

MUSIC BOX PROTEST

Objectives

- Students will explore the concept of protest and will brainstorm different social justice issues that inspire them to speak out.
- Students will create an original chant that conveys a message about an important socio-political issue.
- Students will understand how they can use their voice to speak out about important matters.

Materials needed

- None

Activity

Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992 by Anna Deavere Smith focuses on the events surrounding the “uprisings” that happened in Los Angeles in 1992. Over 30 years ago. Acts of civil unrest still happen today, all over the world. In 2020, in response to the killings of Black Americans like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations in protest of police brutality happened across the U.S. including here in Los Angeles.

- Define protest: “a declaration of opinion, usually one of dissent.”
- Take a few moments to collectively brainstorm major social issues that might spur protests (government corruption, gun violence, violence against women, discrimination against marginalized groups, etc.)
- Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 participants and have them review the list and have them identify an issue they feel passion about – an issue they would take to the streets and protest.
- Model a chant from *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* with students:

“No Justice, No Peace (No Racist Police!)”

- Rehearse the chant together a few times, then add some percussion.
- Ask the students to create their own chant for the issue they identified.
- Share the chants and add percussion (claps, stomps, using props if available).
- Conduct a chorus of chants – selecting groups to raise and lower their chants in volume.

While watching the play and learning about the past, think about the world we live in today and ask yourselves:

What is your tipping point?

What would it take to shake you out of complacency?

What can you do?

Lesson Extensions

This activity can be further developed into staging a live protest with real physical signs/banners made by the students.

Lesson Variations

In lieu of a collective brainstorm on social justice issues to explore, a specific topic can be prescribed if there is a particularly obvious issue of importance facing the group of students.