

UNIT 5



Unit 5: The Power of Voice

UNIT OVERVIEW

Can one voice really make a difference? Drawing on historical examples, participants will discover a rich heritage around the roots of citizen voice and a democracy designed to be “of the people, by the people and for the people.” Participants will move to the next stage of determining what action they, as a group, want to take regarding a particular community need. Using democratic voting, participants will learn the importance of participating in the decision-making process.

UNIT 5		
5A	DESCRIPTION AND GOAL	MINIMUM TIME
Activity	Circle of Strength Goal: To demonstrate the power of working together.	10 minutes
Lesson	A Government Of, By and For the People Goal: To recognize important concepts published in the Constitution’s Preamble.	30 minutes
Reflection	Circle of Strength - Historical Style Goal: To demonstrate the strength provided by key historical concepts.	5 minutes
5B	DESCRIPTION AND GOAL	MINIMUM TIME
Activity	Campaigning For Your Cause Goal: To provide participants the opportunity to voice their interest in a service area and to campaign for that choice.	10 minutes
Lesson	The Power of the Vote Goal: To further develop participants’ understanding of the power of the vote.	30 minutes
Reflection	Journal Entry: Making Up Your Mind Goal: To reflect on the factors that influence our position on an issue or cause.	5 minutes
TOTAL UNIT TIME		90 minutes

Supplies:

- Open space
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Pens/pencils
- Journals
- Tape or push pins to post paper
- Gettysburg Address handout (page 118)
- We the People sample (page 119)
- We the People handout (page 120)
- The Constitution of the United States handout (page 121)
- The Power of the Vote handout (page 122)
- Voting ballots



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5A: ACTIVITY

Circle of Strength**Goal:**

To demonstrate the power of working together.

Description:

Supporting one another, participants will not only build group trust, but will understand how each person's support is required for the whole structure to stay strong.

Supplies:

Open space

Directions:

1. There must be an even number of people for this activity. The facilitator should either join in or stay out, depending on need.
2. Have participants form a circle, standing shoulder to shoulder and holding hands.

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3. Participants count off by two's.
4. All the one's will say, "Woo-hoo," and all the two's will say, "Yee-ha!" Have them practice shouting their phrase several times before continuing to the next step.
5. Keeping their feet firmly on the floor, the "woo-hoo's" will lean as far as they can forward. At the same time the "yee-ha's" will lean as far as they can backwards. They are to hold that position, leaning as far as they can.
6. Once in place, ask them to shout back and forth to each other "Woo-hoo, Yee-ha" twice.
7. Now ask the participants to switch so that the Woo-hoo's are the Yee-ha's and vice versa. In other words, every time participants lean IN, they say woo-hoo, and when they lean OUT, they say yee-ha.
8. Try to keep a rhythm going so they switch and shout several times.
9. Pay attention to safety during this activity.
10. Debrief by asking participants to explain why they were able to lean in or out? Would they have been able to accomplish this in a smaller group? With an odd number of people?

Notes:

5A: LESSON

A Government Of, By, and For the People

Goal:

To recognize the important concepts published in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Description:

Building on the lessons from the Circle of Strength activity, this lesson draws from two historical documents: the Constitution of the United States and the Gettysburg Address. Participants will gain an understanding of the values that govern our society.

Supplies:

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- The Constitution of the United States handout (page 121)
- Gettysburg Address handout (page 118)
- Journals

Directions:

1. Read aloud, from the handout, the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States and its explanation. On flip chart paper, write the concepts that the constitution sought to establish:
 - Justice
 - Domestic Tranquility
 - Common Defense
 - General Welfare
 - Liberty
2. Break into five groups. Each group will receive one clean piece of flipchart paper. Each group will focus on one of the five concepts listed above. In their groups, participants will list the laws or practices used to uphold those concepts published in the Preamble. For example, the military was established for common defense, what else

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has been done to insure our common defense? Participants will have 10 minutes to create their lists.

