

DISCOVERING DEMOCRACY UNITS: CITIZENS AND PUBLIC LIFE – LESSON PLAN

Joining in: community groups

Poster activity – Students explore and investigate the kinds, structures and functions of groups in the community. They create a poster to display information they have learnt about a variety of community groups.



Social Traders/flickr

Aims

- For students to examine how and why people participate in groups, and consider ways that all citizens can participate in community groups, thereby valuing and respecting diversity.
- To support students in the middle primary years to explore key concepts including:
 - community groups, their role and purpose
 - active participation in civil society.
- For students to:
 - explore the characteristics of community groups and learn how to form their own student groups
 - consider how groups function to achieve their purposes or goals
 - have the ability to critically evaluate the effectiveness of a simulated group scenario and consider ways all members of the community can join in and make a difference.

Preparation and resources

- Cut large circles of cardboard for students to write on when in groups.
- Have enough non-toxic markers for students to use when they write on these in Step 2.
- Print out the attached **Poster evaluation sheet** to give to each group at step 6, or be ready to display these in a central place.



What to do

1. Ask students as a whole group to identify some of the community groups they are aware of that exist to achieve benefits, not only for themselves, but for other members of the community. Display these in a central place, such as a whiteboard.
2. With input from the students, circle the groups that help other members of the community.
3. Discuss with students the people who they think are likely to join certain of these community group, considering factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, racial or cultural backgrounds, time availability and interests.
4. Ask students why they think people join groups in general. If they need some prompts, the commonly listed reasons that people identify for joining in are:
 - to make friends
 - to share an interest
 - to learn something new
 - to help someone or something
 - to feel good about themselves
 - to have fun.
5. Hand out to groups the large, pre-prepared circles of cardboard and one or more non-toxic markers.
6. Give the students a handout of the suggested criteria for assessing each poster (see final page), or display the criteria up on the board.
7. Ask that one person from each group write on the cardboard circle the name of one of the circled groups on the board. (Aim for variety among the student groups.)
8. Ask students to write in large lettering on their group's cardboard circle at least three reasons why people might join that group.
9. Ask students from each group to report back to the class on the reasons they wrote down. On the display board, label the corresponding circled group with the reason/s. There will be multiple reasons for most groups.
10. In groups, students create posters with hand-drawn or computer-generated illustrations to further demonstrate a chosen community group's activities.

Further notes

This unit is adapted from the **Discovering Democracy Units (1998)** for students from middle primary to middle secondary school.

Browse the [Discovering Democracy website](#).

POSTER EVALUATION SHEET

Community group name (add it below):

Does it contain:	Yes/No
the purpose of the community group?	
the benefit of the group to the community?	
who is likely to be a member of this community group?	
reasons for joining the group?	
information that is appropriate and correct	
information that is clearly and logically presented?	