



PRE-PROGRAM CURRICULUM: LESSON 3

COMMUNITY DELIBERATION

GOAL: Students will take part in a community deliberation applying the values they have explored in the Preamble to the Constitution to an issue facing a hypothetical local community. Working in small groups, they will attempt to reach a consensus on how to resolve the issue. Students will then engage in a whole-group deliberation and work toward a classwide consensus on the solution.

TIME: 50 minutes

MATERIALS: Attachments 1-4

PROCEDURES:

Warm-Up (5-8 minutes)

1. Ask students if they have ever participated in a debate. What is an example of a debate about politics or current events that most people might have seen? (Example: A presidential debate.)
2. Ask students what they feel the goal of participating in a debate is. (Example: To prove that their side/argument is best.)
3. Ask students if they have ever watched a competition-based show, such as a cooking show, a dance challenge, or anything that involves a panel of judges determining a winner. Explain that in most cases, these judges engage in **deliberation** to decide who wins.
4. Ask students in what ways they think a deliberation might be different from a debate. (There could be many answers but some key responses to highlight would be: There are no “sides,” there can be more than two choices, the judges must convince each other and reach a consensus.)
5. Display ATTACHMENT 1. Emphasize that the goal of a **debate** is to **prove that one argument is best**, whereas the goal of a **deliberation** is to **reach a solution that everyone involved can agree with**. Ask students: If you wanted to discuss a current event or controversial issue, do you think a debate or a deliberation would be most likely to make everyone involved feel that their views were heard and respected?

Direct Instruction (8-10 minutes)

1. Explain that today, students will engage in a community deliberation. They will act as a town council faced with a local issue and work together to reach a consensus on a solution. They will work in small groups first and then share what they discussed in their groups/any possible solutions when they engage in a whole-group deliberation on the same scenario.
2. Display ATTACHMENT 2. Read the scenario aloud, clarify any terms you think students might be unfamiliar with, and ask if anything in the overall scenario is unclear.

3. Ask students the following questions:
 - a. Can anyone summarize the issue facing this community?
 - b. Thinking back to the American political values we explored in the previous lesson (equality, equity, liberty, security, private interests, the common good), what values are reflected in this scenario?
 - c. Can anyone identify some of the competing perspectives the people involved may hold?

Small-Group Deliberation (10-15 minutes)

1. Separate students into small groups (4-5 students per group).
2. Distribute a copy of ATTACHMENT 3 to each student.
3. Instruct students to begin their deliberation using the questions on ATTACHMENT 3 to guide their discussion. Be clear on how much time they will have to answer all the questions.

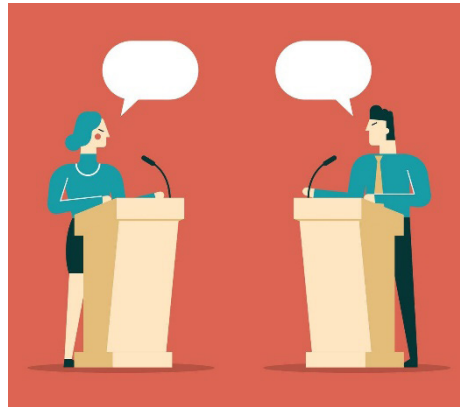
Whole-Group Deliberation (~20 minutes)

1. Call the class together as a whole group.
2. Ask a representative from each group to share what they discussed during their deliberation, any potential solutions they put forward, and if there were any points/solutions their group reached consensus on. Record the responses somewhere the whole group can see them.
3. Continue the deliberation with the whole group working to reach a consensus. You can poll the room to identify potential solutions that have more or less support to help guide your facilitation of the deliberation.

Wrap-Up (5-8 minutes)

1. Distribute ATTACHMENT 4 as an exit ticket.
2. Explain to students that deliberation can be a helpful way to develop a more authentic understanding of perspectives you do not necessarily agree with and to find areas of agreement even between individuals with very different views. Lastly, inform students that they can expect to engage in deliberation with students from across Arizona during their Close Up program.

DEBATE



A **debate** is usually between two people representing either themselves or a group. The goal in a debate is to demonstrate to an outside audience why one argument is **BETTER** than the opposing argument.

DELIBERATION



A **deliberation** usually involves many people with each participant representing their own perspective. The goal in a deliberation is to address a problem on the basis of everyone's views and try to reach some level of **consensus** that everyone can agree with.

ATTACHMENT 2: COMMUNITY DELIBERATION SCENARIO

You are members of a town council. Recently, a development group called Wellworth Inc. filed a request to redevelop 15 acres of a 50-acre public park into 100 townhomes and an apartment complex. The apartment complex would be built as the upper floors of a new shopping center, which would feature a grocery store and a new medical clinic. The development plan is partially funded by a state program which requires that 15 percent of the housing units be designated as affordable housing. This means that the properties must be rented to families making 50-80 percent of the average income in the area.

A local community group, Citizens for Community Action (CCA), has filed a request to challenge any permit granted to Wellworth Inc. for the project. CCA argues that the land designated for the project is public land meant to provide natural greenspace for the town's families to engage in outdoor activities. CCA is concerned that the development would significantly reduce the size of the park, and that the development's location along a river bordering the park would pollute the water and make it unusable for fishing and swimming. In addition, the area selected for the development includes the park's amphitheater, which is the site of public concerts and festivals on major holidays in the spring and summer. Currently, there is no other outdoor venue which could host performances in town.

Residents have attended recent town council meetings both in support of and opposition to the development plan. Supporters have argued for the need for more housing in the area, the economic benefits of the shopping center, and the increased access to medical services. Some have also argued that when the amphitheater is not in use for public concerts, it is frequently the site of vandalism and illegal activity by minors after dark. Opponents of the development have supported the position of CCA and pointed out that every other public park in town has already lost land to housing and commercial development in the past ten years.

ATTACHMENT 3: COMMUNITY DELIBERATION GUIDE

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. **Answer individually:** What is your personal perspective on this issue?

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2. **Discuss with your group:** What do you feel are the strongest arguments in favor of and in opposition to building the housing development?

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

3. What are possible solutions to this scenario your group can offer? Be sure to account for all of the concerns and perspectives involved. Your solution does not have to please everyone in town, but you should at least be able to explain your decisions.

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ATTACHMENT 4: COMMUNITY DELIBERATION REFLECTION

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Do you feel that deliberation can be a more effective approach to addressing controversy than a debate? Why or why not?

2. During the deliberation, were there any perspectives you heard or solutions offered that you might not have reached if you were asked to develop a solution on your own?

..... *cut*

Name: _____ Date: _____

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