



Lesson Plan

Avenues to Advocacy: Student Organizations

Length:

1 hour

Objectives:

Through this activity participants will:

- Explore ways their daily activities and involvement in different groups allow them to be advocates.
- Gain insight into how groups they're already involved in might be the best route for them to advocate for a particular cause, group, or community.

Materials:

- *Student Organizations* handout for every student
- Sticky notes to stick on a wall with names of the organizations participants suggest

Process:

Have participants break into small groups. Make sure that everyone reviews the examples of types of organizations found in the blue boxes at the same time. Ask participants to read the examples, and discuss the questions that follow within their groups.

After participants have gone through all of the questions, ask someone from each small group to share a response from someone in their group that surprised them, or made them think about advocacy in a new way.

Finally, have participants answer the reflection on the back of the handout by choosing organizations and answering the questions.

Optional: Have participants cover the board/use sticky notes on a wall with the names of the organizations they suggested.



Handout

Avenues To Advocacy: Student Organizations

Are you a member of any organizations, clubs or teams?

Any opportunity you have to gather with peers can become an opportunity for advocacy!

There are many ways you can be an advocate through the activities you already participate in. Think about how one person's passion about an issue can inspire classmates, teammates and friends to learn more about the issue and become involved, too! For example, a student playing a role in the school play might be participating in a local event to support Catholic Charities and raise awareness of domestic poverty. Just by mentioning this at play practice or by sharing some information about the event in the playbill for the show, she could inspire her cast mates and the audience to become involved with the event and passionate about the issue.

What are some of the characteristics of student organizations that make them a good place to advocate for something?

As a leader in a student organization (club officer, sports team captain, etc.), your opportunity for advocacy may be even greater!

How could you advocate through organizations in which you are a leader? What would you choose to advocate for in an organization such as student government?

For example:

- ***A student council might work together to implement donating uneaten cafeteria food to a soup kitchen instead of throwing it away.***
- ***A student council president could work with the administration to ensure good recycling practices.***

In many organizations, shared interests are what bring people together. Sometimes, these shared interests naturally lead to a shared passion about a specific issue.

What organizations do you participate in to pursue an interest or activity you enjoy? Have any issues become relevant to all members as a result of a shared interest?

For example:

- ***Student choirs or bands decide to perform in benefit concerts for causes or charities.***
- ***Sports teams participate in basketball, volleyball, and other tournaments to support those in need.***

Let's look at a real life example!

Three and a half years ago, Kylee Bliss, now 18, saw herself sidelined after suffering two concussions within two months while playing basketball. The once sociable and athletic honors student went from easily acing tests to struggling to earn Cs, opting against spending time with friends in favor of rest, and retiring from organized sports for good. "Everything was taken away from me, and I didn't know what to do," Kylee, who was diagnosed with post-concussive syndrome (PCS) during her sophomore year of high school, told FoxNews.com.

According to the Mayo Clinic, PCS—a condition associated with sports injuries and marked by symptoms that include dizziness and headaches—is the result of concussion, a mild traumatic brain injury that usually occurs after a blow to the head.

Kylee, of Overland Park, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City, took a liking to basketball at age 7 and had played ever since. As she grew restless to play again after her head injuries—and coping with noise sensitivity, depression and anxiety—she eventually found solace in striving to help others avoid a similar fate by starting the HeadsUp Foundation for PCS. The organization aims to raise awareness and teach others about the condition.

"I saw a sparkle in her eyes for the first time since the first concussion," Kylee's mother, Ginger Bliss, told FoxNews.com about her daughter's decision to start the foundation.

Kylee and Ginger said the HeadsUp Foundation for PCS has raised more than \$20,000 since its inception in July 2013. But even as the foundation grows, Kylee continues to cope with PCS symptoms, like recurrent headaches and vision and learning problems.

foxnews.com/health/2015/07/15/former-high-school-basketball-player-starts-nonprofit-after-suffering by Melinda Carstenson, 7/15/2015

In many organizations, a small group of people are brought together by their passion about a specific issue or problem. Some organizations that you may be a member of may have formed specifically for the purpose of advocating for solutions to a problem members are passionate about.

Are you involved in any organizations that have a specific societal goal for which they advocate? What methods do different groups use in order to achieve their goals? Are these types of organizations more popular or less popular than other student groups? Is there a strong bond between members of your group?

For example:

- ***March for Life or other pro-life clubs***
- ***Anti-cruelty/animal welfare groups***

In other organizations, shared passion about an issue leads to the group's participation in works of charity, such as work camp programs or service/immersion trips, to address specific problems. The group's actions might also include taking part in the fundraising aspect of service programs. While your initial goals may be limited to raising money, the transition to actively raising awareness about a problem and advocating for a certain solution can be straightforward when the issue is already defined. But it can be more difficult to effectively advocate when the problem is large, for example global poverty or finding a cure for cancer, and there are no immediate or short-term solutions.

How can you advocate for the issues that people are passionate about when the solution(s) to the issue is/are unclear or extremely difficult to achieve?

For example:

- *Students who go on mission or services trips can raise awareness for the plight facing communities in which they have worked by bringing back photographs and sharing their personal experiences with people at home.*

Reflection

After reflecting on the examples and ideas shared, finish the statements below by choosing one organization through which you currently advocate and one organization through which you see the potential for advocacy action that you will take. You can use the table provided to aid in your reflection process as well.

Through my participation in _____ (club/activity),

I work with peers to advocate for _____.

Through my participation in _____, I see the

potential to advocate for _____ (issue)

by taking _____ actions.

Organization	How can you turn your membership in this organization into an opportunity for advocacy? Or, how does this organization already engage in advocacy?

