



Goodbye Graffiti Early Childhood Curriculum Materials

Topic: *Community*

Introduction:

We can think of community as a place, as a group of people, as a set of relationships, a feeling or a way of relating to others. 'Community' is hard to define, yet many people seem to be mourning its loss. We often hear that community is 'breaking down', that people don't know one another, don't trust one another, don't share the same values. Taylor (2012)ⁱ suggests that people who commit graffiti vandalism gain social capital from their crimes that is lacking in their family and community.

At the same time, we hear of on-line communities, role-playing communities and learning communities. Communities, says Marcia Conner, are "groups of people held together by a common identity or interest" and communication is fundamental to being a community. We have always depended on tools to support communication whether it be the voice, writing, the telephone, the car or the internet.

"Coming from two Latin words meaning *with gifts*, the term community suggests a general sense of altruism, reciprocity, and beneficence that comes from working together. Communities help generate a shared language, rituals and customs, and collective memory of those that join the group." (Conner, 2000)ⁱⁱ

The derivations of the word 'community' are from Middle English *communitē*, Old French *citizenry*, Latin *communitās*, *fellowship*, or *communis*, *common*. These are the same derivations as the word 'communication'.

For more information about communities, and to help your own thinking, you might read: [What is Community?](#), (Smith, 2001)ⁱⁱⁱ [Introduction to Online Community Development](#) (Cohen, 2007) or [Community](#) from Wikipedia.

In this topic, children will explore their own ideas about community and identify their own community or communities. They may:

- Define community
- Keep a journal of community places and people
- Prepare an ecological map to describe their own community/ies
- Write about their community/ies.

Tuning in: What is a community?

Read a book about communities.

Bear About Town. Blackstone, Stella. ISBN 1841481521. Publisher: Barefoot Books. 2001. Bear heads into town every day. He stops at different places (bakery, pool, movie theater, gym, toy store, and park). His outings provide an opportunity to learn the days of the week as well as the ins and outs of a town.



On The Town: A Community Adventure. Caseley, Judith. ISBN 0060295856. Publisher: Harper Collins. 2002. Charlie and his mother walk around the neighborhood doing errands so that Charlie can write in his notebook about the people and places that make up his community.

Exploring Our World. Hollenbeck, Karen. ISBN 0590898094. Publisher: Scholastic. 2000. As students learn about the people and places within their communities, they will also build on the concepts of cooperation, living with diversity and change, and making a personal contribution to the common good.

What Is A Community? From A to Z. Kalman, Bobbie. ISBN 0865054142. Publisher: Crabtree. 1999. An alphabetical introduction to the basic concepts of community, such as "Buildings," "Family," "Rules," and "Working Together."

Finding out: Who are the people in 'my' community?

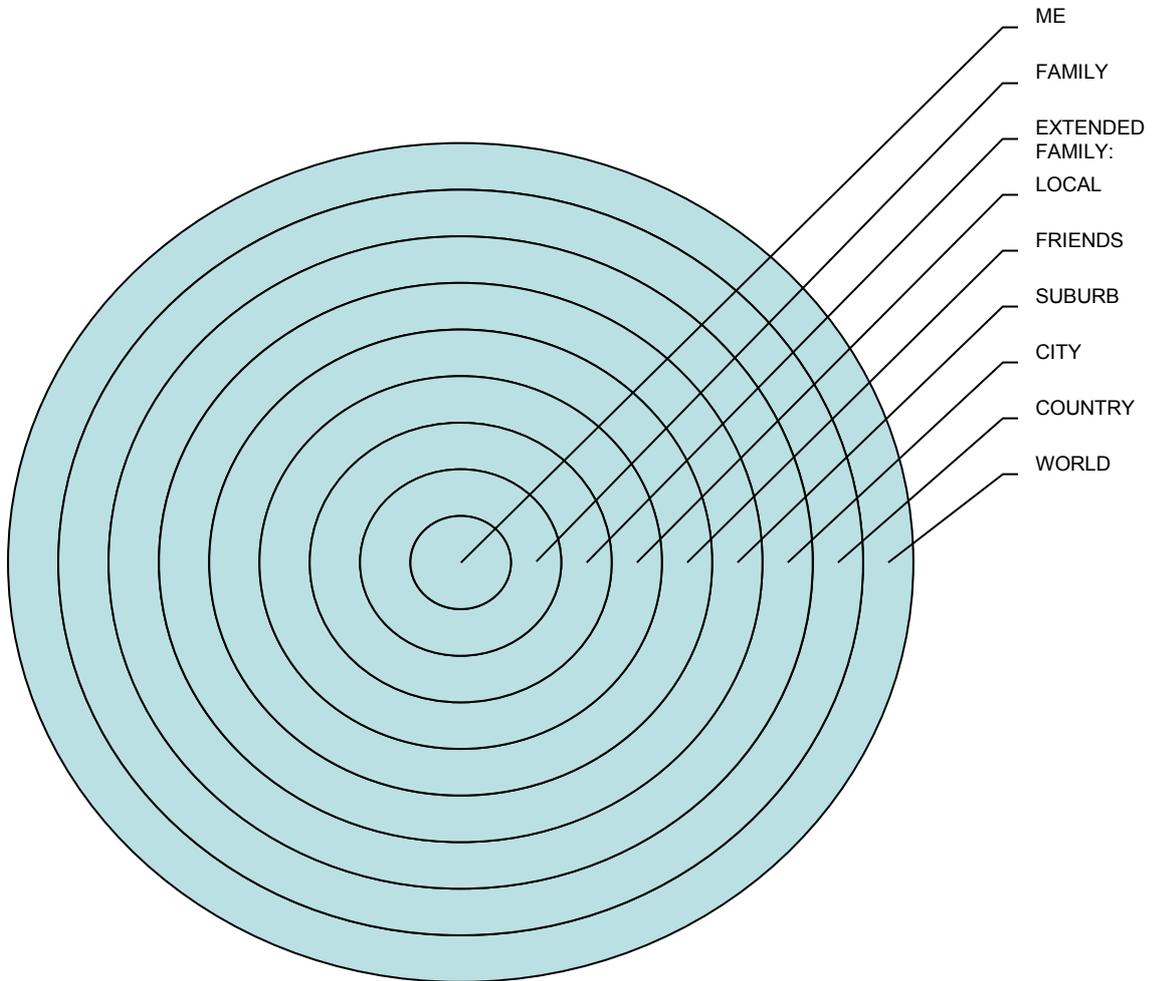
Have the children begin a Community Journal and write down the people and places in their community/ies. You might dedicate a small note book to the topic 'Community' and invite families to help their children make notes about the people and places in their community that are important to the children. Keep the topic wide and open. Try not to impose assumptions on the children about the sorts of families or communities from which they come. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' about families and communities – they just are.

