

Civic Duty

Goal: Students will learn that voting is a privilege that few people in the rest of the world get to experience. We in the United States have rights and freedoms that few in the rest of the world are given. Through running a campaign, voting, and calculating votes, the students will learn the responsibility of campaigning fairly and honestly, the importance of everyone voting, and how what they say and do can impact an election.

Quote for the week: "The opportunity to vote isn't a right that is enjoyed by everyone in every country." Paul Simon, 52 Simple Ways to Make a Difference, page 61

Materials needed:

1. Newspapers
2. Posters
3. markers

Preparation:

MONDAY

- Read the issues. Supply local, state, and national newspapers for the students to peruse.
- Each student should select a story to follow during the week. This can be a local issue, a state issue, a national or international issue.
- "Thirty-eight percent of adult Americans do not regularly read a newspaper, which means they likely are poorly informed about national and international issues." page 61

TUESDAY

- We in America have been given rights in our constitution that many other people in the world do not have. Among these rights are the right to vote, right of free speech, that right to worship, the right to bare arms,
- "Billions of people around the globe would like to have the right to select their country's officials-and too often we assume, as Americans, that our opportunity to vote will always be there. A muscle unused diminishes in strength. Democracy's muscles also can diminish." page 61
- Plan a mock election...have students run for president of the class or mayor of the town.
- Divide into groups and have each group select a candidate or issue to campaign for.
- Talk as a class about what the issues are for your class, school or town, depending on type of election you are holding.
- Have each group come up with an argument for backing their candidate or issue. Plan for debating the issues and making presentations for each candidate or issue.
- If it is an actual election time in your town, state, or in the country, talk about that election, who is running and have the students divide into groups and research the issues and the candidates.
- Have the groups select a candidate or issue to support and present a debate on the issues.

WEDNESDAY

- Make election posters and flyers to back their candidates or support their issues
- Talk about what would happen if one group made statements on their posters and flyers that were not true. What if these statements said the person did some wonderful things that he or she really didn't do or that the candidate promises to do that they can't possibly do? What if they were negative statements about one of the other candidates? Would it make a difference in the students' opinions if the negative statements were true or if they were false?

THURSDAY

- Hold debate on candidates and issues. Do not need to have individual candidates offer presentations but have each group offer presentations to back their selected candidate or issue.

FRIDAY

- Give short reports on issue from Monday studied during the week.
- Hold election and give voting results.

- Mix the votes up and count only half of them. Discuss what the results might have been if only half of the class had chosen to vote_ Discuss the importance of every person voting in an election
- Option: Have the students vote in their groups and only count half of the groups. Discuss the results and what a difference it can make if only a select group of people are allowed to vote.
- Have the students write the quote of the week without looking in their journals or without assistance or have them write a one sentence explanation of what the quote means.

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