LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TEXAS

Mock Election Toolbox for Youth

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Overview

Description

A 1-hour interactive session for mothers and their children, enrolled in 6th to 12th grades, approximately 30 to 40 mothers and students in the group.

Goal and Objectives

Goal

Encourage informed and active participation in government by facilitating voter engagement.

Objectives

1. Engage students in political decision-making process through participation in mock voter registration, candidates forum, and election activities.
2. Reinforce mothers' capacity for being a voter through observation and participation in mock voter registration, candidates forum, and election activities.

Activity Segments

1. Mock voter registration drive for students (20 minutes)
2. Mock candidates forum (25 minutes)
3. Mock election for students (15 minutes)

Mock Voter Registration Drive

Description

A 20-minute activity in which the students participate in a mock same-day voter registration drive. The students complete an abbreviated voter registration form (with assistance of their mothers, if needed) and submit it at the Elections Department table where they obtain a Mock Voter Registration Certificate, voters guide, and Voter ID for Mock Election.

Two to four LWV volunteers staff the Elections Department. The volunteers pass out the forms, complete a Mock Voter Registration Certificate for each student at the Elections Department table, and are available to answer questions throughout the drive. Two of the volunteers prepare a Mock Voter Registration Roll for each precinct. (Rolls can be completed during the Candidates Forum segment.)

Concepts

- Why vote?
- Who can vote?
- Voter registration requirements and process

Number LWV Volunteers

- One facilitator
- Two to four volunteers to work at the Elections Department table and pass out the Mock Voter Registration Forms, Voter ID for Mock Election, and LWV-Texas *Voters Guide.*
  - Two of the volunteers from the Elections Department table prepare the Mock Voter Registration Rolls for the precincts.
- One photographer

Supplies & Equipment

Forms

- An actual Texas Voter Registration Application (for the facilitator to show)
- Mock Voter Registration Application (one for each student)
- Mock Voter Registration Certificate (one for each student)
- Voter ID for Mock Election (one for each student)
- Mock Voter Registration Roll (one for each precinct)

Supplies

- LWV-Texas *Voters Guides* (one for each student)
- Pencils (one for each student)
- Pens (one for each Elections Department volunteer)
- Large sign (poster board): Elections Department

Equipment

- Camera
- Easel (to display Elections Department sign)
- Table and three chairs (for Elections Department)
- Podium for the facilitator, optional
- Chairs for the audience

Script for Mock Voter Registration Activity

Introduction

Hello future voters! Casting your first vote at age 18 is a milestone that marks your transition from being a girl or boy who lets others decide who runs our government to being a full-fledged citizen who stands up for what you believe in.

Today you're going to experience why it's important to vote, registering to vote, learning about the candidates, and what it's like to vote. Once you learn that it's not so hard to do, you'll be ready to be a voter when you turn 18.

The Importance of Voting

Discussion

Let's talk a little about voting. Do you think it's important to vote? Why?

Activity

Now let's see why voting is such a big deal. Normally, to register to vote in Texas you must:
- to be a citizen of the United States,
- be 18 or older on Election Day,
- not have been declared mentally incapable, and
- not be completing punishment for a bad crime (called a felony).

And you must register to vote at least 30 days before an election.

Today, there is only one requirement for you to vote: You must be younger than age 19.

So, everyone who is younger than 19, please stand up.

Now, those of you who are in the first [three] rows, keep standing. And the rest of you sit down.
- *Note:* Those standing should be about 1/3 of the students in attendance.

The ones standing represent the people who actually voted in the last [primary/midterm/general] election.

Now, questions for those of you sitting down: How do you feel about it if these guys standing get to choose who is going to make the laws for everyone? For example, they are vegetarians and decide that there should be no meat in the school cafeteria, e.g., no pepperoni pizza. (Allow brief discussion.)

That's what happens when only a few people vote—they decide who makes the laws for everyone.

You can all sit down now.

Let's say you are a candidate trying to get elected. Who is more important to you—the person who votes? Or the person who doesn't vote? (Brief discussion)

Have you heard this expression: "If you don't vote, don't complain?" Voting is the way to say, "Yes, I want my opinion counted." Being a voter means you have a voice in who is elected and that the candidates and elected officials will pay attention to what you want. You may not always get exactly what you want, but you can be proud that you have a voice in what happens.

Mock Voter Registration

Introduction

When you become eligible to vote, you will be offered the opportunity to register to vote at you high school. The application looks like this (show actual Texas Voter Registration Application). You can see that it is a short, one-page form that asks for your:

- name,
- address,
- birthday,
- driver's license or last four digits of your social security number, and a
- signature testifying that you
  - are a resident of this county and U.S. citizen,
  - are not completing punishment for a felony crime, and
  - have not been declared mentally incapacitated.

