

# Introduction to Lesson Plans

## (and a resource list follows the Introduction)

Dear Administrators, Teachers, and Parents,

In the backdrop of Black Lives Matter, COVID-19 and the upcoming presidential elections, we are at a turning point in education. We have been given the unique opportunity to think about how we will go forward, will we continue to do the same or create change?

*Equality's Call* is a chance for children to get exposed to decision making in democracy at a younger age, to learn that they can wield tools to help be active citizens and form the decisions that impact their lives. In effect, these suggested lesson plans aim to increase student engagement, social and emotional learning, critical thinking and create a safe place for children to discuss difficult but important matters that affect their lives. But as the gatekeepers, this starts with you. Are you willing to take that leap?

Right now young people are disillusioned with the rights that so many people fought so hard to win (NYT Article on young people not voting, but protesting <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/06/us/politics/protests-voting.html>). Is this because they feel change doesn't happen, because no one consults with them, no one represents their interests or because they are exposed to decision making, democratic governance and voting too late in life?

John Dewey postulated that education is life; since pupils are to live in a democratic society they should help to organize one and live in it. In Pre-K children constantly get to exercise choice by deciding throughout the day which centers they want to play in. Just one year later, children get a scheduled day where they get little stake in where they will play, or anything else that affects their day. We are conveying the message that we trust children less and less as they get older. What if we changed that model? What if we told children that they should be active participants in deciding what and how they learn? What if we decide the skills but they decide the vehicle for learning them?

We all know student engagement is at its high when what children are learning is meaningful to them (<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/116015/chapters/The-Key-Benefits-of-Choice.aspx> or <https://bit.ly/2Gjq0VY>). What better way to learn what's meaningful to the minds of tomorrow than by consulting with them and making them partners and responsible for their education? What better way can we do this than to

increase community engagement, with parents, educators and students, coming together to discuss? We want our children to be prepared to be adults who can think critically, show empathy, create and contribute to society, but how can they do that if they never get the chance to practice and make mistakes and learn from mistakes?

If you are feeling daring, try to take on all of these suggested lesson plans/activities and materials. If you would rather dip your feet in the water take on one or two. If you'd rather stand at the shore, just have a look at them, look through the resources and start thinking about what works best for your community. The goal is not to make more work, but rather to use the existing structures in place to become more actively engaged. After all, "The journey's not over. The work hasn't ended. Democracy's dream must be constantly tended."

*Karen Keesling*

Early Childhood Educator

***Resource and Activities list begins on next page***

# Resources & Activities to support the lesson plans

## Books by Grade

*Please note that these are rough suggestions and you should screen ahead of time to see if books are appropriate for your student(s)/child. There is a lot of variability here e.g. books for PK-could easily be used for K and vice-versa.*

### Pre-K-

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
Have You Filled a Bucket Today? By Carol McCloud  
Beautiful, Beautiful Me by Ashley Sirah Hinton  
I Like Myself by Karen Beaumont  
Mixed by Arree Chung  
Be Who You Are by Todd Parr  
The Story of Martin Luther King Jr. by Johnny Ray Moore  
I Am Rosa Parks by Brad Meltzer  
This Little Trailblazer by Joan Holub  
Little Legends: Exceptional Men in Black History by Vashti Harrison  
Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison  
Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o, illustrated by Vashti Harrison

### Kindergarten

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
A is for Activist by Innosanto Nagara  
The Story of Ruby Bridges  
The Story of Martin Luther King Jr. by Johnny Ray Moore  
A Picture Book of Rosa Parks by David A. Adler  
The Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Pena  
The Adventures of Beekle: An Unimaginary Friend by Dan Santat  
One Vote, Two Votes, I Vote, You Vote by Bonnie Worth

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade:

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
The Youngest Marcher by Cynthia Levinson  
The Next President: Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America's Next President by Kate Messner  
If I Had Your Vote by The Cat In The Hat  
The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson  
Skin Again by bell hooks  
Amelia Bedelia's First Vote by Herman Parish  
Malala's Magic Pencil by Malala Yousafzai

### 2<sup>nd</sup> grade:

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport  
The Color of Us by Karen Katz  
Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman  
Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Acts of 1965 by Jonah Winter  
The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka  
The Three Little Pigs by Paul Galdone

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson  
We March by Shane W. Evans  
The Bold & Brave, Ten Heroes Who Won Women the Right to Vote by Kirsten Gillibrand  
Ballots for Belva by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
Her Stories: African American Folktales by Virginia Hamilton  
Henry's Freedom Box by Ellen Levine  
Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer by Carole Boston Weatherford  
Separate is Never Equal by Duncan Tonatiuh  
Bad Kitty for President by Nick Bruel

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America by Deborah Diesen  
Let's Talk About Race by Julius Lester  
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas  
Grace for President by Kelly DiPucchio  
Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box by Michael Bandy  
Papa's Mark by Gwendolyn Battle-Lavert  
The Voice that Won the Vote: How one woman's words made history by Elisa Boxer  
The Next President: The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America by Kate Messner

### **Activities for Administrators/Teachers:**

- Team up with a middle school or high school and start a mentor/buddy program
- Create a critique box for students to anonymously write things they think are important, unfair or concerned about at school (e.g. school values, school motto, homework and discipline policies etc)
- Have a committee of parents, administrators and students come together to discuss important school topics

- Allow each class or grade to take a turn leading the school assembly (if your school has them)
- Give students more access to creating school media (podcasts, radio, TV, school newspaper with topics that they feel are important)
- Even though PK-5<sup>th</sup> can't vote, they can still be active participants, teach into making posters to get out the vote, educating local representatives about what's important to them, writing letters to representatives, registering the vote, volunteering for campaigns and calling voters
- Create multiple chances for students to discuss and vote on important topics that affect them on a personal level, have the tough conversations by modeling awareness of your own privileges (your power in the relationship, your life experience because of your age, your skin color, socioeconomic status if applicable) but wanting to learn more and thinking about how to change things that you find unfair.
- Create entry points to discuss what's unfair or important to them, ask what they notice and create curricula around their interests (while still teaching into skills e.g. if a kindergarten neighborhood walk has children curious about homeless people then lead a study around homelessness to teach about letter sounds and counting to 100)
- Forge partnerships and opportunities for students to be more active in the community e.g. local shop owners, retirement homes, family members, police officers to come in and talk with students on regular basis
- Classes can raise money or donate their time (field trip or create things) based on topics that they feel are important to them
- Look at your classroom/school libraries and toys/learning materials what changes can be made to make them more reflective of your student population? If you don't have the resources, can you source them directly from your students (e.g. ask your students to bring in books in their home language or have a family member come in and discuss that family's traditions)

### **Activities for Parents:**

- Talk to your children about being the change they want to see in the world
- Take your children with you to vote, give them your stickers from voting or show them your mail-in ballot. Discuss why you're taking the time to vote, why you think it's important, what it achieves.
- Discuss (when appropriate) the state of current events, and things you are doing to change them (attend protests, educating your child, vote, register voters, educate, discussing with family members, writing letters etc.)
- Look at your at-home library, your local library and child's toys/TV shows/Movies etc. (if they have them). Is your child engaging with more than just one image of a white person, person of color, man, woman etc.