3. Each group will report their lists to the whole group. Allow participants from other groups to add to the lists, too.
4. Ask participants what they think is missing from the lists. In other words, is there anything more we could do to secure justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare and liberty for our people? Write those ideas down as well.
5. Ask the participants why it was important to list these concepts. Paraphrase:

“Almost 100 years later, President Abraham Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, “It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they [soldiers] who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.” How can we advance or strengthen the concepts published in the Constitution?”

5A: REFLECTION

Circle of Strength - Historical Style

Goal:

To demonstrate the strength provided by key historical concepts.

Description:

This reflection is similar to the Circle of Strength activity in Unit 5A. To further reflect on the historical concepts discussed during the lesson, participants will shout out "We the People" and "Of, By and For the People."

Supplies:



Adequate space

Directions:

1. Follow the instructions for the Unit 5A Circle of Strength activity.
2. This time, however, instead of shouting "Woo-hoo," and "Yee-ha" have the number one's lean in and shout "We the People" and the two's lean back and shout "Of, By and For the People."
3. After alternately shouting several times, switch roles.

Notes:

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UNIT 5		
5B	DESCRIPTION AND GOAL	MINIMUM TIME
Activity	Campaigning For Your Cause Goal: To provide participants the opportunity to voice their interest in a service area and to campaign for that choice.	10 minutes
Lesson	The Power of the Vote Goal: To further develop participants' understanding of the power of the vote.	30 minutes
Reflection	Journal Entry: Making Up Your Mind Goal: To reflect on the factors that influence our position on an issue or cause.	5 minutes

5B: ACTIVITY

Campaigning For Your Cause

Goal:

To provide participants the opportunity to voice their interest in a service area and to campaign for that choice.

Description:

Using two of the primary causes/issues selected in Unit 4, participants will voice their concern or interest for each.

Supplies:

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape or push pins to post paper

Directions:

1. Prepare: Write two of the group's selected issues onto a piece of flip chart paper and post where clearly visible.
2. Explain:
"This is the list of the two issues that we chose as possible project areas. We want to give everyone the opportunity to have a say in what we choose to do to address this issue. So, we are opening up the meeting to anyone who wants to either campaign for or against a particular cause. Your position doesn't matter. This is your time to have a voice in what we decide to do."
3. Encourage participants to campaign for or against one of the issues.

✓ Participants may be reluctant to say anything. If this occurs, be prepared with your own set of questions or identify strengths and weaknesses (positives and negatives) of each cause.



Notes:

5B: LESSON

The Power of the Vote

Goal:

To further develop participants' understanding of the power of the vote.

Description:

Participants will have the opportunity to exercise their voice and discuss the importance of each vote by taking part in a secret ballot process. Following a brief review to the Preamble to the Constitution, participants will develop a statement of intent and create a "We the people..." statement of their intent regarding their service project.

Supplies:

- We the People sample (page 119)
- We the People handout (page 120)
- The Constitution of the United States handout (page 121)
- The Power of the Vote handout (page 122)
- Voting ballots

Directions:

1. Ask:
"We are going to be voting on a issue. But before we do, what is a vote?"

(Vote can be defined as a formal expression of preference or a means by which such a preference is made known).

The goal is to help participants see that a vote is a way to exercise their voice. Make sure that participants understand the difference between exercising their right to speak and actually getting what they want. The power of the vote does not guarantee that you will get what you want. It guarantees that you have an opportunity to be heard. And, with few exceptions, it is binding on the government. While the power of the vote does not guarantee

that you will get what you want, when enough people clearly speak through the vote, their decision must be ratified. If millions of people demonstrate or protest, the government may or may not be influenced to respond to their wishes. However, if millions of people clearly speak through their vote, the government must listen.