Activity

Some states have same-day registration. Texas doesn't, but we'll pretend we do. If you are younger than 19 and want to register to vote today, stand up.

One of our volunteers from our Elections Department will bring you a mock voter registration application.

To fill out the mock application, you just need to:
- check the boxes that:
  - this is a new application,
  - you live in the United States, and
  - you are younger than age 19.
- Then, print your name and address.
- Finally sign your name and write today's date, which is _____.

After you fill out the application, take it over to the Elections Department table. One of the Elections Department workers will give you a Mock Voter Registration Certificate. You must have this certificate to vote in today's mock election.

After you get your voter registration certificate, pick up a voters guide and a Voter ID for Mock Election. You will need these as well to participate in today's election.

When you go back to your seat, start looking at page [#] in the voters guide about the race for [governor/president/mayor]. Read about that office because today we're going to vote for [governor/president/mayor].

Mock Candidates Forum

Description

A 25-minute activity in which the students attend a mock candidates forum following a discussion of being an informed voter. This example mock candidates forum was designed around a mid-term election for governor. The discussion can be modified for another election, such for president or mayor.

In preparation for the mock candidates forum, two to three mothers are asked in advance to volunteer as candidates. These mothers prepare a 1 minute opening statement and answers to campaign issues.

Prior to the forum, the facilitator stimulates a discussion of issues participants think are important in deciding who to vote for in the selected race. Three to four children write down a question on an issue on an index card, with the help of their mothers and LWV volunteers.

For the mock candidates forum, the candidates sit at a table at the front of the room. The moderator provides a very brief introduction, introduces the candidates, and reads the questions from three to four students in the audience. The candidates give their opening statements and then answer each question from the audience. A timer limits opening statements to 1 minute and answers to questions to 30 seconds. Volunteers pass out and collect index cards.

Concepts

- Being an informed voter
- Nonpartisan voters guides

Number LWV Volunteers

- One facilitator/moderator
- One timekeeper
- Two volunteers to pass out voters guides and index cards
- Photographer

Supplies & Equipment

Supplies

- Table tents with candidate name (one for each candidate)
- Printed programs (one for each participant)
- Index cards (one for each participant)

Equipment

- Stop watch and timing signs
- Table and three chairs for the candidates
- Podium for the narrator, optional
- Chairs for the audience

Script for Mock Candidates Forum

Introduction

Now you are registered to vote in today's election for [governor/president/mayor]. The next step is to become an <u>informed</u> voter. How can you get information about the candidates and their opinions on important issues they would have a say in if elected? (Brief discussion.)

The League of Women Voters is an organization that focuses on making voters be informed. They provide "nonpartisan" information about candidates and issues. This means that they just provide the information but do not support or oppose any candidate or any political party. They leave it up to you to decide how to vote after getting the information. Two ways the League does this is through voters guides and candidates forums.

Take a look at the voters guide that was given to you. Look at the section for [governor/president/mayor]. There you will see the qualifications and responsibilities for the office and a list of questions about issues each candidate for the office was asked to answer. You can compare their answers to help you decide how to vote.

At a candidates forum you get to see the candidates face-to-face and hear them tell you what their opinions are on issues. The audience is also given a chance to ask questions.

Become an Informed Voter

In a few minutes, we're going to have a candidates forum where we can hear these candidates talk about why they would be a good [governor/president/mayor] and answer questions from the audience. But first we should be prepared for the forum. We will want to know what the [governor/president/mayor] does and prepare questions for the candidates to answer. So let's look for information in the voters guide on page [#].

What does a governor do? (Example office)
- Executes a laws passed by the Legislature
- Appoints people to offices that are not elected
- Calls special sessions of the Legislature and decides what issues they can pass laws about in the special session
- Signs or vetoes bills passed by the Legislature

In summary, the governor doesn't actually pass laws, but the governor can tell the Legislature what type of laws he wants them to consider and can veto the laws they pass that he doesn't like. So now let's think about what type of laws are important to you and how you can ask questions about them during the candidates forum.

Today we want two or three good questions. What are some things that are important to you? OK, what do you want to know about that?
- See examples next page

When someone suggests a good question

That's a good question to ask. Will you please write it down on the index card that was passed out? It's ok to have your mother or one of the volunteers help you. I've often needed help in getting my question short and to the point.

Hang on to your question cards for the time being.

