Core Democratic Values
and
Michigan's Judicial Branch of Government

Teacher
Resources

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center
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Introduction

Michigan's judicial branch of government uses Core Democratic Values every day in operations and decision-making. Examples of the Core Democratic Values can be found at the Michigan Hall of Justice and Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center. This teacher resource complements Core Democratic Values tours at the Learning Center.

Grade Level

Through concrete examples, the program and accompanying guide illustrate political and legal processes created to clarify the meaning of values in the American creed and to resolve conflicts among those values. The exercises are most appropriate for students in elementary.

Pre-Visit Activities

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn definitions of selected Core Democratic Values.
- Identify Core Democratic Values in everyday life.
- Identify Core Democratic Values as applied to roles of participants in a criminal trial.

Instructional Resources

- Glossary
- Chart paper or white board
- Flip book/pencil for each student
- Roles in the Courtroom transparency or handout
- Overhead projector (optional)

Sequence of Activities

1. Prior to beginning these activities, choose the values that you wish students to investigate during their tour at the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center. The following Core Democratic Values are especially relevant to the court system, and examples of all can be found at the Michigan Hall of Justice and the Learning Center.

Common Good	Popular Sovereignty
Diversity	Pursuit of Happiness
Equality	Rule of Law
Justice	Separation of Powers
Liberty	Truth
Life	

2. Write the definitions of the values on a white board, overhead, or chart paper and explain them to the students. Discuss some examples of values from school or home life. Have students create “flip books” to record selected Core Democratic Values. In their flip books, students should write definitions and draw examples of these values in everyday life.

3. During the tour of the Learning Center, students will be asked to match exhibits with Core Democratic Values; this activity introduces students to the concept. First, discuss the various roles in the courtroom with students, using the Roles in the Courtroom floor plan, which can be made into an overhead or a handout. Review the role each person in the courtroom plays during a criminal trial. Discuss how these roles reflect the Core Democratic Values. Possible answers include:

- Bailiff—Life
- Defendant—Justice, equality, rule of law, pursuit of happiness
- Defense Attorney—Justice, life, common good
- Judge—Justice, rule of law, common good, life, popular sovereignty
- Jury—Popular sovereignty, diversity, justice, equality
- Prosecuting Attorney—Common good, life, justice
- Spectators—Popular sovereignty
- Witness—Truth

4. To extend this activity, repeat with information found in the Learning Center's online Gallery of Exhibits, http://courts.mi.gov/education/learning-center/pages/gallery.aspx.

Learning Center Activities

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn more about Michigan's judicial branch of government.
- Identify Core Democratic Values as applied by the judicial branch.
- Discuss Core Democratic Values as applied by the judicial branch.

Instructional Resources

- Flip book/pencil for each student (optional)

Sequence of Activities

1. Before the tour, your guide (docent) will present you with two clipboards. One will include a Welcome form for you to select Core Democratic Values. The second clipboard will include a form for you to record what students found to aid classroom discussion.

2. During the tour, the docent will tell students about the Hall of Justice and Learning Center, highlighting how the information fits the theme of Core Democratic Values. Students will receive cards with the selected Core Democratic Values. They will be asked to match the values with exhibits and discuss them as a class at the end of the tour.

   Note—Students may bring their flip books to the Learning Center to record examples found at the Hall of Justice. If so, be sure students bring pencils (not pens).

Post-Visit Activities

Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss Core Democratic Values as applied by the judicial branch.
- Write about the importance of particular Core Democratic Values.
- Write about how they felt during the conversations about Core Democratic Values.

Instructional Resources

- Flip books
- Pencils

1. Review the selected Core Democratic Values and how the judicial branch applies them, according to what they learned at the Learning Center. Discuss the following questions:

   - What would happen if the judicial branch did not follow _____ (a particular Core Democratic Value)?
   - Did you notice examples in the Learning Center where people were not following our Core Democratic Values? What happened? Has the situation changed?
   - Values sometimes conflict (e.g. Pursuit of Happiness and Common Good). How do we solve these conflicts?

2. Have students complete the flip book by writing why they think the assigned Core Democratic Value(s) is/are important.

3. Ask students to share one thought about the importance of the Core Democratic Values and how they felt during the conversations.

Core Democratic Values Flip Book Rubric

_____ Accuracy, clarity of definitions (10 pts.)

_____ Quality of illustrations; depth of thought (10 pts.)

_____ Accuracy of examples from everyday life (10 pts.)

_____ Quality of examples from the Michigan Hall of Justice/Learning Center (10 pts.)

_____ Clarity of argument for importance of the assigned Core Democratic Value(s) (10 pts.)

_____ Overall quality of work, including neatness and spelling (10 pts.)

_____ Total (Possible=70 pts.)

Key Words

Core Democratic Values

Common Good—People should work together for the good of all. The government should make laws that are good for everyone.

Core Democratic Values—The fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles outlined in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and other important writings such as U.S. Supreme Court rulings.

Diversity—Differences in language, dress, food, where parents or grandparents were born, race, and religion are not only allowed but accepted as important.

