

## Responsibilities and Rights

Marilyn Licklider teaches government, geography, psychology and economics at Cuba High School in Cuba, Mo.

In her government class, when they talk about the Bill of Rights, she pairs these rights with responsibilities. "As we talk about our freedoms, we discuss how my freedom ends where your nose begins."

For each of the first 10 Amendments, she hosts guest speakers or shows films to explore the meaning and implications of the amendment.

For example, when they talk about the Second Amendment (the right to bear arms), they watch the WARN segment "Responsibility." "This is a rural community," says Licklider. "Many of my students have guns and hunt deer and turkey, so they are familiar with the right to bear arms, but they also need to know they have responsibilities. We discuss



what you would do if you knew a student brought a gun to school. We discuss what would happen if you *didn't* tell someone in authority and then someone was hurt. Students have to help with safety at school."

## In the Classroom

In her sixth grade classroom, Rankin School of Technology teacher Charlene Nelson uses *The American Promise* with the **CHARACTER COUNTS!** curriculum.

Before students watch the video, Nelson poses this hypothetical question to the class: Our textbooks have been vandalized. The school district and the taxpayers provided these supplies. Whose responsibility is it to repair or replace them? The class discusses the differences between rights and responsibilities.

Nelson has developed activities for each segment of the "Responsibility" Act from the video. Following these exercises, students are able to identify the fact that they are responsible for their own fate.

- After the Inupiat segment, students make

a list of responsibilities/values to which their culture subscribes.

- After the WARN (guns in schools) segment, Nelson has a number of activities:

— Share the book *Just One Flick of a Finger*, by Marybeth Lorbiecki (Dial Books, 1996).

— Discuss how peers can pressure young people to do something they really don't believe in just by saying, "You aren't my friend if you tell." Ask the class, who is the one you want to trust?

— Discuss the past few national school shootings. Ask students what they would do if they heard someone planning such an attack. Have the students make posters encouraging others to use methods of conflict resolution to solve problems.

— Introduce *Talk It Out: Conflict Resolution in the Elementary Classroom*, by Barbara Porro (Trade Paperback, 1996).

Use the book for guidelines on setting up a classroom conflict-resolution center.

- After watching the COPS segment, present and discuss the activity Prisoner's Dilemma from the teaching guide. Give an example of how this might work in a classroom: Someone loses a pencil; someone else happens to have it. Did they steal it? Did they find it? What decisions might affect a disciplinary action here?
- After the Queue-up segment, discuss what we can do to help homeless or underprivileged people in our community.
- After the segment on the Monday Group, identify a realistic goal to help out Akron's environment. Service projects discussed in Nelson's class included Keep Akron Beautiful cleanup day, beautification of the school grounds and collecting spare change to donate to an animal shelter or the Akron Zoo.