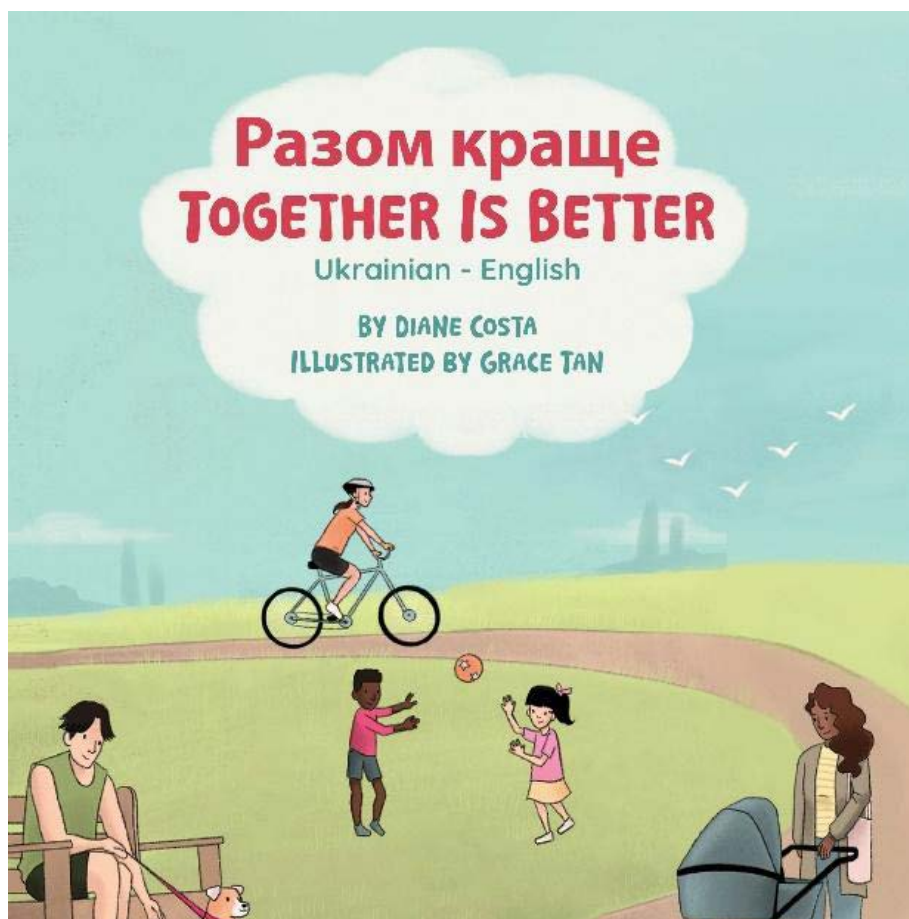


# Living in Harmony Series

## Theme: Community Involvement and Appreciation



**Goal:** Explore how we can promote community involvement and appreciation

**Book Used in Lesson:** *Together Is Better* by Diane Costa

This book is available in English only and in many bilingual editions with text in English and another language. Please visit Language Lizard ([www.language lizard.com](http://www.language lizard.com)) for a full list of available languages.

## **Snapshot of Lesson:**

- **Introduction:** Brainstorm with the students what they like about the area they live in. Use a mind map on the whiteboard to note what they like about their area, e.g., the playground, their school, or a nature walk. Discuss who maintains these areas.
- **Evaluate the cover of the book:** Ask the children what they notice about the cover and the title and what they predict is going to happen in the story.
- **Vocabulary and word recognition games:** Play a few rounds of Vocabulary to consolidate their vocabulary learning.
- **Read the book** using the pictures as the guiding voice.
- **Comprehension strategies:** Making connections and visualizing.
- **Asking a range of differentiated questions**
- **Drama activity:** Still images/mini performances of community involvement activities
- **Conclusion:** Visualization graphic organizer activity and revisit the essential question.
- **Extension Activities**

## **Background information for Facilitator:**

This lesson can be used as a stand-alone lesson or be incorporated into a broader unit on living in harmony. The facilitator should promote the values of this book in their interactions with students. Some valuable resources on this topic can be found in Appendix A. Each page in the book has been carefully illustrated to reflect diverse communities, people, and places.

Additional lesson plans to support the themes of Living in Harmony and fostering inclusion, interconnectedness, and respect can be found at <https://www.LanguageLizard.com/Harmony>.

## Lesson Plan: Together Is Better



**Grade Level:** This lesson is aimed at the earlier grade levels; however, the activities in this lesson can be tailored to suit the needs of the specific group being taught at the discretion of the facilitator.

**Time Frame:** 30-40 minutes

### Objectives:

#### **Knowledge:**

- Recognize how helping others can improve their local community and make it a better place to live.
- Learn about simple ways they can help their local community (e.g., picking up litter, helping their neighbor).

