



National Farmers Union *“Project Citizenship”*

Grades 9-12

Contents:

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Lesson 4*: Cooperative Citizenship ~ 1 hour, 30 minutes

Lesson 5: Global Citizenship ~ 1 hour, 30 minutes

Optional Activities

** Lesson contains a cooperative education component.*

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Lesson Plan 1: Election Year Citizenship

- Unit Objective:** Young people will learn their rights and responsibilities as citizens in an election year. They will also recognize and verbalize positive traits that they possess.
- Grades:** 9-12
- Length:** 2 hours: 15 min. for intro discussion, 45 min. for Campaign Craze, 30 min. for background information and “Election Year Discussion Questions,” 30 min. for Activity Sheet A live reports.
- Materials Needed:** Butcher paper, construction paper, pens or pencils, colored markers, tape, scissors, something to hang the posters, Activity Sheet A and “Election Year Discussion Questions.” (Optional: glitter, glue, etc., for advanced poster-making and a webcam or digital camera to record video with a laptop and projector to play back. A copy of “Where Is the Love,” by Black Eyed Peas.)
- Preparation Needed:** Print an Activity Sheet A and the “Election Year Discussion Questions” for each team. Locate digital video recorder/webcam, laptop and projector, if available, and practice recording and play-back.

Background:

For more than a century, people have fought for their right to vote. In the 1870s, the 15th Amendment gave American citizens of any race the freedom to vote. However, in the 1888 presidential elections, Native Americans were not allowed to vote because some saw them as not being citizens of the United States, even though they were born here. It was not until 1924 that American Indians were allowed to vote. Women were not given the right to vote until the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920.

Regardless of these amendments, polling taxes, literacy tests, physical violence, and other voter intimidation, particularly of minorities, continued. The Voter Rights Act passed in 1965 to ensure no voters would be kept from voting by misinformation or intimidation.

There is evidence that some people continue to fight to uphold their right to vote today. Yet, some simply choose not to vote. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 64 percent of the general population voted in the 2004 presidential elections.

In the early 1970s, the 26th Amendment passed which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Despite stereotypes of political apathy among young people, young people have the opportunity to make history with their involvement in the 2008 elections. Whether you will be eligible to vote or not come Nov. 4, you have the right and responsibility as a U.S. citizen to be educated and involved in the process.

Teaching Strategy:

1. You may open the lesson by playing the song “Where is the Love?” by the Black-Eyed Peas. Ask students to discuss the purpose of the song. What kinds of issues are discussed? Let them know that the Project Citizenship theme of these lessons is about getting their voices heard about important matters like the ones included in the song.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of various issues in their community (school or larger community) that they care about. Create a large list of potential topics. Next, put a plus sign next to an issue in which someone in the room has already been active. Discuss what kinds of actions they have done and how this was a type of civic engagement.
3. Discuss common reasons why people are not civically engaged (lack of knowledge, lack of time, not knowing what to do, feeling that they cannot make a difference, mistrust of politicians, etc.) Ask students what the result of civic disengagement of their generation might be?
4. *One way people express themselves is through voting and this is an important year.* Introduce the background information on voting. When finished, hand out “Election Year Discussion Questions.”
5. Introduce Campaign Craze as an ice-breaker activity and an introduction to the election year topic. *Many of you have probably noticed the barrage of campaign signs and ads in the last several months. When politicians run a campaign they sell themselves by telling everyone about all their successes, strong points,*

values and positive traits. Creating your own campaign takes guts. It isn't easy to stand up in front of a bunch of people, brag about yourself and share your values. Today you're each going to have the opportunity to do just that. Inform everyone that they each will be running for an office of their choice. (It's all pretend of course.) Each person will need to run an extensive campaign in their attempt to become elected. Each person must then create the following campaign items: a poster, campaign buttons, a one-minute campaign speech, a slogan and anything else they can think of (some might even write their own song). Encourage everyone to base their campaign on all of their positive attributes, traits and issues they believe in. Once everyone is finished, ask each person to present her/his campaign to the rest of the group.

6. Discuss the activity as a group. *How did you feel when you were presenting your campaigns? Was it difficult or easy for you to think of positive things about yourself for the campaign? What did you learn about others in the group when doing this activity? How many of you actually have ambitions to run for the office you made up? Why or why not?*
7. Encourage people to put their posters on the wall for all to see for the remainder of the day and to wear or share their buttons.
8. Have group divide into teams of three or four for the next activity, outlined on Activity Sheet A. After reading the television broadcast from "Rea Porter," they will generate their own news coverage of issues they would like to see 2008 candidates cover. If possible, have them actually record their coverage for playback to the group. Many digital cameras now have recording capabilities and some computers have built-in webcams that could be used. If recording is not possible, simply have the students "report live" from their event.

Sources: Ideas submitted by Amber Hill, North Dakota Farmers Union. Introduction adapted from www.lessonplanspage.com, HotChalk, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Campaign Craze adapted from Games for Groups.com, 104 Activities that Build. Iowa Caucus story adapted from Wiretap Magazine coverage, www.wiretapmag.org.

Election Year Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think they lowered the legal voting age from 21 to 18 in the early 1970s?
2. Is it time to change the age again? At what age do you think people should be allowed to vote? Why?
3. In the 2000 election only 51 percent of the population voted. In 2004, 64 percent voted, although only 47 percent of 18-24-year-olds voted. What are reasons to vote? Why do you think some people choose not to vote?
4. If you could vote this year, would you? Why or why not?
5. Recently, candidates have begun courting young voters. Why do you think this is?
6. What are some ways young people under the age of 18 can get involved in the democratic process?

NEWS FLASH...Young People Make History in Iowa Presidential Caucuses!



This is Rea Porter with live coverage of the 2008 Iowa Caucuses. Young Iowans and young activists working here in Iowa made history in tonight's caucuses.

