



Sample Lesson Plan from ProAct University

Social Issue Addressed: Violence

ProAct Indy does great philanthropic work that benefits many companies, faith groups, nonprofits, youth and their families across the city of Indianapolis. This sample lesson plan, from ProAct's evidence-based curriculum, briefly outlines a plan for a 30-45-minute session to support youth in processing and talking about violence and determining how to take action to address the issue through service.

This sample lesson is meant to serve as a guide for adult facilitators who wish to teach character education through human-centered service-learning and it assumes that the group's facilitator has already built rapport with the youth they are guiding through this session about violence.

To gain online access to [ProAct University](#) to see more of our curriculum and/or to take our online course, **ProAct 101**, to learn more about our history and innovative program model, [please click here](#) or email Founder & CEO, Derrin Slack at derrin@proactindy.org with the email subject "ProAct University Access."

Check-in

Purpose: To get a basic understanding to see how the group is doing in their personal lives to continue to build relationships.

Duration: 5-7 minutes

Materials: Chairs organized in a circle.

Guide:

1. With participants sitting in a circle, go around the circle asking participants to share one high and one low from the past week.
2. Throughout your program year, keep checking in, even if things seem to be going well.
3. As the facilitator, make sure that everyone feels good about his or her involvement. Take responsibility for communicating any serious concerns you or others have about anyone's behavior.

Note: Some participants may share deeply personal things going on in their lives as the group becomes more comfortable with each other. As a facilitator, use discretion in how you offer advice. First ask the group to offer any advice in these situations so the individual feels support from both you and their peers.

Safety Note: *If you suspect anything illegal has occurred in the lives of any participant, report the issue to your supervisor, a school counselor, a school principal, and/or another appropriate adult.*

Continued on Page 2

Conversation About Violence

Purpose: This activity should be used to preface the tree of violence to gauge how the group is feeling towards this topic.

Duration: 10 minutes

Materials: Chairs organized in a circle.

Guide:

1. Facilitator should get the ball rolling with this conversation using the following questions:
 - a. What is violence? What is the first thing that pops into your head?
 - b. Where do you see violence? And how often do you see it?
 - c. Is violence always physical?
 - d. Who is involved in violence?
 - e. Why is there violence?
 - f. Does violence on tv make society more violent?
 - g. Is there a cure?
 - h. Do you think men are more violent than women or vice versa?
 - i. Do you think humans can ever be nonviolent?
2. Allow the conversation to move at its own pace, no need to answer every single question, just use that list as a guide.
3. Feel free to incorporate current events that involve acts of violence into your discussion of any of the questions above (e.g. police brutality, recent school shootings, assault cases being discussed in the media, etc.)

Variation: *these conversations can also be done in small groups. Just put the guiding questions on a big piece of paper or written on the white board visible to everyone in the room.*

Tree of Violence

Purpose: To address the root causes of violence and look at how they affect the violence we see in our everyday lives.

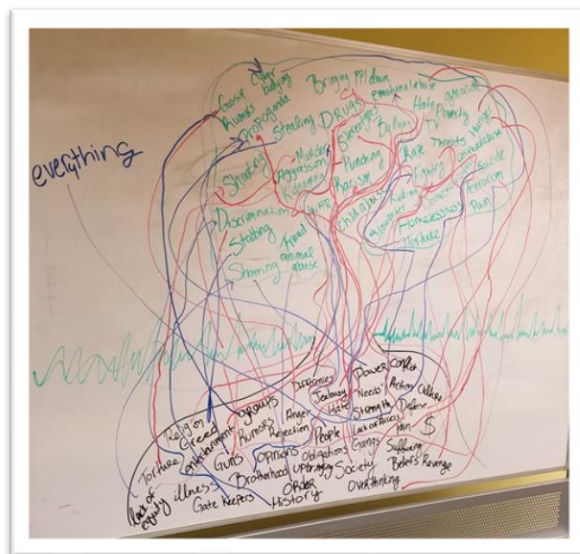
Duration: 20 minutes

Materials: A white board and 3 different colored markers (preferably one that is green) you can use just one color, but it may be difficult.

Guide:

1. Start this activity by drawing the trunk of a tree on the board.
2. Ask your youth participants, "What types of violence do you see in your world?"
 - a. With every answer you hear, write that in green as the **leaves**.

- b. Do not limit the group to only physical violence.
 - c. Ask them to be as specific and as broad as they want.
 - d. As ideas start flowing the group will start thinking outside the box more, grasp onto that and run with it.
3. After this brainstorming has slowed down, ask the group, “Now why do these acts of violence happen?”
 - a. Now you will be writing in the **roots of the tree**.
 - b. At the base of the tree write out everything the students say.
 - c. Have them look at the violent acts they came up with before and think about why those things happen.
 - d. These can also be as broad or specific as the participants wish.
4. After the **roots** and **leaves** are all written in, have students come up one by one and attach a root (cause) to a leaf (act of violence) by drawing a line from one to the other.
 - a. **For example:** Money would be the root cause of homelessness. Insecurity might be the root cause of bullying.
 - b. As each boy or girl comes up to the board have them announce to the group what they have chosen to attach and a brief reason to why.
 - c. Each root cause is not limited to one act of violence and each act of violence is not limited to one root cause.
5. Once this process is done you will have something that looks like this:



6. Now you have your **Tree of Violence** and it should look messy.
7. Ask the students how they feel about this tree:
 - a. Is it overwhelming?
 - b. Is it pleasant to look at?
8. Leave the tree on the board as you move into the debrief for the day.

Variation: If you do not have a white board, do this activity on a large sheet of paper hung up on the wall or pass out blank sheets of paper and have the participants break into small groups to complete the activity and discussion.

Debrief

Duration: 5-7 minutes

Guide:

1. While looking at the **Tree of Violence** ask the students what is keeping this tree alive?
2. Erase all the lines connecting the roots to the leaves.
3. Explain to the group that even when we cut down a tree, the roots are still alive and new growth will still sprout...
 - a. How does this relate to violence?
 - b. What needs to happen to break the cycle of violence?
4. Have student think of specific ways that they will be able to take on the various roots to this tree of violence

Variation: *Instead of erasing all the connecting lines, you can have each boy or girl, one by one, slash through those lines and share an idea of how they will get rid of that root.*

Power of One

Purpose: To reinforce the idea that one person can make a difference in challenging the root causes of violence and to encourage ourselves to serve one another to build relationships so we can gain empathy, compassion, and respect for others in our community.

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Materials: Paper or index cards, pens or pencils, tape or stapler

Guide:

1. Hand out paper and pens. Ask each person to work independently. Remind the group of the four different types of service (direct, indirect, research, advocacy) and service activities in which participants named things that they could do to make change
(Reminder is from an earlier session on service with the same group the facilitator is leading during this session.)
2. Ask the group to each write one thing that they can really do after the workshop to make a difference. Ask the group to be serious and realistic.
3. Ask each person to fold his or her card, seal it with tape or staples, and write his or her name and address on the outside. Explain that you will send these "pledges" to them in a few days, to remind them of their commitment to act.
4. Send the pledges back in 2-4 days. If you are working in a school, ask participants to write their homeroom, rather than their home address.

Contact Information for Instructional Designer



To discuss this sample lesson plan or to have a trained ProAct Facilitator lead a workshop for you and your team, please contact:

Derrin Slack

Founder & CEO | ProAct Indy | 317.399.5800 | derrin@proactindy.org
www.proactindy.org | Facebook, Twitter & Instagram: @proactindy