#### **Skills:**

- Practice teamwork and cooperation by participating in group activities or projects that involve helping the community.
- Demonstrate problem-solving skills when presented with scenarios about how to help others (e.g., what do you do if you see litter in the park).

- Identify, define, and use new vocabulary in the story.
- Enhance their comprehension strategies: visualizing and making connections.

**Attitudes:**

- Foster a positive attitude toward helping others and understand that small actions can have a significant impact.
- Inspire a sense of responsibility and pride in contributing to the community, even in small ways.

**Essential Question:**

- What does *Together Is Better* teach us about our role as members of our community?

**Materials and Resources:**

- *Together Is Better* by Diane Costa.
- Graphic organizer for visualizing (see appendix).
- New vocabulary flashcards and pictures.
- Talking object (e.g., teddy bear) to signify whose turn it is to speak during discussion.

**Linkage and Integration Across Subject Areas:**

**Language Arts/ Reading:** Engaging with literature

**Drama:** Still images of community involvement activities

**Art:** Drawing images from the story during the visualization process

**Geography:** Promoting active citizenship

**Vocabulary to be Developed in Lesson:**

Key Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community</li><li>• Neighbors</li><li>• International</li><li>• Culture</li><li>• Mural</li><li>• Charity</li><li>• Seniors</li><li>• Volunteer</li><li>• Celebrate</li></ul>

## **Procedure:**

### **Introduction:**

1. Brainstorm with the students what they like about the area they live in. Show images of their local area on the projector to inspire the students.
2. Make a mind map on the whiteboard to note what they like about their area, e.g., the playground, their school, or a nature walk. Engage in group discussion and sharing of these ideas.
3. Discuss who maintains these areas. Who in our community is responsible for looking after the local area?
4. Show the students the cover of the book *Together Is Better*. Ask the students for their predictions about the book using guided questions.
  - *What do you think this book will be about? Why do you believe that?*
  - *What activities are better when we do them together?*

### **Vocabulary Development:**

5. Engage in vocabulary development with the students using the list of words above or any additional words as you see fit. Using flashcards, pictures, or interactive whiteboard slides, invite the students to identify, say, use, syllabify, and define the new terms in their own words.
6. Vocabulary Game: Write the new words on a post-it note and pick one student to begin the game. Stick a post-it on their back and have them turn around so their peers can see the new word. The students must help the player guess which word is on their back by defining the new term in their own words.

### **Reading:**

7. Ask the children if they can make connections based on the book's title and cover. Connections may be text-to-text (what does the child notice from one book/story to another book/story), text-to-self (what does the child notice from the book in relation to their own lived experiences) or text-to-wider-world (what does the child notice from the book in relation to real-world historical or current contexts). Bring the children's attention to the names of the author and illustrator of the book and make sure they know the author is the writer and the illustrator is the person who created the images in the book.

8. Read the book with the children, ideally sitting together so you can show them the pictures while reading. Ask the children to put their fingers on their noses when they hear one of the new vocabulary words. The reading can be done by conducting a read-aloud, getting the children to read sections after the facilitator (echo reading), all reading it together (choral reading), or reading a sentence each between facilitator and child (see-saw reading). Read with appropriate tone, pace, inflection, and enthusiasm to engage the children as much as possible. If there are children who speak the language of the dual language book, here is an excellent opportunity to get them to read/translate a section if they like or to identify some words they can recognize in the book.

**Discussion to Encourage Reflection and Response:**

9. After reading the book, prepare the children for a group drama activity. In groups of 4/5, the students will perform a still image/freeze frame of various scenes in the book. For example, on page 3, get the children to act out what it looks like to grow fresh food and flowers in a garden. For older learners, the children may add a mini-script to accompany their chosen scene. The children can perform for their peers and encourage group discussion around these scenes.

*What scene do you think this group portrayed?*

*Have you ever done this activity in your community?*

*What do you see that makes this scene familiar?*

10. Invite the students to share anything they enjoyed, connected with, didn't understand, or wanted to question while using a talking object or another suitable strategy. This can be passed around the group, and only the student with the talking object may speak, encouraging careful listening and turn-taking skills in the students.
11. Ask a range of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions to gauge comprehension of the text (selected at the discretion of the facilitator):

**Literal Questions:**

*(Readers use information directly from the text to answer this type of question.)*

- i. What does the art club do on a sunny day?
- ii. How did the families help their neighbors?

**Inferential Questions:**

*(Readers must use the information in the text to deduce the answer to this type of question.)*

- i. Do you think this is a friendly community in which to live? Why?
- ii. Why do you think having an international fair at school is a good idea?