Youth turnout numbers in Iowa have almost quadrupled since 2000. Among 17- to 29-year-old Democrats, 57 percent supported the winner, Barack Obama, and among 17- to 29-year-old Republicans, 40 percent supported the winner, Mike Huckabee, according to CNN's entrance poll. In case you're wondering, 17-year-olds were allowed to caucus here in Iowa as long as they would be 18 by Nov. 4, 2008.

National commentators have consistently ignored increases in youth voting since 2000. The Iowa Caucus vote will have profound implications on public perceptions about youth engagement.

According to a Rock the Vote spokesperson, tonight has proven that candidates who court young voters will win elections. This is the first year the leading Democratic candidates all have a Youth Director and young voter outreach programs. The turnout numbers of young people prove if you target young people they vote.

Back to you, Bob. . . .

Thanks, Rea!

Next, we go to our Farmers Union youth reporter [Your Name], with a look at some of the big issues that young people in [Your State] are interested in.

[Come up with a 1-minute television report with interviews from Farmers Union youth about what they are looking for in a presidential candidate. If you were able to vote today, what kinds of issues would be important to you?]

Lesson Plan 2: Sharing My Voice

Unit Objective:	Young people will learn to share their opinions and ideas in a variety of ways.
Grades:	9-12
Length:	2 hours: 5 min. for background, 20 min. for Activity Sheet B, 30 min. for guest speakers, 20 min. to complete Activity Sheet C, 20 min. for sharing projects in small groups or with the whole group, depending on numbers, 10 min. brainstorming, and 15 min. discussion on service leadership.
Materials Needed:	Activity Sheets B and C, “NFU Communications Examples,” “Citizenship as Service,” pencils, and extra loose-leaf paper.
Preparation Needed:	Print Activity Sheet B and C so each student receives one. Print a copy of “Citizenship as Service” sheet. Download and have available the “NFU Communications Examples” in case students would like to see or hear an example of each area of communications. Invite someone who has advocated to legislators and someone involved in media relations to speak to the group.

Background:

Young people have more opportunities than ever to voice their ideas and opinions. Through sites like YouTube.com, Blogger.com, MySpace.com, Facebook.com and many others, youth are able to share their views and experiences with the world. Another place you can share your voice is through your Farmers Union organization. Young people may participate through policy formation, legislative advocacy, and other leadership opportunities.

The concept of “sharing your voice” also includes sharing your time and talents. Sharing your voice may actually be a quiet, yet equally significant, action.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce the concept of the lesson with an overview of the background information above.
2. *Before you can share your voice, first you must find your voice. What interests you? What are your strengths? What experiences and skills do you bring to the table? What are you most passionate about?* Have the group partner up, or divide into threes, and have them go over questions in Activity Sheet B.
3. Introduce the legislative contact you have asked to speak to the group. This person may have attended a Farmers Union fly-in, may be a legislative representative, or may be a lawmaker. They could speak for 10 minutes, plus five minutes for questions, about their experiences and tips for advocating.
4. Introduce the media contact you have asked to speak to the group. This person may be a local reporter, a freelance writer, a communications specialist, a blogger or someone with experience writing editorials. They could speak for 10 minutes, plus five minutes for questions, about their experiences and tips for using media to express views.
5. Hand out Activity Sheet C and go over the communications methods included on the sheet. Be prepared with examples, such as the “NFU Communications Examples” provided, that they can refer to when preparing these items. Ask them to do their best as they will have the opportunity to share their activities with the rest of the group and may have the opportunity to perfect it later for public release. If they finish one, have them start on another method.
6. Have the class divide into groups based on topical themes to share their communications projects. Or, they may present to the entire group if time permits.
7. Open group discussion. *What did you observe about yourself or others from this exercise? What were your challenges? Would you feel comfortable sharing this with the real world? If not, why not? What would need to happen to make you feel more comfortable in sharing this opinion in this way? What are some potential outlets for you to share this opinion? Do you feel there is ample opportunity for youth voice in the media? What about in the law-making process? How could Farmers Union young people improve on this?*
8. Discuss “Citizenship as Service” as a group or small groups.

Note: There are certainly opportunities to share projects locally, at the state level, and even nationally if they are open to the opportunity. Suggest ways that their voice could be shared publicly such as in their local or school paper, community or personal blogs, ListenUp.org, Children’s Press Line (cplmedia.org), YouthOutLoud.net, and various other youth media outlets, or through Farmers

Union outlets such as newsletters, web sites, blogs, MySpace.com and Facebook.com pages, YouTube, online media centers, etc. Challenge them to find a public place for their projects.

Although teens will likely not be new to blogging and sharing their thoughts online (a Georgetown University study showed that more than half of all blogs are maintained by young people ages 13-19), it is important to remind the teens about protecting themselves online. Remind them that while every U.S. citizen has the First Amendment right to free speech, they still need to be mindful of what they say. Anything they post can be seen by others and could be saved and held against them. Something that may seem cool now may not seem so cool three years from now when they are applying for schools or jobs. They should also be aware of the information they share with others online to protect themselves from those who may have bad intentions.

Sources: Service leadership discussion contributed by Cathy Statz, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Teen Guide to Safe Blogging at SafeTeens.com.

Finding My Voice

What are some of the issues that you care about?

What are you most passionate about?

What are your strengths and skills?

If you could tell the new United States President one thing, what would it be?

If you had the chance to be interviewed on CNN, what would you want to talk about?

If you could talk to your state's governor, what would you say?

When you meet National Farmers Union President Tom Buis, what will you want to tell him?

What are needs in your community?

What are your citizenship goals?

What barriers do you have, or perceive to have, to action?

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3 . . .

Can anyone hear me? In this activity, you will have your chance to make your voice heard in a variety of ways. Choose at least one of the following avenues for getting your message out.

