



# Humanities and Social Sciences Year 3

## Lesson: Community participation

**Inquiry question:** How can I participate in my community?

**Lesson objectives:** Students will investigate what it means to be an active citizen and investigate ways to contribute to and participate in their local community. Students will develop an understanding of how citizens can influence the communities in which they live.

**Resources:** Multiple copies of *Belonging* by Jeannie Baker, Walker Books, London, 2004; access to the internet.

### Australian Curriculum

***Why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute***  
(ACHASSK072)

- identifying how they could participate in a school or community project
- identifying groups in the local community or through a virtual community and exploring their purpose

### Lesson body

Teacher will read the book *Belonging* by Jeannie Baker to students. The text is wordless, and the images are very detailed so copies of the book can be given to small groups of students to look at while the teacher is reading.

Ask students to look at the illustrations very carefully and think about:

- the changes that are occurring;
- what may have caused each of the changes and;
- who is the body that makes decisions about street and building changes in our own community?

After reading:

- ask some students to retell the story;
- discuss each of the changes and whether they were because of individual and/or community participation and contributions; and
- think about the title of the book—What does the word ‘belonging’ mean? Was this a good title for the book? Why?

Begin a group discussion about the school community, the building and its surrounding environment (the oval, playground, canteen, carparks):

- do students feel a sense of belonging to their school community? Why or why not?
- what do students like about their school environment?
- what makes their school unique?
- what improvements could be made?
- list the reasons behind the suggestions and write the suggestions down;
- who do students think is the appropriate person to talk to about their suggestions, for example, some suggestions could be taken to the principal or school board for consideration;
- how would these concerns best be presented (e.g. in written form; in a face to face meeting).

Sometimes a suggestion may be an issue of concern that needs action by the local government. For Canberra the local government is the Legislative Assembly for the ACT. Concerns can be raised in a number of ways:

- write to your member;
- participate in the committee inquiry process;
- form of a petition to the Legislative Assembly. A petition needs to be endorsed by a member of the Legislative Assembly who will present it to the Assembly on a sitting day.

**Students may decide to write a petition to the principal or the school board about a school issue to gain some familiarity with how a petition operates. The petition could be endorsed by a teacher and other students could be signatories.**

Information on how to write a petition can be found on the following links:

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/Explore-your-Assembly/resources/fact-sheets/petitions>

Standing Orders. Chapter 8. Petitions 83-100

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1351468/Standing-Orders-as-at-22-August-2019.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1351468/Standing-Orders-as-at-22-August-2019.pdf)

Find out your schools' local members of the Legislative Assembly:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1240375/Members-Brochure-Ninth-Assembly-September-2019.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1240375/Members-Brochure-Ninth-Assembly-September-2019.pdf)

How to contact MLA's can be found on the link below:

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/members/current>

## Further investigation:

Ask students to identify some groups in the local community and explore their purpose (e.g. scouts, guides, religious groups, sporting groups). Students can look on the internet to find more local groups. Ask students to identify at least two different community groups (they could work in pairs). Have a group discussion about why people want to belong to groups and write a list of the local community groups the students have found.

## Lesson reflection

Ask students to reflect on what it means to be actively involved as a citizen. What is a citizen's responsibility to their community? Why do people work so hard to make a positive difference to their neighbourhoods, schools, cities?