

## It's Your Community!

Month: Jan.

Week #: 17

Day: e. Fri. Time: 30 min.

# Kaizen Community Meeting

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

### Objectives/Aims

The students will: actively participate in making the classroom community joyful, functional and effective; know what the word, 'kaizen' means

### Materials

Kaizen Suggestion Box, Kaizen Suggestion Form

### Illustration

Look at how Max is struggling to find things in his bin and and keep his things organized. Then there's Elena, an actual 2nd grader at the time in Mr. Paul's classroom. Wow! She's having no trouble at all finding things and her bin is so neat! What did she figure out that is making her life less frustrating then the boy?



### Background

Kaizen:

改 Kai (change)

+ 善 zen (good)

= 改善 (continual improvement)

is a Japanese term and concept where every member of a community is

expected to make continual and ongoing improvements to benefit everybody. Instead of change being seen as threatening, it is embraced as an inherent, essential aspect of human development. The utilization of this technique satisfies M. Scott Peck's call for a community to be *contemplative*. This is where the group continually examines and monitors its progress to improve itself.

Bringing this concept into the classroom also makes the student responsible for the health and well-being of the community instead of it resting solely on the shoulders of the teacher. Finally, it helps students prepare for a life where hopefully, they will be striving for continual improvement.

Note: This activity has been placed with the topic of community since it obviously fits here, but it is something that needs to be presented during the first or second week of school.

### Group Activity

1. Have a crawling (quadruped) student race against a walking (bipedal) student. After the race where the biped wins (hopefully :) ask the class, "What are some reasons that we humans walk around instead of crawl around?" *A: It's faster, easier, uses less energy, can see danger, etc.* Continue by saying, "Whether it was by choice, evolution or a combination of the two, being bipedal better meets the needs of human beings. The story of humankind is not only the struggle to survive, but to continually improve our quality of life. Kaizen (have the students repeat the word after you) is a Japanese term and concept where every member of a community is expected to make continual and ongoing improvements to benefit everybody. By a show of hands how many of you would like to live and work in a joyful, functional and effective community? (You might need to review what those descriptive words mean.) Since we want such a community, we're going to start

having weekly Kaizen Community Meetings.”

2. Show the students the Kaizen Suggestion Box and the Kaizen Suggestion Form and say, “Here is the form that you will need to fill out when you want to help make our community better and the box you put it in when you are done. And yes, this counts as a work, because it does in fact take work to make a community better.” Go over the form explaining that:

- their thoughts are more important than spelling, so using invented spelling is fine as long as it is legible.
- the form itself is anonymous (no place for your name) so that we can deal with the problem and not personalities and you don’t have to worry about reprisals.
- the form starts out, and ends with something positive so that you maintain a balanced perspective about our community (it’s not all bad or good; probably much more good than bad).
- when you are done, fold the form and place it in the Kaizen Suggestion Box.

3. Say, “Next \_\_\_\_\_(set date and time) we’ll have our first Kaizen Community Meeting. At that time we’ll pick one of the Kaizen Suggestion Forms and work on the problem. I’ll go over the procedures at that time.”

4. Kaizen Community Meeting Procedures:

- A suggestion form is drawn at random from from the box (teacher pre-reads for appropriateness and clarity)
- Teacher reads it aloud to the class
- Discuss problem calmly without naming names, blaming and with the attitude of openness in trying to understanding the situation (teacher facilitates with active listening, models calm demeanor, attempts to clarify situation)
- See if there is consensus as to if this an actual problem that needs to be solved
- Brainstorm for solutions
- Delete solutions that aren’t workable
- Select solution by either consensus or by majority vote, but everybody must agree to at least give the solution a try
- Next meeting, review if the solution in fact worked; if not, go back to brainstorming

### Conclusion

Have the students repeat after you, “Kaizen!... Kaizen!... Kaizen!” and then say, “*Kai* equals change and *zen* equals good. Together they form *kaizen* that means continual improvement. We can make our community better, in fact we will make it better. Chant with me, We will make it better! We will make it better! We will...” (Continue chanting for 20 or 30 minutes or so... kidding! :)



**Look at how Max is struggling to find things in his bin and and keep his things organized. Then there's Elena, an actual 2nd grader at the time in Mr. Paul's classroom. Wow! She's having no trouble at all finding things and her bin is so neat!**

# It's Your Community!

## Objectives/Aims

By the end of this unit, your child will actively participate in making the classroom community joyful, functional and effective, they will also know what the word, 'kaizen' means.

## Background Information for Parents:

Kaizen:

改 Kai (change)

+ 善 zen (good)

= 改善 (continual improvement)

Kaizen is a Japanese term and concept where every member of a community is expected to make continual and ongoing improvements to benefit everyone in the community. Instead of change being seen as threatening, it is embraced as an inherent, essential aspect of human development.

The utilization of this technique satisfies M. Scott Peck's call for a community to be *contemplative*. This is where the group continually examines and monitors its progress to improve itself.



## Day 1

1. Look at the picture. Like many other students at the time, Max was struggling to find things in his bin and keep his things organized. Then there was Elena, an actual 2nd grader at the time in Mr. Paul's classroom. Wow! Now she's having no trouble at all finding things and her bin is so neat! What did she figure out that is making her life less frustrating than the boy's?

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2. Looking at the picture, did Elena use the idea of kaizen and share her idea with others? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Fill in the missing words:

Kaizen:

改 Kai (\_\_\_\_\_)

+ 善 zen (\_\_\_\_\_)

= 改善 (\_\_\_\_\_)

# It's Your Community! Kaizen Community Meeting



改 = KAI = CHANGE

善 = ZEN = GOOD  
(FOR THE BETTER)

改善 = KAIZEN  
= CONTINUAL  
IMPROVEMENT

Look at how Max is struggling to find things in his bin and and keep his things organized. Then there's Elena, an actual 2nd grader at the time in Mr. Paul's classroom. Wow! She's having no trouble at all finding things and her bin is so neat! What did she figure out that is making her life less frustrating then the boy? What do those interesting Japanese letters say?

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## KAIZEN SUGGESTION FORM

Directions: You may use invented spelling, but make sure and write neatly so we can read it!  
What is one thing that you like about our community?

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What is the problem that needs to be solved? (Don't name names!)

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What is one possible solution to the problem?

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What is one other thing that you like about our community?

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