Civics 365: Empowering Kids to Be Great Citizens

Megan Byrnes, Children’s Library Specialist
Bentonville Public Library
Mike Wilkins,
_Preamble_ (1987),
Smithsonian American Art Museum.
Welcome!

• Introduction
• Opening Activity: How do we start a discussion with kids about civics?
• Why/So What? behind the project
• What did we do and How did we do it?
  – Kids Rock the Vote (Fall 2016)
  – Kids Care Storytime (Summer 2017)
  – Hands On History/Curious Kids workshops (Summer 2017)
  – Constitution Day (Fall 2017)
• Conclusion—Puzzle Activity and Lessons Learned
Why civics at the library, and why now?

• Opportunity! Election 2016

• Need for civic literacy.
  – 70% of Americans didn’t know that the Constitution was the supreme law of the land (2011 Newsweek survey)
  – Only 26% of those surveyed could name all three branches of government (2016 Annenberg Public Policy Institute survey)
  – Only 24% of 12th graders scored “proficient” on the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress civics test.

• Libraries as educational and community centers
How It Began: Election 2016

• Civic engagement for children—Get them excited about voting and the upcoming election

• Kids Rock the Vote! Programming: 6 weeks; Reached 1721 kids
Kids Care Storytime—Summer 2017

• How to make civics ideas more accessible for a younger audience?

• 5 Key Themes: Bravery; Diversity; Peace & Kindness; Democracy; Giving Back to Community
Hands On History/Curious Kids Workshops

• Summer 2017; Grades 3-6
• More in-depth look at historic events & civics themes
• Ex: The Little Rock Nine; Anne Frank

"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."
Constitution Day and Beyond

Above: Nari Ward, *We the People (black version)*, 2015, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Resources from The National Constitution Center:
https://constitutioncenter.org/
Lessons Learned:

Activity: Make a Community Diversity Puzzle!

• Using your Teaching Tolerance *My Multicultural Self* graphic organizer, brainstorm five things that are important to you.

• Think of a visual way to represent these.

• Use colored pencils to sketch your five things onto your puzzle piece.

• Put the puzzle together and share!
Thank you!

Any Comments/Questions?

Contact me: mbyrnes@bentonvillear.com

Phone: 479-271-6713

Visit BPL: www.bentonvillelibrary.org
Additional Resources:


National History Day: www.nhd.org


Sites of Conscience coalition: http://www.sitesofconscience.org/

Teaching Tolerance, Southern Poverty Law Center: https://www.tolerance.org/


Youth Leadership Initiative, University of Virginia Center for Politics: http://www.youthleadership.net/