- **Blog** – express your opinion concisely, but informally, in a written, web format
- **Op-Ed** – share your opinions in 750 words or less for submission to a newspaper as a guest editorial on the page opposite the paper’s editorial section
- **Radio** – prepare three bullet points for a radio interview, thinking 30-second sound bites
- **Television** – prepare for a news conference, including where it would be, who else would be invited and what you would say, keeping in mind a picture says a thousand words and only five to ten seconds may be all that makes the evening news
- **Persuasive Speech** – prepare for a two-minute persuasive speech, outlining who the audience would be and the location or venue for the speech
- **Letter to lawmakers** – share your thoughts
- **Policy submission** – write a policy proposal for consideration by the Farmers Union policy committee and delegates to the annual meeting for inclusion in the policy book
- **Create your own** – use your imagination to create your own event or activity for expressing your voice on the subject you have chosen



Which avenue(s) have you chosen? _____

Why did you choose this/these over others? _____

Who is the target audience for your message? _____

Use the back of this sheet or supplemental sheets of paper to work on your project. When finished, answer the following questions.

How do you think your message will be received by the target audience? _____

How did you feel as you expressed your views in this project? _____

What was the most challenging part of this exercise? _____

What other communications methods might be good to use in supplementing your project? _____

Would you feel comfortable sharing your voice on this topic in this way in the “real world?” Why or why not? _____

NFU Communications Examples

Here are a few examples from National Farmers Union of each of these communications tools that may be shared with young people if they need assistance. Find your own examples of local or state communications tools. (If the audio or video clips do not automatically download, try hitting the refresh button on your Internet browser.)

Blogging examples:

- A blog from Missouri Farmers Union member Richard Oswald on attending a presidential summit in Iowa: <http://nfu.org/blog/2007/11/13/letter-from-langdon-populists-and-pedestals/#more-107>
- A blog from National Farmers Union on World Food Day, which was posted on NFU's MySpace.com blog and the NFU Blog: <http://nfu.org/blog/2007/10/16/october-16-is-world-food-day/>

Op-Ed examples:

- This op-ed by NFU President Tom Buis appeared in the [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel](http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=691849) on Nov. 30, 2008: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=691849>

Radio examples:

- This is a clip of a KWAT Ag Hour radio show hosted by South Dakota Farmers Union member Jason Frerichs and an interview with NFU President Tom Buis: http://www.nfu.org/documents/audio/110807_TomKWATAgHour.mp3
- This is a clip of NFU President Tom Buis as a guest on WHYL-960's Rick Smith Show in which he discusses NAFTA, food safety and the farm bill: <http://www.whylradio.com/shows/Rick%20Smith%201-6%20seg%202.mp3>

Television examples:

- A clip from Lou Dobbs Tonight featuring an interview with NFU President Tom Buis: http://nfu.org/v07/100807_LouDobbsCOOLBuis.mov
- A clip from a news conference featuring NFU President Tom Buis: http://nfu.org/v07/111607_BuisFarmBill.mov

Persuasive Speech examples:

- A persuasive speech delivered by NFU President Tom Buis to members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance: <http://www.nfu.org/wp-content/7-24-07-senate-finance-taxing-farm-country.pdf>

Sample letters to lawmakers:

- Visit NFU's Legislative Action Center for the latest sample letters to Congress: <http://capwiz.com/nfu/home/> Click "Take Action," enter your zip code and use the red arrows to include talking points in a letter and/or write your own comments, which will be e-mailed or can be printed to send to legislators. This is an excellent resource for young people to use to contact members of Congress.
- Find numerous examples of letters to Congress on various subjects written by National Farmers Union and the coalitions it leads at: <http://nfu.org/issues/agriculture-programs/resources/letters>

Policy submission examples:

- A special order of business submitted and approved during the 2007 NFU policy process: http://www.nfu.org/wp-content/2007-sob_farm-bill.pdf
- A variety of policy examples are available in the 2007 NFU policy book: http://www.nfu.org/wp-content/2007_nfu_policy.pdf

Citizenship as Service

Read this to youth, or have small group leaders read it, pausing where indicated and discussing where appropriate. Have youth write their thoughts first, then discuss aloud.

Think about the people in your life who are sharing their voice as leaders. They are often in the spotlight. Everyone knows their names. They are involved in everything. *(Pause)*

Now think about the people who really get things done -- the ones who really make a difference. *(Pause)* Are they the same people? *(Discuss)*

Sometimes they are. But sometimes we forget about the people who work behind the scenes. Good citizenship and sharing your voice as a leader is not always about being in front of the room, at the forefront of the crowd.

Sharing your voice includes using your intelligence, your talents, your skills, your experiences to do something you love, serve others and work for a cause that is greater than yourself. Good citizenship is achieved by all contributions, large and small, made by individuals and groups, with the greater good in mind. What would the world be like if everyone used their unique talents and skills to do something they love, while serving others and working for a cause or reason greater than themselves? *(Discuss)*

What special skills, talents and abilities do you have that you could use in service to others? The majority of things you love to do are also things you do best. *(Discuss)*

How do we develop those skills within ourselves? *(Discuss)*

Citizenship is service. Leadership is service. What does this mean to you? *(Discuss)*

How can you lead by serving? *(Discuss)*

As an American citizen, what kind of leaders do you want to support? Would you like better choices of people in political elections? If so, how do we encourage a different kind of leader to run? *(Discuss)*

Every day provides an opportunity for citizenship and an opportunity to lead by serving others in little ways. What are examples? *(Discuss)*

Lesson Plan 3: Farmers Union Citizenship

Unit Objective: Young people will learn about Farmers Union's role as a local, state, national and global citizen. They will identify ways to exhibit good citizenship through their involvement in Farmers Union and to express policy opinions.

Grades: 9-12

Length: 1 hour: 5 min. background introduction and state and local citizenship examples, 25 min. for policy discussion, 10 min. for policy creation activity, 20 min. for reading and group discussion of "From Camp to the Capitol."

