to have an impact. Give students the opportunity to share their favorite ideas with the class. Have the students vote on their favorite service ideas. If at all possible, carry out one of the service activities as a class. If you do not complete a class service project, encourage your students to take their ideas home and complete one or more on their own (or for extra credit).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was it difficult to come up with community problems? If yes, why?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to come up with solutions to community problems? If yes, why?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to carry out the community service project(s)? If yes, how was that the case?*
- ★ *How can you keep having an impact in your community?*



LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The community problem our class chose is: _____.

What we know... (List here the FACTS you have learned about the problem.)	Ways we can make a difference... (List here your group's ideas for how kids can help.)

When you have listed as many ideas as you can think of, talk together as a group and decide which three service ideas are your favorites. Put a star by the three ideas you chose. Be prepared to share these with the class.