

Diversity: Participants connect history to their present lives; participants brainstorm ways to promote diversity.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Personal History
- 2) Diversity
- 3) **Women's History**

Lesson: Personal History

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is your history?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants share their own life stories; **participants learn about their family's histories; participants make a book about their lives.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: **Autobiographical writings by women give voice to women's own histories. Women's voices and perspectives** have often been left out of traditional history books, leaving gaps in historical recollections. When women tell their own stories they are reminded where they come from, they are empowered to understand who they are and why they are the way **they are, and others learn about the variation of women's experiences.** Teaching girls and young women to tell their own stories can empower them to be confident in themselves and become leaders.

MATERIALS:

- Autobiographical books by women
- Pens and pencils
- Colored paper
- Tape
- Stapler
- Glue
- Magazines
- Family photos
- Other craft materials: stickers, glitter, string, etc.

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours, 2 sessions

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be thinking about themselves and their life stories. Remind them their lives are interesting and you want to hear their life stories!
2. Read some sample autobiographies or parts of them. Tell participants they will be making their own book about their own life. If conducting this lesson over a few days, ask participants to talk to their families about their lives. They can ask to hear stories about their birth, about

family members, and about events in their lives. Have them ask their family for photos to include in their books.

3. Pass out paper and pens. Direct participants to create a chronological timeline of their lives, starting with their birthday. They can add any detailed information as they remember it— **where they were born, where they have lived over the years, the schools they’ve attended, the teachers they’ve had, names of family members and friends, and big events in their lives.** Assist as necessary. The timeline should include memories and events from the past, details about the present, and hopes or plans for the future.

4. After they have completed their timelines, hand out paper and craft supplies.

5. Demonstrate how to make a book by folding paper creatively. Paper books can be stapled or folded creatively to hold together.

6. Direct participants to make their books. The book should be about ten pages long. Assist as necessary.

7. Direct participants to title their autobiographies and to decorate the front cover creatively.

The title should be something related to their name or their lives, for example: Jennifer’s Journey or Laura’s Life or My Life So Far. Remind them to put their own name as the author!

8. Give participants time to plan, sketch out, and then write their life stories into the book. The **book can be written in first person (“I”) or third person (“she”).** Their book should include memories and events from the past, details about the present, and hopes or plans for the future. Each page can include an event and a photo and/or drawing or more than one event.

The first page could say, “Jamie Elizabeth Santos was born on July 11, 2002 in San Diego, CA. Her mom, Jessica, and her dad, Pedro, loved her *very much*” and could include a photo of her parents holding her as a baby. Allow participants to decorate each page creatively. Assist as necessary.

9. When the books are complete, have participants share their life stories and their completed books. Remind them their stories are important and they should feel proud to tell their life stories. **Remind them you can’t wait to hear the rest of their life stories as they grow up!**

JOURNAL PROMPT: Did you learn something new about your family while researching your history? How did it feel to write your life story?

EVALUATION: Did participants share their stories? Did participants create a book about their lives?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create Power Point presentations or computer slideshows about their lives. Have participants create skits or dramatic performances of pieces of their lives. Have participants create a collage or a diorama of their lives.

Lesson: Diversity

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is diversity? How do we all benefit from appreciating diversity?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants define diversity; participants define discrimination; participants practice tolerance; participants brainstorm ways to promote diversity.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Diversity means difference. There is great diversity amongst human beings that enriches our societies, communities, and lives as individuals. Child development research has revealed children begin to conceptualize gender, racial, and ability differences and begin to show signs of influence by societal norms and biases within their third year of life (Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force 2); it is essential that anti-bias lessons begin at young ages so young people grow up to be accepting, respectful, and compassionate. Teaching young people to appreciate diversity in race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, and size reduces prejudice and hate and promotes tolerance, respect, and peace.

MATERIALS:

- Board or large paper
- Pictures of people of varying ages, races, sizes, abilities, religions, etc
- Pictures and stories of discriminatory treatment
- Paper
- Pens and pencils
- Poster paper
- General craft supplies

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

PROCEDURE:

1. Have participants sit in a circle. Explain that today you will be talking about diversity, or things that make everyone different and unique.
2. Begin a discussion about diversity. Go around the circle and ask participants to give examples of ways people are different. Record their ideas as they give them. Encourage them to look for examples of diversity in the Girls Only space, as well as think about examples of diversity at their schools, homes, and in the world. Remind them to think in general terms: **if they say, “I am 10 years old and she is 12 years old” that would be a diversity of age. Categories of diversity** include: appearance, age, race, gender, social class, religion/beliefs, language, physical and mental ability, height, weight, size, nationality, educational background, family structure, sexual orientation, personal qualities/personalities, likes and dislikes, and feelings.
3. Remind participants that although people differ in many ways, all people have feelings, can think and learn, want to feel wanted, enjoy life, and have friends.
4. Go around the circle and ask participants to give examples of how they are similar to each other. Categories of similarities can be the same as categories of diversity, as well as more

specific things unique to the participants. Examples include: “we’re in Girls Only,” “we go to the same school,” “we both have moms who are nurses,” “the three of us play basketball.”