Materials Needed: Portable bulletin boards, copies of state and National Farmers Union policy books, "From Camp to the Capitol" and "Group Discussion Questions."

Preparation Needed: Be prepared with examples of how your local or state Farmers Union organizations display citizenship. Display pictures, news clippings, headlines, policy examples on large portable bulletin boards or in albums that may be passed around. Print enough "From Camp to the Capitol" hand-outs for each student and one "Group Discussion Questions" per small group.

Background:

Farmers Union organizations across the nation actively participate in the democratic process and work to make our communities better places to live. Farmers Union exhibits good citizenship at the local, state, national and global levels and encourages good citizenship of its members.

While many organizations utilize a "top-down" structure, Farmers Union is the opposite. Farmers Union is an organization with true "grassroots" representation. Farmers Union's members are families – men, women, and children; farmers and ranchers; rural residents and urban consumers. These members make Farmers Union's policy during annual conventions at the local, county, state and national levels. They are also involved in advocating for these positions at various legislative hearings, through the media, at the State Capitol and during National Farmers Union legislative fly-ins in Washington. By banding together, they become a strong voice on many issues.

As a member of Farmers Union, you have the right and responsibility to help shape the organization by getting involved and sharing your opinions. Through Farmers Union, you also have opportunities to participate as a citizen advocate for issues that are important to you.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce the concept of the lesson with an overview of the background information above.
2. Explain how policy is developed in the organization and how decisions are made for activities the organization undertakes. Pass around examples of Farmers Union citizenship (ways Farmers Union is an active member of democracy and society and makes the communities it represents better places to live).
3. Hand out Activity Sheet D and have young people cast their votes for topics included in the 2007 National Farmers Union policy book, and/or statements from your state Farmers Union policy book. When they've cast their votes, ask if there are topics to which they passionately agree or disagree. Were there stances that NFU has taken that surprised them?
4. Choose a topic that is getting the most buzz and have those who agree stand on one side of the room and those who disagree stand on the other side of the room in groups. Give the groups a couple minutes to form their best arguments for or against the topics. Have the group that takes NFU's stand go first and give the other side a chance for rebuttal. Make sure groups are respectful of those with opposing ideas. Repeat with other topics.
5. Tell groups they now have the opportunity to amend, add to or write their own suggestion that they could use to initiate their stance as a policy resolution at their local or county Farmers Union annual meeting on these or other issues.
6. Divide into groups and hand out "From Camp to the Capitol" and "Group Discussion Questions." Allow two minutes to read the hand-out, 10 minutes for "Group Discussion Questions" and eight minutes for group reports.

Sources: NFU Policy Book, http://www.nfu.org/wp-content/2007_nfu_policy.pdf, Rachel Becker, North Dakota Farmers Union youth.

National Farmers Union on the Issues

The following are a few direct quotes from the 2007 National Farmers Union Policy Book, enacted by delegates to the 105th anniversary convention in Orlando, Florida. If you were a delegate to this convention how would you have voted? How would you have defended your position? Today you will get your chance!

Health Care: “The National Farmers Union strongly affirms the right of all Americans to have access to affordable, quality health care. National Farmers Union urges: 1) A national policy that addresses the difficulty and greater cost of providing necessary health, education and social services in rural areas; 2) The administration and Congress to continue to work toward universal health coverage for all Americans, cost containment, and attention to the health care needs of rural America.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

Prayer in School: “NFU supports voluntary Bible reading and prayer in our public schools.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

Nutrition: NFU supports “free lunches under the School Lunch Program for all elementary students.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

NFU supports “the removal of soda sales in public schools during school hours.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

Recycling: “We affirm recycling as a socially responsible activity. We encourage federal assistance to help establish an effective recycling system throughout the country for post-consumer and industrial waste to protect our environment and natural resources.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

Renewable Fuels: NFU supports “establishment of a national Renewable Portfolio Standard that requires 25 percent of our energy usage comes from renewable sources by 2025.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

Youth Involvement: “Youth must be prepared to assume eventual leadership of our organization through the following methods: a) Greater encouragement for Farmers Union youth to attain positions of responsibility within the organization; b) Special emphasis should be given to ongoing study programs, camps, All-States Camps and seminars; c) Increased involvement of youth in the organization’s decision-making process, group action and conventions; d) Frequently updated Farmers Union educational materials and texts for youth leaders; e) Recognition of state and national youth leaders who have given of themselves in building the organization’s youth programs as well as the youth that are involved in the organization’s youth programs; f) Action from state organizations to encourage young people to remain active in Farmers Union as they become adults, and g) Formation of additional collegiate Farmers Union chapters and holding a collegiate conference on a regular basis.”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> I passionately agree | <input type="radio"/> I somewhat disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree | <input type="radio"/> I passionately disagree |

From Camp to the Capitol

By Rachel Becker, Napoleon, N.D., Age 17



Do you care about the future of the family farmer? Do you want to protect them, but don't know how you can help? Consider attending a Farmers Union legislative fly-in! The fly-in is an event in which members of Farmers Union from all across the nation gather in Washington, D.C., to help the members of Congress understand the challenges that family farmers and ranchers face in today's world.

I had the privilege of taking part in the fly-in this past fall as a representative from NFU's All-States Leadership Camp and had **the time of my life!** Some of the high points of my trip included meeting various senators and representatives, including Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi! I also got to meet National Farmers Union President Tom Buis, participate in congressional visits, eat at North Dakota Farmers Union's family-farm-sourced restaurant Agraria, and tour the White House and monuments.

You, too, can represent the farmers and ranchers in your area by getting educated, getting passionate, and getting involved.

