

# What Kind of Citizen: Introduction to Social Justice

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**Overview:** In this workshop, students will explore the value of social justice through activities designed to encourage discovery of the idea of systemic change and the power of individuals. They will also learn about the three types of citizens and what type of citizen they are.

**Category:** Social Justice, Critical Thinking, Reflection

**Level:** Explore

**Learning Goals:**

- To understand that social issues stem from systemic problems
- To learn about the kind of citizens that are identified by scholars and to identify which type of citizen they are
- To identify the activities that they are involved in and what types of activities they may get involved in to become the type of citizen they wish to be

**Materials:**

- Kind of Citizen posters
- Kind of Citizen worksheet
- Pens
- Post-it Notes

**How to Prepare:**

- The opening activity requires that the facilitator appear to be stern. Put your gameface on and do not joke around with the students. Act initially like you are in a bad mood and having a very bad day

**How to Do/ Brief Outline:**

The outline has the following parts:

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Tapped Into Citizenship | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 2. Discussion              | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 3. Kind of Citizen         | suggested time 30 minutes |

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## Part 1) Tapped Into Citizenship

Suggested time: 15 minutes

1. Have the group get into a circle; don't explain the purpose of the exercise; approach it as if it were an energizer or icebreaker
2. Demonstrate the position that they will be assuming (crouching down in a deep knee bend, balanced only on the balls of their feet). Stress that during the exercise their eyes must be kept closed, that the exercise must be done in absolute silence, and that no other part of their bodies (hands, etc.) may touch the ground at any time – balls of the feet only! Then instruct them to assume the demonstrated position and close their eyes.
3. Read the rules clearly and in a deep voice if at all possible. Be serious – do not laugh, even if the students are laughing. If you see someone cheating, walk nearer that person and state the rules loudly in his/her direction; this usually straightens them out. But don't actually *enforce* the rules in any way. The hope is that they will eventually rescue each other, even if this involves "cheating". Anything that happens will make for a good discussion. After you've repeated the rules several time, start tapping one or two people on the head (ONCE) to make them repeat the rules. Keep tapping people once, and continue to repeat the rules yourself so as to keep up a rhythm of repetition and chanting.
4. Don't tap anyone more than once until you've observed everyone struggling to keep their balance and experiencing some substantial discomfort. Then, slowly, start tapping (one person at a time) a few people twice, and, eventually, three times. Some students, when tapped three times, will begin to torment the remaining crouchers by tapping them once, some will wander off and take some "selfish" time, and some will eventually think to rescue their companions by either ending the exercise or tapping the remaining crouchers three times.
5. If you've tapped half the group three times, and they still haven't started rescuing the others, go ahead and end the exercise yourself and sit down to discuss it. Otherwise, let the students rescue all of their comrades, thus ending the exercise.

## Part 2) Discussion

Suggested Time: 15 minutes

1. Have students sit in a circle
2. Ask questions:
  - a. How did you feel when you were crouching (draw out physical discomfort, but also emotion)
  - b. Who was tapped once? What was the effect of repeating the rules? (hypnotic, like being in a cult, brainwashing, chaotic/confusing)
  - c. Who was tapped twice? How did it feel to stand up? Were you comfortable even though your eyes were closed?
  - d. Who was tapped three times? What did you do? Why? What could you have done? What kept you from doing it?

- e. Who has the power in this exercise? How do you define power (why would it be perceived that the facilitator has power? Who gave me that power? Who else has power?)
- f. What did “Don’t Cheat” mean in the exercise?
  - i. Think about societal rules – who makes the rules? Encourage them to think about rules not only in terms of laws but also in terms of norms.
  - ii. Who has the power to change the rules in society? Did anyone question the rules of the exercise? Why not?
  - iii. Point out that tapping others three times once you’d been tapped didn’t even require “cheating” – you could rescue people (eventually) without changing the laws of this oppressive situation.
- g. What did “Repeat the Rules” mean in the exercise?
  - i. Think about socialization into the status quo, blind acceptance
- h. What did “Do Whatever You Want” mean in the exercise? Who in society is usually “tapped three times” and able to do whatever they want.
  - i. How can we as citizens take advantage of our own personal power to tap other people three times (either within the rules or by changing the rules)?

### **Part 3) What Kind of Citizen**

Suggested time: 20 minutes

1. Transition into section: “Often, our service reflects what type of citizen we are. Today, we are going to be introduced to the value of social justice. It takes a variety of people in different areas of service and levels of citizenship to fight for social justice. We are going to explore these levels of citizenship today and you will determine what type of citizen you are right now and what type you want to be in the future.”
2. Read our definition of social justice – to be an advocate for fairness, impartiality, and equality while addressing systemic social and environmental issues
3. Reveal “Kinds of Citizens” poster
4. Explain poster:
  - a. First is the “Personally Responsible Citizen.”
    - i. This type of citizen is a “good citizen” by working and paying taxes, obeying all of the laws, and acting responsibly in the community by not littering, recycling, giving blood, etc. This citizen may also volunteer on a regular or emergency basis.
    - ii. Actions that this person may take toward social justice: contributing to a food drive, donating money to charity, giving blood, recycling, planting trees, tutoring a child
    - iii. Basic values of this citizen: improvement of society comes from citizens having good character, being honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community

- b. Second is the “Participatory Citizen.”
    - i. This type of citizen is an active member of organizations that seek to improve the community, organizes community efforts to care for others in need, promote economic development, or clean up the environment, has a basic knowledge of how the government works, and has a working strategy for accomplishing tasks related to the community’s shared vision
    - ii. Actions that this person may take toward social justice: organizing drives for food, clothes, or blood, organizing a fundraiser for a charity, organizing an event and recruiting volunteers
    - iii. Basic values of this citizen: improvement of society comes from citizens being active participants and leaders in established systems and community structures
  - c. Third is the “Justice Oriented Citizen.”
    - i. This type of citizen is involved in critically assessing social, political, and economic structures to see beyond the surface causes, seeks out and addresses areas of injustice, and has a knowledge of social movements and how to effect systemic change
    - ii. Actions that this person may take toward social justice: lobbying congress to provide more funding for service organizations, advocating for new or changed laws, participates in national or international organizations for widespread improvement efforts
    - iii. Basic values of this citizen: improvement of society comes from citizens questioning and changing established systems and structures that have reproduces patters of injustice over time
5. Give students “Kind of Citizen” worksheet and pens
  6. Have students write down all of the activities that they are involved in that fall under the three types
  7. Have students then write down the types of activities that they would like to be involved in for each type
  8. Have each student share with the group their top three current and hopeful activities
  9. Give each student a post-it note
  10. Have students write their name on the post-it note and place their note on the “Kind of Citizen” poster in the type that they feel they most associate with
  11. Have students get into groups based on their self-identifications
  12. Have groups discuss accomplishments that they have had in this area of service as well as challenges that they have faced

**Credits:**

1. Westheimer, Joel and Joseph Kahne. “What Kind of Citizen?: The Politics of Educating for Democracy”. 2002.

2. Eyler, Janet, Dwight E. Giles Jr., Angela Schmiede. A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning: Student Voices & Reflections. Vanderbilt University, 1996.