5. Continue the discussion about diversity. Ask participants: What does it mean to you that we live in a diverse world? Do you think our differences should separate us? How do we all benefit from diversity? Record their ideas as they give them.

6. Explain that living in a diverse world means we get to learn new ways of doing things, develop friendships, and use everyone’s unique knowledge and talents.

7. Begin a discussion about discrimination. Explain that sometimes people are discriminated against, or treated unfairly, because of their differences. Give examples and show pictures of discrimination. For each example, ask participants if they think this different treatment is fair and why or why not. Examples include:

- Segregation of blacks and whites in education, housing, buses, voting, drinking fountains, restaurants, etc until the 1960s
- Banning women from voting until 1920s
- Banning gays and lesbians from getting married
- Airlines making someone purchase two airplane seats because of their body size
- At the airport security checkpoint, only searching people who wear head scarves
- Hurting or killing someone because they are Asian, black, Hispanic, white, a woman, gay or lesbian, a certain religion, etc
- Only putting stairs in a building so someone in a wheelchair cannot go in
- Telling jokes about another race
- Calling someone a name that puts down their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

8. Ask participants: Have you ever been discriminated against? How do you think it makes someone feel to be discriminated against? Explain that being discriminated against makes people feel angry, sad, or lonely.

9. Remind participants of all the similarities they found amongst each other and all the benefits they get from diversity. Remind them how it feels to be discriminated against.

10. Introduce the Diversity Action Project. Explain that participants will have a chance to think of and brainstorm creative ways to promote diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and peace and challenge discriminatory behavior. Participants can work by themselves or in groups.

11. Have participants think of what aspect of diversity their project will be about. Topics can be as general or specific as participants want. Examples include:

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| • Appearance | • Height | • Personal qualities/personalities |
| • Age | • Weight | • Likes and dislikes |
| • Race | • Size | • Feelings |
| • Gender | • Nationality | • Animals |
| • Social class | • Educational background | • The Environment |
| • Religion/beliefs | • Family structure | • Children |
| • Language | • Sexual orientation | • Senior citizens |
| • Physical and mental ability | | |

12. Have participants think of what their Diversity Action Project will be. Examples include:

- Write a poem
- Write a song

- Write and illustrate **a children's book**
- Make a poster
- Make a painting
- Make a collage
- Make a sculpture
- Make a skit
- Dress in a different **culture's clothes** for the day
- Teach a class about diversity
- Organize a volunteer service project
- Learn a new language
- Write five possible responses to discriminatory language
- Learn how to cook a meal from another culture
- Make up a game to teach people about diversity

13. Give participants time to create their diversity action project. Assist as necessary.

14. Have participants present their Diversity Action Project to the whole group. For each presentation they should tell the purpose of their project, what it is, and how it promotes diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and peace. An example of a Diversity Action Project could be a **poem about being called a "bitch," how it made the person feel to be called that, and what they would say to the person who called them that name if they got the chance.** Another example of a Diversity Action Project could be **making a skit about a group of kids who don't let a girl who is Asian play on their team at recess because they don't think she is good at sports, how it makes her feel, and how they all become great friends and a strong team after deciding to give her a chance.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: If everyone looked exactly like you, talked like you, and did the same things as you, how would your life be different? Are there friends you would miss? Are there family members you would miss? **How do you identify when someone asks, "what are you?" How does your skin color or your racial identity affect your life?**

EVALUATION: Did participants define diversity? Did participants brainstorm creative ways to promote tolerance and diversity?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Arrange for a field trip to a local site of cultural significance, a museum about diversity, or to cultural enclaves such as Chinatown, Koreatown, or Little Italy.

Lesson: Women's History

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is the **history of women in the United States**? How do women's life experiences differ based on race, class, and other characteristics? What is feminism? How can you benefit from learning about someone else's life?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants learn about the histories of women in the United States; participants research a woman of their choosing; participants connect history to their own lives.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Studying women's history means studying the stories of diverse women, the progress of women in recent history, and the further steps needed to ensure real equality between women and men of all races. Women, as a class worldwide, have endured gender discrimination and segregation as well as physical and emotional harassment and abuse, and continue to struggle for rights today. The National Women's History Project explains, "Knowing the challenges these women faced, grappled with and overcame can be an enormous source of strength to all of us" (NWHHP 2). Teaching young women about the challenges women have faced and the triumphs they have celebrated can empower girls and young women to feel confident and become leaders.