Education is a key part to this process. You must know what you are talking about so that you can be taken seriously. Don't let this scare you; it is quite easy to become educated. I like to educate myself by **staying updated** on Farmers Union news on the state and national level. I also like to learn more about the latest happenings in the government. Farmers Union day classes and camps are excellent opportunities to learn more about how Farmers Union affects the government.

At first I felt intimidated because I knew I would be going to congressional visits, and I thought I would be too shy to talk. However, after being briefed by Tom Buis and the Secretary of Agriculture, **I was confident** enough to speak up in the meetings.

The next step is to **become passionate**. You need to really believe in what you are talking about. Coming from a rural farm, I quickly became passionate about the Farm Bill, which was the topic we were lobbying for. Suddenly, I **gained the power** to express the concerns of farmers and ranchers directly to the people in Washington. If this subject doesn't interest you, look for a different topic. Farmers Union takes a stand on many issues and there is undoubtedly one that you, too, can get excited about.

When you are passionate and educated, you are ready to **get involved**. People really do care about what you have to say, so **speak up!** You could start on a local or state level, or get practice by joining student government. You can apply to be a page in D.C., take an internship, or apply for trips like this one. You can also attend fly-ins through your state Farmers Union. Many collegiate Farmers Union chapters send members and many other teens I know go with a relative or parent.

I would love to see more youth get involved because they LOVE hearing from the youth. Whether it's a cliché or not, **we ARE the future** of this nation!

Also, many of the congressional visits were held with the senators and representative's aides, who are usually in their early twenties. It is much easier for them to **connect** with us than the elderly farmers. There were only a few groups that had a youth in them, and it was really interesting because it really caught people's attention when we walked in, looking all professional. Although we were scheduled to meet with the aides, the senator or representative usually stopped and talked to us in person when they saw a young group member. This provided us with an extra chance to **be heard**, and allowed us to speak directly to the voting delegate.

The fly-in is an amazing experience, and if you ever get the chance you should definitely **seize the opportunity**. I loved it and am hoping to go again. I am even thinking about applying for an internship in D.C., which is saying a lot because I never thought I would like politics. It was really cool to **make a difference** on the national level and to **make my community and state proud**.

I would once again like to encourage you to find something you are passionate about and get involved. You are the future and **America needs you!**



Group Discussion Questions

1. What are three steps that Rachel recommends for representing your views? In what ways are you already following these three steps in your life? Where could you improve?
2. Which of the bold words or phrases Rachel uses inspire you most and why? What else inspires you to action?
3. Initially, Rachel admits she felt “intimidated” to attend congressional visits. Do you think this feeling is natural or even inevitable? How do you make sure this feeling does not turn into an obstacle? What skills, experiences, actions or beliefs do you need in order to lessen the initial feeling of intimidation that Rachel describes?
4. Before attending a National Farmers Union legislative fly-in, Rachel had no other experience than her involvement in Farmers Union Camp, Farmers Union youth work and school activities. How do you feel your experiences in Farmers Union are preparing you, could prepare you, or should prepare you for an experience like Rachel’s?

Lesson Plan 4: Cooperative Citizenship

- Unit Objective:** Young people will learn how cooperatives are channels of citizenship and public problem-solving.
- Grades:** 9-12
- Length:** 1 ½ hours: 30 min. for “Better Together” Cooperative Activity, 30 min. for cooperative case study and presentations, 30 min. for cooperative games.
- Materials Needed:** Cups, a wide variety of candy, four flip-charts and four sets of markers, “Cooperative Case Study: La Montanita” and “La Montanita Discussion Questions,” materials for cooperative games.
- Preparation Needed:** Prepare cups and candy for the “Better Together” Cooperative Activity. Print the “Cooperative Case Study: La Montanita” for all students and cut and fold the four “La Montanita Discussion Questions” and place in a bowl.

Background:

We are able to make a difference as individuals, yet together, we can do even more. When we cooperate, we work together for a common purpose and benefit.

Cooperatives businesses exist to benefit everyone who is involved with them as well as the communities around them. Just as the United States is a democracy, a cooperative is an economic democracy. Each member has an equal share and one vote when decisions are made. The members own it and share in the money the business spends and makes.

Another goal of a cooperative is to give back to the community through cooperative education. Because of these and other reasons, cooperatives are often viewed as good citizens.

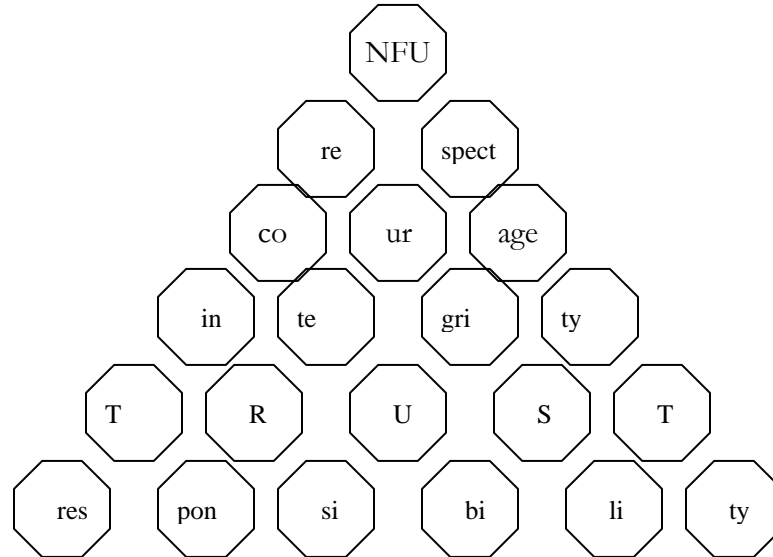
Teaching Strategy:

1. Set the lesson up by presenting the background information.
2. Launch the “Better Together” Cooperative Activity.
3. Divide the group into four teams and have each group draw one of the four questions. Have the group prepare a presentation with flip-charts and markers as though they were presenting to the entire La Montanita board of directors. Have the group nominate leaders to present each page of the flip-chart.
4. *Would you consider La Montanita an example of a good community citizen? What is an example in your state or community of a cooperative or other business that displays good citizenship?*
5. Conclude the session with cooperative games of your choice.

