



PARTY PLANKS

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students examine the concepts of parties and party planks.

MATERIALS

Party Planks handout

GET READY

- ✓ Draw two sets of planks on the board as shown in the illustration on the *Party Planks* handout. Place a party label above them as shown or have your students name them.
- ✓ You may need to define for your class:
 - Political Party* – an organized group who control or seek to control a government.
 - Platform* – an outline of what the party intends to accomplish if they win an election.
 - Plank* – one issue in the platform.
- ✓ See “Political Parties” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say to your students: *Have you ever had to choose between two things that seemed pretty good or two things that seemed pretty awful? Sometimes joining a political party is like that. Often a party member may not agree with all the planks in his or her party platform.*
- ✓ Invite your students to give you fun ways to improve their school. Write an idea on each plank beneath each party name as shown on the *Party Planks* handout.

- ✓ Ask your students to declare which party they would join by signing their names anywhere on the planks.
- ✓ Now that your students are familiar with the concepts of parties, recreate on the blackboard the illustration you just used. This time, write Republican Party and Democratic Party as the party labels.
- ✓ Have your students bring in information about the parties (from newspapers, the Internet, etc.) and fill in the party planks as best they can.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which plank on your party’s platform do you like most? Least? Why?*
- ★ *How did you decide which party to join?*
- ★ *How is this activity like joining a political party?*
- ★ *What information were we able to gather about the Republican and Democratic parties? What are the differences between the two?*
- ★ *What can a person do if they don’t want to join any political party, but want to vote? (Declare himself/herself an independent)*

VOTE QUOTE

“By mutual confidence and mutual aid great deeds are done, and great discoveries made.”
– Homer, *The Illiad*

PARTY PLANKS

Eagles

less homework

fast food at school

snack break every day

new equipment

Liberty Bells

one more recess a day

no timed tests

chewing gum allowed

no detentions