

Centennial: Simple Gifts...Personal Contributions To Utah

Summary

by Mari Domanski. What people in Utah give when they give of themselves.

Materials

Words of the song 'Simple Gifts.'

Profiles in Courage by J.F. Kennedy.

Random Acts of Kindness by Editors of Conari Press.

Salt Lake City Magazine articles 'Profiles in Courage' by Jane Chapman Martin, and 'Dr, Cannon, I presume?' by Carolyn Campbell, included with permission.

Selected obituaries.

Background for Teachers

Using J.F. Kennedy's Profiles in Courage, the Japanese tradition of 'Living Treasures,' the local showcase of 'Quiet Pioneers' and the spirit of volunteers, show the patterns of living and giving for the good of society.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will determine qualities common to contributors to the community.

Students will identify people in their community, past and present, who exhibit the qualities of community contributors.

Students will document the life and contributions of present community contributors.

Instructional Procedures

See preface material for the Utah Centennial Lesson Plans book.

Discuss what courage is and what courage looks like when it is manifest in stressful situations and in daily life.

Have each student select a person important to their life. Make a list of all the things that this person has done for them. This list should include events, simple gifts like helping you survive the fear of a thunderstorm, dealing with being afraid of the dark, sticking with piano lessons, going to all your soccer games, etc.

Begin a list of the qualities that people have who exhibit courage, give simple gifts, or who practice lifelong random acts of kindness. Modify this list as readings and discussions require.

Read selections and hear reports or stories of people who have contributed to Utah. It may be best to begin with the state and local contributors already known to the students. Then move to people who model givers to the community. Read selections from literature on perseverance, courage, giving, sharing, helping, etc.

Discuss what behaviors those who help individuals and those who help communities have in common.

Use obituaries to help students find life summaries of contributors. Read local and community newspapers to find who is in the news. From the lists that are created decide from your criteria who would make good candidates for your contemporary givers.

Have students conduct research and interviews to create a presentation to nominate 'giving' candidates or living treasures.

Students shall present their reports of nominees to the class. These can be both an enlightening and uplifting experience.

Extensions

Based on the presentations the class could create awards to be given to the community contributor during an appropriate school or community function.

Ask the local newspapers about creating an article on community givers both past and present.

In a public location create a display of thanks for the contributions of the members of the community that the class has selected.

Make the awards presentation an annual event. Perhaps choose to make only one presentation a year. The student will have to make strong cases for each nominee.

Have each student do a self portrait portraying themselves by the qualities they identified for the contributors to their communities. Working from this list begin individual or class plans to action.

Perhaps begin with random acts of kindness in your school and community.

Authors

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