

CITIZENSHIP

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Find Your Cause

This activity is part of the **Junior World Changers kit**, created to give teachers of Grades 4, 5 and 6 a fun and practical resource to introduce younger students to social justice issues and to inspire them to stay involved in their local and global communities throughout their lives. To request your copy of the Junior World Changers kit, email youth@freethechildren.com.

Purpose: This activity helps students find the social or environmental issue(s) that piques their interest and inspires them to make a difference as active citizens.

Materials:

- We Day U Spark Sheets, downloaded in advance from www.weday.com
- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer with Internet or the school library

Activity

Step 1: Challenges We Face

Purpose: To introduce students to a wide range of issues and help them find what interests them.

- Go online to www.weday.com and click on “We Day U”. On the page, there is a series of introductions on a range of local and global issues, called Spark Sheets. Print each one, or alternatively, choose as many as you like, keeping in mind the actual and potential interests of your students.
- Put the sheets around the classroom, on the walls or on desks, or go outside and tape them to the wall of the school building.
- Ask students to walk around and read each Spark Sheet. Ask them to stop at the one that sparks their interest the most. They can form a group or be on their own.
- When every student is standing in front of an issue, have them take the sheet and sit down.

Step 2: Issue Breakdown

Purpose: For students to learn how to break a complex issue down into its components and discover how one might take effective action.

- In groups or on their own, encourage students to perform an investigation and explore their chosen issue further.
- Ask students to write down everything they know about the issue.



- Using the school library or classroom resources, have students seek out more information about the issue they choose. Ask them to find and write down five things about the issue that they didn't know before.
- Write on the board the following questions to help guide their research:
 - Who are some of the different people involved? (In child labour, for example, there are children, owners of businesses, parents, people who buy products made with child labour, etc.)
 - What are some causes of this issue?
 - What are some of the ways that this situation can be improved?
 - Who are some of the people/organizations taking action to improve the situation?
 - What can you do to help?
- When students have completed their investigation, bring the class back together and hold a discussion around their research. Ask students to share the information they learned and encourage the class to ask questions.
- Before the conclusion of this activity, ensure students have a deep understanding of each issue explored. Encourage students to perform similar investigations in their daily life when they encounter issues that interest them.