Sorting out: Who is my community?

Prepare concept maps of the children and their community. Have the children write or draw each layer of their community in concentric circles. You might use the questions that follow to help the children's thinking. (Please note that 'family' and 'extended family' may overlap or be thought of very differently. Many children live with grandparents, aunts and uncles. Some children may not be living with their family of origin. Others may be living in two or more families in different geographic locations on a regular basis. You might choose to have one layer rather than two for 'family'. Adapt the concept map and the questions to suit the families of the children in your class and school.)



Goodbye Graffiti - Early Childhood: *Community*





Who is my community?

My name is _____.

I am _____ years old. I like do to these things:
_____.

There are _____ people in my family.

Their names are: _____

The language/s we speak at home is/are _____

I have ____ aunts, ____ uncles, ____ cousins and ____ grandparents

They live in _____

I belong to these groups and clubs _____

The people who are important to me in these places are _____

My friends are _____

I live in _____

What I like about where I live is _____

The people who are important to me in my community are _____



Going further: What does my community value?

Look at some of the images of communities that are linked here or collect images of your own.

[Big day out](#) – crowd at a Big Day Out event

[Boys](#) – building a sense of team in a boy's team

[City image](#) - a photograph of a dense city section of San Paulo

[Community life](#) – 7 smiling young people lying down looking up at the camera

[Community of interest](#) – Stonehenge at Summer Solstice

[Economic development](#) – people planning a community project

[Food](#) – providing food to the community

[Garden](#) – community garden

[Group of people](#) – a large group of people looking at the camera and smiling

[Health](#) – people who work in a hospital

[Internet](#) – seniors accessing computers in a community house

[Parade](#) – Lewes bonfire public parade

[Religious](#) – church service

[Street musicians](#) – group in New York City

[Young people](#) – young people wearing helmets are preparing for to skateboard

[Youth](#) – young people in Oslo, Norway

[Volunteering](#) – people spreading topsoil in a community garden

What are the values in these images? Children might look for examples of: Care and Compassion, Doing Your Best, Fair Go, Freedom, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion, Individualism, Creativity, Thoughtfulness.

Alternatively you might use the [Values Outcomes](#) from the Curriculum Framework, the [National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools](#), a values framework adopted in your school or any of the many other values frameworks that are available as starting points.

What do the images tell us about the values of our community?

Make a Community Book showing the values of our classroom, school or local community.

Applying: Who needs to know?

With the children, look at the activities that you have undertaken about our community. Who do they think needs to know about their learning? How could this information be given? (e.g. reading their Community Book to others in the school, to residents of a nearby Senior Citizen's Centre, to a local Rotary Club or other community group.)



Taylor, M.F., Marais I and Cottman, R (2012): Patterns of graffiti offending: towards recognition that graffiti offending is more than 'kids messing around', *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, 22:2, 152-168

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.2011.605128#.VPk292AcRj0>

ⁱⁱ Conner, M. L. "Online Community Development." *Ageless Learner*, 1997-2007.

<http://agelesslearner.com/intros/community.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Smith, M. K. (2001) 'Community' in *the encyclopedia of informal education*,

<http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm>.