2. Help participants recognize the key points of a vote.
3. Pass out the Power of the Vote handout.
4. Referring to the handout, briefly emphasize that elections can be decided by very small margins.
5. Explain:

“We are now going to vote for one of the two issues that we identified as potential service-learning projects. Whether you win or lose, your vote is important. Not just for the outcome of the election, but it is important for you. Your vote is cast in secret. That way no one will know how you voted unless you want to tell them.”
6. It is best if you can set up one or more makeshift voting booths. If using booths, have participants pick up a ballot at one location and proceed one at a time to the voting booth. Have a designated “Ballot Box” where participants can place their ballots.
7. If it is not possible to create “Voting Booths,” have participants spread out to ensure privacy.
8. Pass out ballots. Have participants complete their ballot and fold it. Collect all completed ballots.
9. Count ballots and announce the outcome.
10. Write the chosen issue on a piece of paper.
11. Explain:

“Now that we have made a decision, we want to finalize that decision by writing our own declaration. This one will be called a ‘Declaration of Intent.’ We will use a phrase from the

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Constitution of the United States of America. The phrase is 'We the people...' Look on your handout and see how the founding fathers of our country used it."

12. Read aloud the Preamble to the Constitution. The emphasis is on the determination to do -- "We the people...in order to..."
13. Using the "We the People" handouts, create a first draft of the We the People statement by stating the chosen issue. Later you will add your plan to the declaration.
14. Have all participants sign the declaration of intent.



Ballots: Ballots can be preprinted with both options and check boxes. Or they can be blank sheets on which participants write their choice. Choices can be identified as A or B.



Notes:

5B: REFLECTION

Journal Entry: Making Up My Mind

Goal:

To reflect on the factors that influence our position on an issue or cause.

Description:

Participants will reflect on what factors influenced their choice in the previous activity and record those factors in their journals.

Supplies:

- Journals
- Pens/pencils

Directions:

1. Explain:
"Now that you have voted, we want to take a minute and reflect on what influenced you to make your choice. Take a minute and think about why you made your particular choice. Then write or draw in your journal the factors that influenced your choice."

Notes:

The Gettysburg Address President Abraham Lincoln

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

SAMPLE

We the People of _____ (group name) _____

have determined to accomplish the following:

WHAT: What need was voted on to address.

We will work to reduce hunger in our community

HOW: After the planning session add additional information regarding how you will meet the need.

By organizing the following:

We will . . .

- Partner with one or more food banks and free food programs;
- Organize a monthly food drive;
- Create an awareness campaign about hunger in our community;
- Recruit businesses that will provide support for the partner food bank(s) through donations of food and money;
- Recruit volunteers to organize and oversee the ongoing monthly food drives.

We commit to these goals as members of our team.

Sincerely,

Date: _____

We the People of _____

In order to strengthen and improve our community have determined to address the following:

We will address:

We will meet this need through the following:

We commit to these goals as members of our team.

Sincerely,

Date: _____

The Constitution of the United States

Once the thirteen Colonies became the United States of America they needed an agreement about how their new government would operate. They also needed a way to guarantee the “unalienable rights” that were identified in the opening paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence. To accomplish this the founders drafted the Constitution of the United States of America.

In this Constitution the words of the Declaration of Independence are reinforced and expanded, as the young country struggled to define itself as a nation and to declare the values that would govern this new society.

The Preamble to the Constitution reads:

We the people of the United States,

From the beginning it was about the people deciding

in order to form a more perfect union,

Not perfect, just more so than what they had experienced

establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense,

Justice was a critical component

promote the general welfare, and

The welfare of every citizen was important

secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity,

Liberty was a blessing that the people highly valued.

do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Sometimes people mistakenly think that the Constitution was created to give the government power. Actually it was designed to limit the government’s power. This was such a concern for the early nation that the Constitution would not have been ratified had it not included some more specific guarantees of personal and individual rights. The very first amendment is one of the most powerful. It reads:

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The Power of the Vote

Here are some important facts about voting in America

Did you know that:

- Half of all eligible citizens do not vote in U.S. Presidential elections?
- Only one in five 18-year-olds will vote before they are in their mid-twenties?
- More than half of all children in the U.S. live in a household where no one votes?