Equality—All people should get the same treatment regardless of where their parents or grandparents were born, their race, their religion, or how much money they have. Everyone has political, social, and economic equality.

Justice—All people should be treated fairly in getting the advantages and disadvantages of our country. No group or person should be favored.

Liberty—Includes the freedom to believe what you want, to choose your own friends, and to have your own ideas and opinions. It also includes the right to express your ideas in public, to meet in groups, and to have any lawful job or business.

Life—Each person has the right to the protection of his or her life.

Popular Sovereignty—The power of the government comes from the people.

Pursuit of Happiness—People can find happiness in their own way, so long as they do not step on the rights of others.

Rule of Law—Both the government and the people must obey the law.

Separation of Powers—Legislative, executive, and judicial powers should be used by different branches of government to keep their power limited.

Truth—Tell the facts as they are; the opposite of a lie. Individuals and the government must be truthful.

Roles in the Courtroom

Bailiff—An officer who takes care of prisoners during the trial, guards the jury, and preserves order in the court.

Criminal Case—A lawsuit involving a crime.

Defendant—The person against whom a lawsuit is started, or who is charged with having committed a crime.

Defense Attorney—The lawyer representing the accused (defendant). The job of a defense attorney is to reach the best possible outcome for the client.

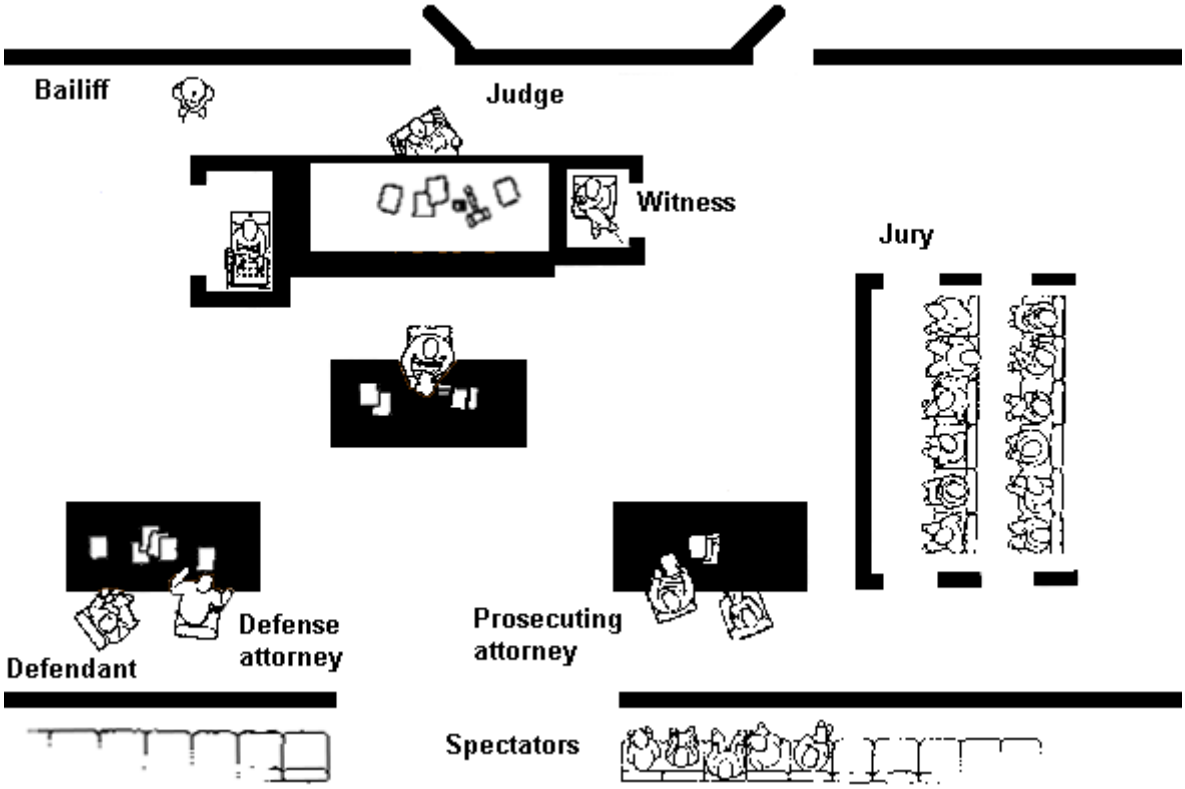
Judge—A public official, elected by the people to administer justice in a court of law. The judge must see that the trial is conducted fairly. At the end of a criminal trial, the judge imposes the sentence.

Jury— People who are sworn to consider the evidence presented and to deliver a verdict in a judicial proceeding. In a criminal case, all twelve jurors must agree on a verdict before it is presented to the judge.

Prosecuting Attorney—In a criminal case, the prosecuting attorney's job is to reach the best possible outcome for the people of Michigan, including the victim of the crime. The prosecuting attorney must show beyond a reasonable doubt that the person is guilty.

Spectators—Members of the public who watch court proceedings. All court proceedings are public.

Witness—Someone who gives testimony at a trial or hearing. Witnesses swear under oath to tell the truth.

Roles in the Courtroom

Participants in a Criminal Case