Examples
- Education: How much money should public schools get from state government for teachers and other things?
- Jobs: What can the state do to make sure that everyone who wants a job can get one?
- Highways: How should the state make sure that highways and roads are in good shape?
- Water: What should the state do to make sure everyone has safe water to drink?

Activity

Note. Volunteers hand out the programs before the forum begins.

Welcome! I'm _____, representing the League of Women Voters. The League is very glad that you are here. We commend these candidates sitting before you for running for office, participating today, and being willing to tell us how they will improve our community through their public service.

As a reminder, the League is a nonpartisan political organization. We are nonpartisan in that we do not support or oppose candidates for office or political parties. Because we are nonpartisan, no portion of this forum may be used in campaign materials.

To begin, each candidate will have 1 minute for an opening statement. After that, they will each have 30 seconds to respond to questions from the audience. The presentations will be timed to ensure equal opportunity for each candidate. Our timekeeper today is _____. She will raise signs to let you know how much time is left. Please stop promptly when your time is up.

Today's program has the names of the candidates and space to write notes. You were also provided with index cards on which to write your questions for the candidates. Please pass your cards to the end of the aisle for a volunteer to pick up.

Opening Remarks
The candidates are seated in the order that they will give opening remarks. As your name is called, please introduce yourself and tell and tell us what you would like to accomplish as [name of office].
- Name Candidate 1 _____
- Name Candidate 2 _____
- Name Candidate 3 _____

Questions and Answers
We have collected several questions from the audience. Each candidate will have equal opportunity to respond to each question. We will vary the speaking order to allow different candidates to speak first.

The first question is _____. Each candidate has 30 seconds to respond, beginning with [name of candidate]. (Continue with second and third questions.)

Closing Remarks
Each candidate now has 30 seconds to make a closing statement. This time we are going to go in reverse order from the opening remarks, beginning with [name of candidate].

End of Session
- This concludes our candidates forum. Thank you to the candidates for your participation and to the audience for your attendance and questions.

Mock Election

Description

A 15-minute activity in which students proceed to their precinct polling place, a present Mock Voter Registration Certificate and a voter ID, sign the Mock Voter Registration Roll, vote on a paper ballot, and place the ballot in the Ballot Box. Volunteers act as poll workers, election monitors, election administrators, TV reporter, and photographer. Poll workers examine voter registration certificates and voter IDs. Election monitors provide each voter with an "I Voted!" sticker and make sure than no one takes a ballot out of the polling area. Election administrators count the ballots in a separate area of the room during refreshments. The TV reporter publicizes voter turnout and the winner of the race during a mock broadcast during the election night party.

Concepts

- What do I need to vote?
- Where do I vote?
- What happens at the polls?

Number LWV Volunteers

- One facilitator
- Three poll workers (one for each precinct)
- Three election monitors (one for each precinct)
- Two election administrators to count the votes (can use poll worker/election monitor)
- One TV reporter (can use poll worker/election monitor volunteer but differentiate with a scarf and mock microphone)
- One photographer (can use poll worker/election monitor)

Supplies & Equipment

Supplies

- Three large signs (poster board): Polling Place
- Three completed Mock Voter Registration Rolls (individualized by precinct)
- Six table tents printed with "Voting Booth"
- Ballots (one for each student)
- Pencils(one for each student)
- "I Voted!" stickers (one for each student; can be hand-made using round white stickers)
- Tally sheet to record number of votes for each candidate
- Lint roller or similar object for TV reporter to use as a mock microphone
- Badge for winning candidate (optional)
- Balloons for the election night party (optional)
- Refreshments, paper plates, cups, and napkins for the election night party

Equipment

- Camera
- Three easels (to display Polling Place signs)
- Three tables with chairs for precinct polling places
- Three tables for voting booths
- Three ballot boxes
- Podium for the narrator, optional
- Chairs for the audience

Script for Mock Election

Introduction

It's Election Day and time to go to the polls! You're all informed voters, but there are a few things you need to know about going to vote.

1. What you need to take to the polling place
    a. Your voter registration card. It normally comes in the mail after you register to vote. For today's election, you obtained a Mock Voter Registration Card.
    b. A photo voter ID. One example of a voter ID is a Texas Driver License, but there are others that you can learn about when you are old enough to vote. Just remember, in Texas you need a photo voter ID.
2. Where to go to vote
    a. You will go vote at your precinct's polling table.
    b. You will find your precinct number on your voter registration card
3. What happens at the polling place
    a. A poll worker will:
        i. check your voter registration card to make sure you are at the right place,
        ii. check your name and photo on your voter ID to make sure you are who you say you are, and
        iii. ask you if you live at the address on your voter ID or have moved.
    b. You will:
        i. sign your name on a voter registration roll and
        ii. obtain your ballot from a poll worker.
    c. At the voting booth, you will mark an X beside the name you want to vote for.
    d. Then drop the ballot in the Ballot Box.
4. After voting:
    a. A poll worker will give you an "I Voted!" sticker.
    b. You will proceed to the election night party to await the results of the election.