Sources: Cooperative Activity submitted by Lisa Teske, Kansas Farmers Union, www.kansasfu.org. Case Study submitted by Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, www.rmfu.org.

“Better Together” Cooperative Activity

- Create cups with parts of words written on the bottom. The letters on the cups will be used at the end to create principles of citizenship in the form of a triangle. Complete words might be written with the same color marker so the puzzle may be easier to put together.
- The letters on the cup could spell the following. You may use other words depending on the size of your group and areas you would like to focus on.



- Depending on the size of the group, some may have blank cups that would not be used in the exercise. Those with blank cups can help put the pieces together. If you have a large group, more words could be added such as self-control, patience, honesty, compassion, freedom, kindness, forgiveness, honor, fairness. Also, depending on the number of people, and for added difficulty, cups might be used along the sides to form the education, legislation and cooperation of the Farmers Union triangle. Be sure to draw out the cup design before playing to make sure the pyramid will work. For the pyramid to work, you should start with one cup and build down by adding one cup per line.
- Fill the cups with a variety of candy -- jaw breakers, gum, mints, chocolates, sweet, sour, tart, etc. It is better if everyone does not have the same varieties of candy in their cups.
- Have the young people sit in groups in a circle. Pass out the cups to each person and ask them not to eat the candy yet, but for them to look only at the gift they have been given without touching the contents and without looking at anyone else's gift.
- Ask the young people to observe their personal gifts closely. Ask, *in what ways might your gift be like you?* (possible responses: sweet on the inside, made for a purpose, diverse, etc.)
- Now ask them to observe their neighbor's gifts closely. *In what ways might your gift be like the others in the group?* (same shape, all candy, etc.) *What conclusions might we draw from this observation as a metaphor for each of us?* (We're equal in many ways, we may be useful in many ways, etc.) *How do you feel about your gift?*
- Have them dump the contents and look at each piece and compare with others in their group. *Now how do you feel about your gift? Is there some candy that you like more than others? Place your favorite pieces in one pile and put your not-so-favorite pieces in another pile to give to someone else in your group who likes those best. Look at others' pieces and ask for something from their not-so-favorite pile.*
- *What happened to your gift? Did it get bigger/smaller, better/worse? The candy you like might be similar to your strengths and the candy you don't like might be similar to your weaknesses. We all have different strengths and weaknesses we bring to the table. It takes all kinds of people and that's why cooperation is so important in solving problems – we can count on the strengths of others.*
- Explain they now will need to cooperate with those in other groups to build a pyramid with their empty cups.

Cooperative Case Study: La Montanita



In the early 1970s, American consumers became more aware of the benefits of eating a diet rich in fresh vegetables, natural grains and high-quality meats. Unfortunately, it was hard to find these types of products at most grocery stores.

Often, the only options in a community would be processed foods and produce that had been shipped from all over the country and world.

In 1976, a small group of citizens in New Mexico saw the need for natural, local food in their community. They came together to form a cooperative store called La Montanita Food Market. Their goal was to make their community a better place to live by supplying healthy foods, supporting area businesses and by contributing to the local economy by keeping more money and jobs in the area.

Approximately 25 percent of all the products at La Montanita come from local producers, and all dairy products come from local dairy farmers. The remaining goods come from nationally recognized organic and natural brands. The store also has a gourmet deli with top-of-the-line meats, cheeses, soups, salads and entrees prepared fresh daily.



As a cooperative, La Montanita is member-owned. While the store is open to anyone who wishes to shop there, members enjoy special benefits including product discounts and refunds, whereby any year-end profits the co-op earns are returned to the members based on how often they

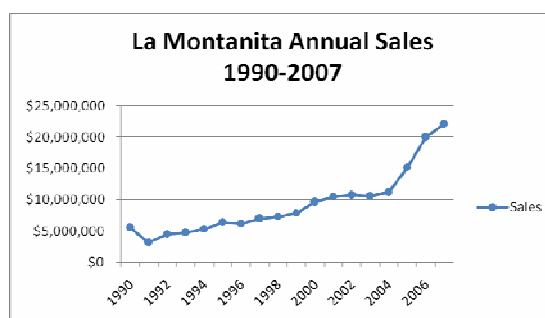
shop. Members also have the ability to help make decisions about their cooperative.



As part of La Montanita's commitment to making good food available to all who want it, members who have disabilities or who live outside the city limits are offered free delivery.

Although La Montanita is facing increased competition over the years, the community has rewarded LaMontanita for its good citizenship by continually shopping at the cooperative.

Sales have been increasing, as shown by the graph on the right. In the last 30 years, La Montanita has grown from serving about 300 households to nearly 14,000 households and has expanded from one store to four locations.



Co-op members are considering opening an additional location in Colorado, with the hopes that Colorado producers will supply, and local consumers will value, the same unique combination of attributes that have made the New Mexico stores successful.

It was not always easy, but the co-op members stuck together and remained true to their goals and to the communities they serve.

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative Development Center has helped provide La Montanita with business advice and clear direction over the years, which has helped in the co-op's success. They plan to provide additional guidance as the co-op expands.

La Montanita Discussion Questions

1. As a current member of the board of directors of La Montanita, you have been asked to assist managers in identifying ways to attract new members by adding value to the cooperative membership experience. What are three recommendations you have for the management?
2. One of La Montanita's strengths is the ability to source fresh, local and natural products. However, the co-op now faces increasing competition from the traditional grocery stores and some direct-to-consumer outlets for these value-added products. As La Montanita's grocery buyer, how do you encourage local farmers and ranchers to continue supplying the co-op?
3. According to the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative Development Center, a well-constructed business plan includes a situation analysis component that discusses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing a cooperative business. What could be some of the potential weaknesses and threats facing La Montanita today and in the future as it looks to expand into Colorado? How could its member-owners prepare to strengthen these potential areas of weakness?
4. American people are increasingly demanding better community and global citizenship from the businesses they encounter. La Montanita board members are interested in advertising their current role as community citizens and would like to expand the cooperative's citizenship efforts. What recommendations do you have for increasing the cooperative's citizenship efforts?