### **Evaluative Questions:**

*(Reader uses their knowledge to explore answers to this type of question.)*

- i. What are some of the activities mentioned in this book that you also do in your community?
- ii. Can you think of other ways you could help your community?
- iii. What was your favorite page/picture in the book? Why?

### **Conclusion:**

12. Hand out graphic organizers for the visualizing strategy. Get the children to illustrate their favorite image/ biggest takeaway from the story. To share their work, the students can arrange a walking gallery. The students can lay their images on their table and walk around the room to view their peer's work.

13. At this point, the facilitator may want to revisit the essential questions to determine whether the children have understood the main ideas of the lesson:  
What does *Together Is Better* teach us about our role as members of our community?



### **Assessment:**

**Drama as an Assessment Tool:** to gauge the student's interpretation and ability to extend their thinking of the story.

**Facilitator Observation:** of responses to questioning, of drama, and the visualizing activity.

**Facilitator Questioning:** from a range of lower-to-higher order questions.

## Accommodations/Differentiation:

### Differential Response:

- Ask the advanced students higher-order questions. If the visualization activity is too simple for some students, encourage them to write about what they drew and why they chose this image.
- Older students should be encouraged to expand their scene by creating a mini-script and performing for their peers.

### Differential Processes:

- Provide extra wait time and language scaffolds/supports for students who need them (e.g., showing pages from the book, sentence starters).
- Model and support students in creating the drama by providing hints and suggestions for characters they could take on during the scene.
- All students (especially English Language Learners or ELLs) will benefit from pictures accompanying the vocabulary learned in the story.
- For ELLs, it may be helpful to allow the child to take home the dual language book either before or after the lesson. It can then be read at home in the home language before class engagement, promoting students' confidence in discussing the book in class. If possible, ask the parents to record the book being read in the home language. The book and recording can then be brought into school so that other students can see and hear some of the home languages spoken by their classmates, deepening their appreciation for language diversity.
- Note that English language learners can also choose to listen to the English recording of the book available at <https://LanguageLizard.com/Together> before the class discussion.





## **Extension Activities:**

### **Art & Writing:**

- **Younger Students:** Design thank you cards using a variety of art supplies (markers, stickers, etc.) and write simple sentences about why they are grateful for each person. Create a class mural or bulletin board that displays the cards and includes a photo collage of the community members being thanked.
- **Older Students:** Write more detailed letters that reflect on the impact of the person's contributions to the community. Incorporate persuasive writing techniques to express gratitude. Organize a small event where students present their cards and letters to the community members, possibly inviting them to a class gathering or sharing their messages on a community platform.

### **Social Studies:**

- **Younger Students:** Create a "Culture Wall" in the classroom where students can share pictures, artifacts, or stories from their backgrounds. Host a "Cultural Day" where students can dress in traditional attire, bring in a dish to share, or demonstrate a cultural dance or song.
- **Older Students:** Research a specific cultural event or holiday and create a presentation that includes its history, significance, and impact on the community. Facilitate a discussion panel where students share their findings and invite community members to contribute their experiences or insights on cultural diversity.

### **Physical Education:**

- **Younger Students:** Play simple team-building games that focus on cooperation, like "Capture the Flag" or relay races. Create a "Teamwork Chart" where students can write or draw what they learned about teamwork during the games.
- **Older Students:** Engage in more complex team sports that require strategy and communication, such as ultimate frisbee or basketball. Have students reflect in a journal about their teamwork experience, identifying what strategies worked best and how they can apply these lessons in other areas of life.

### **Science:**

- **Younger Students:** Conduct a simple recycling project, such as sorting materials or creating art from recycled items. Start a small classroom garden where students can plant seeds and observe their growth over time, discussing the importance of plants in the environment.

- **Older Students:** Design and implement a more extensive environmental project, such as creating a school-wide recycling program or organizing a community clean-up day. Have students write a research paper on the impact of environmental actions on the community, including interviews with local environmental groups.

**Vocabulary Flashcards for *Together Is Better*:**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Neighbor</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>Culture</b>	<b>Mural</b>	<b>Charity</b>
<b>Seniors</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>Celebrate</b>

**Visualizing Graphic Organizer for:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Together Is Better*



## **Appendix A**

### **Some Useful Resources Containing Background Information on the Topic of Community Involvement:**

Hampden-Thompson, G., Jeffes, J., Lord, P., Bramley, G., Davies, I., Tsouroufli, M., & Sundaram, V. (2015). Teachers' views on students' experiences of community involvement and citizenship education. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 10(1), 67-78.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1746197914568854>

Rhoads, R. A. (1998). In the service of citizenship: A study of student involvement in community service. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 69(3), 277-297.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:19db58bf-0f54-3680-b37a-a91da2058d63>