The Power of One Vote

Sometimes individuals don't vote because they say, "What difference does one vote make?" One vote can make a big difference. For example, here are some facts about the power of one vote.

- In 1771 just one vote gave America the English language instead of German.
- In 1845 just one vote brought Texas into the Union.
- In 1868 just one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- In 1876 just one vote made Rutherford B. Hayes President of the U.S.
- In 1923 just one vote gave Adolf Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party.

More recently:

- In 1999, Leslie Byrne was elected to the Virginia Senate by 37 votes, less than one vote per precinct.
- Donald Sherwood was elected to the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania by a margin of 202 votes, less than one vote per precinct, making this election the closest House of Representatives race in 1998.
- Loretta Sanchez was elected to Congress from California by less than 4 votes per precinct in 1996.
- John F. Kennedy's margin of victory over Richard Nixon in 1960 was less than one vote per precinct.
- One vote per precinct passed women's suffrage in California in 1911.

UNIT 5A: CIRCLE OF STRENGTH

Human Knot

This gets the team working together and problem solving actively.

Directions:

1. Divide into groups of no more than ten people. An AmeriCorps member should facilitate each group.
2. In a circle, stand facing each other, shoulder to shoulder.
3. Each participant places their left hand in the circle, then shakes hands and holds onto another group member's hand.
4. Now each person places their right hand in the circle and holds onto a different person's hand.
5. Try to unwind to form a circle again without dropping anybody's hand. Remember that if someone is uncomfortable, they can be a helpful observer.

UNIT 5A: CIRCLE OF STRENGTH

Lap Sit

Another team builder that reinforces the idea that the success of the group depends on each person's participation. As this involves participants touching closely, make sure your group is mature and comfortable enough to participate.

Directions:

1. Have the group organize themselves into a circle standing next to people who are close to their height.
2. Once in the circle, everyone turns to face clockwise and puts their hands loosely on the shoulders of the person in front of them.
3. On the count of three, participants all sit. If done correctly, each person is being supported by the person in back and is supporting the person in front. If done incorrectly, everyone falls down.
4. For an additional challenge, once sitting, try to walk forward three steps together.

UNIT 5A: CIRCLE OF STRENGTH

Stand Up

Builds trust and emphasizes idea of working together to accomplish a goal. Also, the idea of success requiring full participation from everyone—much like democracy.

Directions:

1. Get into pairs with someone of roughly the same height.
2. Sit back to back, and link elbows.
3. Attempt to stand up together. Once done, attempt to sit back down.
4. If the group is successful in pairs, try groups of four and maybe larger. As always, remember to set safety guidelines and to allow youth to pass or participate.

UNIT 5A: CIRCLE OF STRENGTH

One Word Story

A non-physical activity that helps participants see that when they all work together, their contributions add up to something much more. It also reminds them to be thinking of how their words will affect others—they have to be thinking of the next person to ensure that the story can continue.

Directions:

1. Participants sit in a circle either in small groups, or, for more of a challenge, in the whole group.
2. One person starts off with a single word, and each person follows with a word, trying to make a sentence and then a story. (For example, “The” “wombat” “ate” “three” “blue”...)
3. Younger ages might have trouble with this one. If you choose to do it, disperse the AmeriCorps members throughout the group to help keep it going.

UNIT 5B: CAMPAIGNING FOR YOUR CAUSE

Worksheet

Here is a worksheet used by Federal Way WRC with younger students to help them think through their need and project before they began campaigning.

Directions:

1. Create worksheet with the following questions:
 - In a complete sentence, give the reason why you picked the project you picked.
 - Why do you think the school should vote for your project? List three reasons.
 - If your project is picked, what kinds of events should be organized to raise money?
 - Exactly what and where would the money raised go towards?
 - Pick a project name for the group you are representing (Ex. Pennies for Pets).
2. Have participants fill out worksheet.