MATERIALS:

- **Fact sheets and timelines about women's history**
- **Videos or online videos about women's history**
- Historical pictures of women from different time periods in the United States
- Books and articles about women of note
- Computer with internet access
- Newspapers
- Poster paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Colored paper
- Pens and pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 2 to 3 hours

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will be learning about the histories of women in the United States. Show videos/online videos, pictures, timelines, and books and articles about **women's history during different time periods in the United States**.
2. Based on the films and information presented, begin a discussion about challenges that **women have historically faced. Ask participants: "what challenges have women faced?"** Examples include: voting rights, not being allowed to work/being forced to work/job discrimination, freedom to control their bodies/reproductive rights, racism, homophobia, unequal pay, and physical abuse.

3. Remind participants that women have come a long way, but there is still work to be done and challenges to overcome. Explain feminism is the movement to end sexist oppression and to work for equality for women.

4. Have participants choose a woman to research. Participants can work alone or in small **groups. Explain that participants will be learning about this woman's life, thinking about the challenges she overcame, and relating her life to their own.** Participants can pick from the list given or think of someone they want to research. The facilitator should approve all proposed subjects. Suggestions include:

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| • Rosa Parks | • Marilyn Monroe | • Hillary Rodham Clinton |
| • Coretta Scott King | • Billie Holiday | • Sally Ride |
| • Myrlie Evers-Williams | • Marie Curie | • Venus and Serena Williams |
| • Oprah Winfrey | • Abigail Adams | • Maya Angelou |
| • June Jordan | • Susan B. Anthony | • Clara Barton |
| • Michelle Obama | • Rachel Carson | • Tyra Banks |
| • Laura Ingalls Wilder | • Isadora Duncan | • Ruth Bader Ginsberg |
| • bell hooks | • Juliette Low | • Connie Chung |
| • Mae Jemison | • Elizabeth Cady Stanton | • Michelle Kwan |
| • Amelia Earhart | • Mae West | • Gloria Anzaldua |
| • Audre Lorde | • Betsy Ross | • Sonya Sotomayor |
| • Margaret Cho | • Lucy Stone | • Sandra Cisneros |
| • Maya Lin | • Elizabeth Blackwell | • Ani DiFranco |
| • Georgia O'Keefe | • Annie Oakley | • Queen Latifah |
| • Martha Graham | • Helen Keller | • Elizabeth Eckford |
| • Lena Horne | • Eleanor Roosevelt | • Viola Liuzzo |
| • Dolores Huerta | • Margaret Mead | • Better Friedan |
| • Paula Gunn Allen | • Lucille Ball | • Alice Paul |
| • Charlotte Bronte | • "Babe" Didrikson | |
| • Zora Neale Hurston | • Sandra Day O'Connor | |
| • Adrienne Rich | • Madeline Albright | |
| • Harriet Tubman | • Condoleezza Rice | |
| • Sojourner Truth | • Billy Jean King | |

3. **Instruct participants to research their subject's life** using books, historical newspapers, the internet, and film. Assist as necessary. They should find out:

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| • date and place of birth | • what life was like for women when she was growing up |
| • date and place of death | |
| • where she lives or lived | |

- what life was like for people of her race when she was growing up
- what challenges she faced
- what she did or does that impacted history
- what she did or does that is significant for women
- two things about the woman or her life that strike you as interesting or surprising

4. **As they research, encourage participants to think about how their subject's life relates to their own life.** Prompt with questions: How are you and your subject similar? How are you and your subject different? What did you learn from your subject? What challenges do you face in your life? How can what you learned about your subject help you face the challenges in your life?

5. **Pass out poster making materials. Have participants create a poster about their subject's life,** including the elements they researched, photos, and copies of primary source documents.

6. When participants have completed their posters, have them present to the group telling the story of the woman they researched. Ask participants to connect the life of their subject to their own life, prompting them with the same questions from before.

7. Hang the posters around the room to inspire participants with the challenges faced and overcome by women historically.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What role will you play in history? How **will this impact women's history?**

EVALUATION: Did participants research the history of a woman of note? Did participants connect history to current events and to their own lives? Did participants make a poster demonstrating these connections?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a local woman celebrity, politician, or well-known community member to speak to Girls Only. Arrange a field trip to a local place of interest involving **women's history.**