Script for Election Night Party

Facilitator/Party Hostess

Isn't this exciting to celebrate democracy on election night with friends and family?! And we are delighted that our candidates could join us as we all await the results of the election. The polls closed at 7 pm and it's now 9 pm, so the results will be available momentarily. Oh, look at the television screen. I see that a reporter on XYZ-TV is standing by with a report.

TV Reporter

Hello! I am _____ from XYZ-TV reporting from the elections office with the results of today's election. It is a historic occasion because voter turnout was the highest it's ever been: 100%. We have tied Punxsutawney, PA, home of the famous Punxsutawney Phil, in voter turnout. And now, to the results just posted: _____ has won the race for _____. Now back to you at the station.

- *Note.* Do NOT give the number of votes for each candidate.

All Volunteers

Volunteers clap and cheer, encouraging participants to do the same.

Facilitator/Party Hostess

Would _____ come forward to be recognized and say a few words to your supporters?

Winner makes a very brief statement and photos are taken.

We again commend all the candidates for running for office, participating today, and being willing to tell us how they will improve our community through their public service. Let's give them all a round of applause. And thank you all for joining us to celebrate democracy on election night.

Comprehensive List of Volunteers, Supplies, and Equipment

Item	Voter Registration	Candidates Forum	Polling Place	Election Party
Volunteers				
Facilitator	1	1	1	1
Volunteers	2 – 4	4	6	3
Signs (Poster Board)				
Elections Department	1			
Polling Place			3	
Materials to be Printed				
Mock Voter Registration Applications	1 per student			
Mock Voter Registration Certificates	1 per student			
Voter ID for Mock Election	1 per student			
Mock Voter Registration Rolls	3			
Candidates Forum Program		1 per attendee		
Table tents with candidate names		3		
Table tents with "Voting Booth"			6	
Ballots			1 per student	
Vote Tally Sheet			1	
Supplies				
Texas Voter Registration Application	1			
LWV-Texas *Voters Guides*	1 per student	1 per attendee		
Pens and pencils	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Index cards		1 per attendee		
"I Voted!" stickers (can be hand-made)			1 per student	
Lint roller (or other) for microphone				1
Winner badge				Optional
Balloons				Optional
Refreshments				Yes
Paper plates, cups, and napkins				Yes
Equipment				
Camera	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Easel	1		3	
Stop watch and timing signs		1 set		
Podium	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Chairs for the audience	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Table with 1-3 chairs, as needed	1 set	1 set	3 sets	
Table for voting booth			3	
Ballot Box (cardboard box, labeled)			3	

Mock Voter Registration Application

1. Answer these questions before proceeding

☐ New application   ☐ Change of address or name   ☐ Request for replacement card

Do you live in the United States?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Will you be less than age 19 on Election Day?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

2. Last name: _____   First name: _____   Middle name: _____

3. Address: _____   City: _____   State: TEXAS

4. I understand it is a crime to lie on a voter registration application.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

- -

Mock Voter Registration Certificate

Name: _____

Precinct #: _____

_____
Signature

Texas

VOTER ID
FOR MOCK ELECTION
MOCK ELECTION

ID 12345678

Iss 11/22/3333   **Exp 11/22/3338**

DOB 01/02/3315

LASTNAME

FIRSTNAME

2120 OLD MAIN STREET

ANYTOWN TX 12345-0000

Firstname Lastname

Hgt 5-05   **Eyes BLU**

DD 1234567890000000

Official Ballot for Mock Election

Vote for one candidate by placing an X in the box in front of the name.

☐ Candidate #1 _____

☐ Candidate #2 _____

☐ Candidate #3 _____

Mock Voter Registration Roll

Precinct # _____

Print name of registered voter:	Voter signs here when obtaining ballot:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	
21.	
22.	
23.	
24.	
25.	

Mock Candidates Forum Program
Candidate Notes

Candidate #1 Name: _____

Candidate #2 Name: _____

Candidate #3 Name: _____

The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

Mock Election Vote Tally Sheet

Voter Turnout

Total number registered voters: _____

Number voters: _____

% of registered voters who cast ballots: _____

Number Votes Cast

Candidate #1 _____   _____
Name

Candidate #2 _____   _____
Name

Candidate #3 _____   _____
Name