Lesson Plan 5: Global Citizenship

- Unit Objective:** Young people will learn responsibilities and issues of global citizenship.
- Grades:** 9-12
- Length:** 1 ½ hours: 20 min. to do Activity Sheet E and discuss, 30 min. for introduction and discussion of global citizenship through Activity Sheet F, 20 min. for Ecuador discussion, and 20 min. for Ecuador fund-raiser marketing activity.
- Materials Needed:** Activity Sheets E and F, “A Voice for Those Who Have No Voice” and “Discussion Questions,” materials for making a display about the Farmers Union-CARE Ecuador project such as cardboard, material to cover the board, scissors, markers, glue, print-out photos from the CARE site, etc.
- Preparation Needed:** Print Activity Sheets E, F, and “A Voice for Those Who Have No Voice” and “Discussion Questions” for each student.

Background:

Global citizenship is recognizing the connection we have with all human beings that inhabit the Earth. By recognizing that connection, we should also recognize the responsibility we have to each other and to the natural resources we all share.

There are many global issues of concern including poverty, the environment, children’s rights, diversity, labor, HIV-AIDS, etc.

Farmers Union organizations take their roles as a global citizens seriously. Farmers Union acts as a global citizen through the policies it represents, contributions to global causes, as well as through its involvement in organizations such as the International Federation of Agricultural Producers.

One of the issues that Farmers Union fights for regularly is fair trade. Fair trade is when people who grow and produce food and other products are paid a fair price for their work. This helps make sure the producers and workers have enough money to look after themselves and their families and work in safe conditions. Fair trade also ensures that U.S. producers and workers do not unfairly have to compete with imports from countries that pay little or no attention to labor and environmental standards.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Hand out Activity Sheet E and give class a few minutes to fill out and then run through the answer key and discuss the results. *Did this surprise you? Half of the entire village’s wealth would be in the hands of only six people and most of them would be citizens of the United States. What does that say about our world? When one considers our world from such an incredibly compressed perspective, the need for cooperation and understanding becomes glaringly apparent. If these are the trends, what are the remedies? What can we do?* Hand out Activity Sheet F, give five minutes, and discuss as a group.
2. *Say the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word “global citizen.” What are the qualities that you think characterize a good global citizen?* Have the group organize the traits of a good global citizen into no more than 10 characteristics (social justice, an environmental steward, corporate responsibility, etc.). Next, have them rank the traits in order of importance as a group and discuss why they feel that way.
3. Hand out two-sided Ecuador information and discussion questions, then show the NDFU video about the Ecuador CARE project:
<http://www.ndfu.org/data/upfiles/video/careproject.mov>.
4. If younger students in your organization will be creating seed packets for a fund-raising event (See Grades 1-2 and 3-5 Lesson 4 Service Craft), older students could create displays and other marketing plans for raising money. Photos and information from the area can be found at <http://www.care.org/vft/ecuador/journal.asp>.

Sources: CARE, www.care.org, North Dakota Farmers Union and Cindy Schlosser, NDFU member.

Summary of the World

If we could shrink the Earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same, what would it look like?

- 1. How many of our village of 100 people would be from less developed countries with a yearly gross income per capita of \$3,580?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 2. How many of our villagers would be from developed countries with a yearly gross income per capita of \$22,060?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 3. How many would live on less than \$2 a day?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 4. How many would live on less than \$1 a day?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 5. How many would be from North America, including Canada?** What I think _____ Actual _____ **How many would be Asians?** What I think _____ Actual _____ **How many would be Europeans?** What I think _____ Actual _____ **How many would be Africans?** What I think _____ Actual _____ **How many would be from South America and the Caribbean?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 6. How many are white?** What I think _____ Actual _____ **Non-white?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 7. How many would mistrust their own government?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 8. How many would be female?** What I think _____ Actual _____ **How many would be male?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 9. How many would lack access to basic sanitation?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 10. How many would live in the city?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 11. How many would have substandard housing or have no home at all?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 12. How many would be under 18 years old?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 13. How many would lack access to safe drinking water?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 14. How many would be unable to read and write?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 15. How many would suffer from malnutrition?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 16. How many would have Internet access from home?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 17. How many would be citizens of the United States?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 18. How many would be near death?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 19. How many would be near birth?** What I think _____ Actual _____
- 20. How many would have a college education?** What I think _____ Actual _____

Activity Sheet E Answer Key

1. **81** would be from less developed countries with a yearly gross income per capita of \$ 3,580.
2. **19** would be from developed countries with a yearly gross income per capita of \$22,060.
3. **48** would live on \$2 a day.
4. **20** would live on \$1 a day.
5. **5** would be from North America including Canada, there would be **61** Asians, **12** Europeans, **13** Africans, and **9** would be from South America and the Caribbean.
6. **75** would be non-white, while **25** would be white.
7. **60** would mistrust their own government.
8. **51** would be female, and **49** would be male.
9. **48** would lack basic sanitation.
10. **47** would live in the city.
11. **25** would live in substandard housing or have no home at all.
12. **17** would be under 18 years old.
13. **16** would lack access to safe drinking water.
14. **70** would be unable to read.
15. **50** would suffer from malnutrition.
16. **8** would have Internet access from home.
17. **4.5** would be citizens of the United States.
18. **1** would be near death.
19. **1** would be near birth.
20. **1** would have a college education.

“My country is the *world*.

