

## **Group 2 Lesson Module: Arts as Social Action**

### **Description**

Participants will explore various ways of expression in terms of active civic engagement and how to be an active citizen as part of a democratic community.

Participants will be given the opportunity to develop an increased interest in taking action in relation to civic and community responsibility. They will learn what active civic engagement is in relation to the democratic process. They will first pick a topic of personal value, research the issue if needed, and create an artistic expression of active engagement. Participants will then be asked to present their argument in 1-2 minutes and each participant will vote on the one that was most effective. This lesson is best for classrooms of 20-30 students from the ages of 14-17.

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Experience hands-on civic action by thinking of ways to affect change in their communities, and then bringing that idea to life through action, collaboration, cooperation and a democratic process.
- Increase their interest in taking action in regards to civic and community responsibility, including intention for future electoral.
- Enhance their skills for participating in the electoral and political process (e.g. research, forming a point of view, providing evidence and presenting an argument).

### **Materials**

- Bristol Board,
- Chart Paper
- Markers, pencil crayons, pens
- Sticky tack,
- Ballots (see templates below)
- Ballot boxes & voting screens
- Post it notes for each student
- Participants' smart phones if allowed for research

### **Accommodations**

Instructions will be delivered orally and by PowerPoint, and there will be a variety of options to express their art as activism (e.g. tableau, slam poetry, etc.).

### **Process** (105 mins)

#### **1. Write on the board and ask students to think about two questions before they listen and watch a video on Sabrina's Law.**

- What is active civic engagement?
- Where have you seen examples of active civic engagement in your own life? (ex. school, community, national, global). Or, what do you think it would look like?

## 2. Students will listen to the audio and watch the video together. See links at the bottom.

- Part 1. Sabrina Shannon's radio documentary. (Intro, Part where her friend asks what happens with anaphylactic shock, and around 50 seconds from the end - re pulling down her pants to administer an epipen in the middle of a crowded grocery store)
- Part 2. Youtube clip of Sabrina's mother talking about what happened to Sabrina.
- Part 3. As a result of her mother and others' work, a law was passed to make sure that staff know what to do in an emergency.

Additional background: Sabrina Shannon was a student who was involved in promoting awareness of anaphylaxis (so, serious and life-threatening allergic reactions). When she was in her first year of high school, she suffered an anaphylactic reaction from the cross contamination of food tongs in her high school cafeteria and died. The signs and symptoms were not recognized and she was told to walk to the office. By the time they had applied the epipen, it was too late. After her death, her family and others rallied, and in 2006, a law was passed ensuring that all school boards have policies or procedures in place to address anaphylaxis in schools, and ensuring that staff have instruction and guidance in the administration of medication. (*An Act to Protect Anaphylactic Pupils: Sabrina's Law*)

## 3. Do a "think, pair, share" about the opening questions on civic engagement.

- What is **active civic engagement**: what is their prior knowledge?
- Definition of **active civic engagement**: consists of efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, or environmental change...

Show other examples of active civic engagement taken by students if time allows:

Craig Kielberger of Free the Children: <http://www.freethechildren.com/about-us/our-team/our-founders/>

### **Reprise (5 -10 minutes)**

- Think about what you saw. Where have you seen examples of active civic engagement in your own life? (ex. school, community, national, global)
- What do you think active civic engagement looks like?
- Arrange chart paper for each topic: school, community, national, global
- Each student will take a few sticky notes and write an example of active civic engagement.
- They will stick it on the chart paper.
- Discuss the examples they have chosen as they brainstorm and analyze.

### **Getting into groups for the project (5 minutes)**

- Participants will take sticky notes and select a topic of interest to them.
- They will form groups based on similar interest.

### **Research & Presentation (40 min)**

- Students will brainstorm and research to create an artistic expression of active civic engagement in an area of interest to them. They will do their own research (computer, cell phone) but the teacher can provide suggestions if they are stuck.
- Students will be guided to structure this step (e.g. one person can research, one person can organize the poster, etc.). Participants will need to prepare a 1-2 minute a presentation of their of argument.
- Write group number and area of civic engagement somewhere visible for voting.

### **Groups present to the class (10-15 min)**

#### **Vote (10 min)**

- Ballots to be handed out
- ballot sheets (labeled group 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.)

#### **Debrief (10 min)**

Students from each group can lead the debrief while others are counting the ballots, under teacher supervision.

Debrief questions:

1. What have learned through this activity that you could use to take action in your community or in school?
2. What informed you to make your choice in terms of voting? (After the winner has been announced.)
3. What are your thoughts on the voting process and how does this relate to active civic engagement? (Bring up the definition of active civic engagement.)

#### **Resources**

Sabrina's law resources:

- [http://www.thestar.com/life/health\\_wellness/diseases\\_cures/2007/05/03/sabrinas\\_mom\\_agitates\\_so\\_other\\_kids\\_wont\\_die.html](http://www.thestar.com/life/health_wellness/diseases_cures/2007/05/03/sabrinas_mom_agitates_so_other_kids_wont_die.html)
  - An article from *The Star*, documenting Sabrina's mother's advocacy for passing "Sabrina's law"
- <http://www.anaphylaxis.ca/flash/>
  - Sabrina's podcast documenting her experiences with allergies (5:34 min)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGknKTRb1ZE>
  - Sabrina's mother discussing what happened at Sabrina's school and allergy awareness (5:25 min)

Craig Kielburger resource:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RiUHRCK0yw> (3:13 min)

