4th Grade Lesson Plan
Understanding Government Officials and Civic Responsibility

Objective:
- Students will explain the responsibility of individuals to be informed and vote in state and local elections.
- Students will demonstrate the use of voting as a method for making group decisions.

Standards Addressed:
- 4.15C: Explain the duty of the individual in state and local elections such as being informed and voting.
- 4.15F: Use voting as a method for group decision-making.

Assessment:
Evaluate students' participation in discussions and their reflections for understanding of civic responsibility and the voting process.

Materials:
- Reading passage: "Understanding Government: Local, State, and National"
- Sticky notes or index cards

Opening (10 minutes):
"This or That" Voting Game
Introduce the activity by explaining that students will engage in a simple voting game to practice making choices and understand how voting works.

Game Instructions:
1. Designate one side of the room as "This" and the other as "That."
2. Present the following choices, asking students to move to the side of the room that represents their vote:
    - Pizza or Tacos
    - Dogs or Cats
    - Summer or Winter
    - Reading or Math
    - Parks or Museums
3. After each choice, tally the votes and announce the results.

Discussion:
Engage students in a discussion about the following:

- How did it feel to make a choice and show your preference?
- Did anyone change their mind after seeing how others voted?
- What if you couldn't participate in the voting? How would that feel?
- **How would you feel if you had to live with the choice of the majority?**
- Why is it important to be able to vote in real-life situations?

Whole Group (20 minutes):

Reading and Discussing: "Today, we're going to learn more about our civic responsibility to be informed voters and how voting is used to make decisions in our communities and country."

1. **Distribute the Reading Passage**:
    - Hand out the passage titled **"Civic Responsibility in a Democratic Society."**
2. **Reading**:
    - Option A: Read aloud as a class, pausing to discuss key points.
    - Option B: Allow students to read independently and then discuss.
3. **Discussion**:
    - Discuss the key points from the reading, emphasizing the importance of being informed and the role of voting in decision-making.

Guided Practice (15 minutes):

"Give One to Get One" (15 minutes)

1. **Individual Writing**:
    - Have students write their answers to the following three questions on index cards or post-it notes, ensuring they put their names on each card:
        - Why is it important to be informed before voting?
        - How do you think voting helps make fair decisions in our community?
        - What might happen if people don't vote or aren't informed when they vote?
2. **"Give One to Get One" Activity**:
    - Instruct students to stand up and move around the room.
    - They will partner up with a classmate, listen to their partner's answer to one of the questions, and then share their own answer to the same question.
    - After sharing, they will swap cards with their partner.
    - The goal is for each student to collect three different cards from three different people.
    - Once they have collected three cards, they sit down.

3. **Share Out**:
    - After the activity, invite a few students to share one of the answers they received from a classmate, promoting a broader class discussion based on the collected responses.

Exit Ticket (10 minutes):

Reflection:

- Ask students to write a short reflection on what they learned about civic responsibility and voting.
- Prompt them to consider how they might apply these lessons in their lives, even before they are old enough to vote.

Closing (5 minutes):

- Review the terms Civic Responsibility and Democratic Society
- Ask students to share one new thing they learned about government officials or civic responsibility.

Extension Activity:

Class Vote:

- Allow the class to vote on two or three things for the day, such as:
    - Indoor or outdoor recess
    - Choice of a read-aloud book
    - A fun activity at the end of the day
- Conduct the voting process similarly to the "This or That" game, where students move to different parts of the room to cast their votes.
- Discuss the results and how the majority decision impacts everyone.

Homework:

Ask students to have a discussion with an adult family member:

- "Why do you think it's important to vote, and how do you decide who or what to vote for?"