My countrymen are *mankind*.”

~ Thomas Payne, author of *Common Sense* (1776)

What does this quote mean to you?

Do you feel this way?

Do you think most people think this way?

If everyone believed this, what would be different?

How has the world changed since 1776 when Payne wrote this? Have we become more or less connected with our fellow world citizens?

How are we disconnected?

How are we connected? How many global links can we find in this room? They could be personal, friends or relatives you may have in another country, maybe someone you met on MySpace.com? Global links could also be impersonal, but very influential. The origin of our food and our fuel, for example.

How does a crisis in one country impact another?

A Voice for Those Who Have No Voice



*Cindy Schlosser, former
Farmers Union youth
photos courtesy of NDFU*

Cindy Schlosser, a 2000 Farmers Union Torchbearer, currently works at Annunciation House, providing shelter, food and work for poor immigrants and refugees in El Paso, Texas. As a fluent Spanish speaker, she was asked to serve as North Dakota Farmers Union's on-the-ground representative in Ecuador exploring a project NDFU is partnering on with CARE. CARE is an international organization present in 66 countries working at the grassroots level toward the eradication of poverty.

NDFU launched a humanitarian fund-raising effort with CARE to help rural women in Ecuador rebuild their communities through sustainable agricultural practices. The goal is to raise \$50,000 to assist indigenous farmers of the Shuar tribe in the southeastern province of Morona Santiago. Funds will be used to finance small loans to women to buy seeds or cattle and to educate them on agricultural practices that the community has lost over the years.

CARE and NDFU's project works to reintroduce the practice of Aja Shuar (Aja – the farming practice; and Shuar – the indigenous tribe) whereby farmers will receive education on how to plant and grow a wider variety of crops that were used by their ancestors. As proven in other communities that practice Aja Shuar, the level of nutrition increases as well as crop production. Excess produce is then sold which has allowed women to purchase more seeds, clean water for their families, electricity and an education for their children.

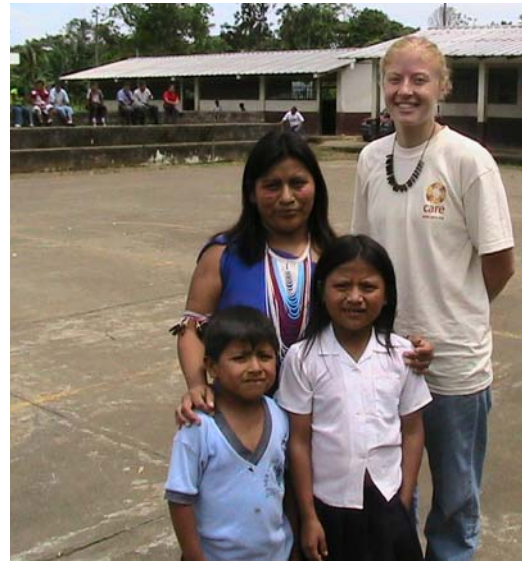
The women have been able to start a cooperative by collectively taking out loans. They use excess seeds to make into jewelry and use the excess fruit they are now able to grow in their fields to make jelly and sell it in nearby markets. It is being shipped to Germany and France through the help of CARE's connections with European markets.

The following are excerpts from Cindy's speech to the 2007 North Dakota Farmers Union Convention:

"We as farmers. . . are connected to human beings all over the earth through our connection to and dependence on the land. The realization of the strength we have in our unity is what allows us to use our voice for those who have no voice or those whose voices are falling on deaf ears.

"The commitment to social and political change from the grassroots is one commitment I highly value about Farmers Union. It has deeply affected what I do and, really, who I am. I have learned to ask questions when decisions are being made in my community. We should question the motivations behind the actions and who is being affected. I have this organization to thank for being so forward thinking, for teaching me to ask the questions, and most importantly the need to listen.

"I see Farmers Union as an organization that unites people around a culture of community. It may be a community of farmers, small business owners, families or students. Farmers Union is a model of a healthy society whose concern is the welfare of the community and even beyond to our global community. We must understand our interconnectedness with every human being on this earth, only then can we move forward to accepting our responsibilities of this global community."



Cindy with family from Ecuador

Discussion Questions

If you were given \$50,000 to try to make a difference in the world, what would you do?

What are things we can do to be good global citizens even if we, as individuals, have limited resources?

Why do you think North Dakota Farmers Union has committed to helping the Shuar community in Ecuador?

NDFU will make their donation on August 29, 2008. Do you have any ideas for how to assist in this effort in the meantime?

Cindy Schlosser, the 2000 Farmers Union Torchbearer who traveled to Ecuador on behalf of NDFU, feels that, "...the strength we have in our unity is what allows us to use our voice for those who have no voice or those whose voices are falling on deaf ears." In what other ways do we or should we take advantage of our collective strength?

Cindy also described how the lessons she learned as a Farmers Union youth have followed her into adulthood. What do you value about your Farmers Union organization? Is it impacting the person you are becoming? If so, how?

Optional Activities

The following activities could be incorporated at the end of any lesson to fill extra time.

1. Have the group plan and implement a community service project for the year.
2. Have senior youth create visual aides to use in teaching the younger age groups. Have the senior youth teach the lessons to the younger age groups for a leadership component.
3. Encourage young people to preview the Meet the Candidates area and take the Presidential Match-O-Matic. By answering questions about their beliefs, it suggests which candidates for president are their best matches:
<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/page?id=3623346>.
4. Lead the group in the St. Mary's Paper Bag Game, which explores global citizenship and free trade issues:
<http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/YouthLeaderResources/pbag.aspx>.
5. Check out the Passport Game:
<http://www.freedomfromhunger.org/bytes/passport/>.
6. See Grades 6-8, Lesson 3, for alternative cooperative case study.
7. Charades or hangman with new vocabulary words.
8. Teach some Farmers Union songs.