



Level: Grades 8-12

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Duration: 4.5 hours

Campaign School for Girls

Overview

In this workshop, students develop the skills and tools to run for student council. The sessions begins with introductions and an icebreaker activity, students are then asked to watch a video profile from the Experiences' Speakers Bureau video profiles. This serves as a catalyst for discussion with students on women in leadership positions, particularly in elected office the campaign school hosts a series of activities where students will discuss and practice the various steps necessary to run for student council (electoral platform, advertising, speech). The day will conclude with each student delivering his or her campaign speech.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Discuss why it is important that women be represented at all orders of government
- Discuss why it matters that young girls and young women get involved, including running for student council
- Develop leadership skills
- Study student council positions
- Discuss what is needed to run an effective campaign
- Develop a campaign platform that reflects their values
- Create supporting promotional materials
- Write and deliver a campaign speech
- Explore the linkages between running for student council to running for political office

Preparation and Materials

Video profiles

"Why run for student council" cue cards

Prizes

Question sheets for "campaign theme" activity

Art supplies for advertng and promotion activity

Public Speaking Tips

Pens and paper



Certificates
Girls Action Foundation “zines”

Procedure

Introduction and Icebreaker (20 min)

EV staff introduces themselves and discusses Equal Voice Experiences’ program

Choose an icebreaker from the icebreaker toolkit (Possibilities Training Group) that is appropriate to the audience. For example, if the girls already know each other then you will not need a “get to know you” type of activity.

Agenda (5 min)

Explain the format for the campaign school: we will begin by watching a video profile of a woman in politics, followed by a discussion on why it is important to have women in public office and why it matters that young girls get involved including running for student council. The rest of the day will be learning and practicing the steps necessary to run for student council: campaign platform, promotional materials, and speech.

Video (15 min)

Introduce video series. Briefly describe the purpose (to inspire and encourage young women to run for government) and where the videos can be found.

Introduce the specific video to be shown.

Watch video

Ask students what they got out of the video. What stood out for them?

Transition into running for student council: eg. this woman saw that something needed to be changed and she took action. This can be applied to student council. Is there something you want changed at your high school? This would be a reason to run for student council. There are also other reasons which we will explore now.

Why Run for Student Council? (15 min)

Explain that we will be doing an activity that explores the reasons why students run for student council. On the board, write “☺”, “☹”.

Divide the group into two. Hand out cue cards to each group (each pile of cue cards is the same for each group and contains a reason to run for student council. Some reasons are better than others. Cue cards are a different colour for each group. Include some blank cards).



One by one, each group member looks at the cards and must tape their card to the right category on the board. The group who finishes first wins a prize. Then with the blank cards students are encouraged to add more reasons why they would run.

Reasons to run for student council:

- You Like to bring about change.
- You Would enjoy a career in politics.
- You Enjoy planning events.
- You Are outgoing and sociable.
- You Have time to attend the meetings!
- Many elected officials were on student council

- To effect change, women need to be at least 30% of the elected officials
- Good extracurricular when applying to colleges and universities

Reason not to run for student council:

- Increase my popularity
- To be the boss
- To shorten the school day
- (etc)

Student Council Positions

It is important to know the positions in student council and the basic responsibilities for them. Remember, the campaign - or even winning it - is not the end result of running for student council. You should know the responsibilities and tasks you will face once you have the position to make sure that you are indeed ready for it.

Ask: What are common Student Council Positions? President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer.

Briefly explain what each position is responsible for:

- **President:** The class president normally runs council meetings. The president may also represent the student body in meetings with school administration members. The president is also responsible for the disbursement of funds.
- **Vice President:** The vice president assists the president in many duties. The vice president also stands in for the president when necessary.
- **Secretary:** The class secretary keeps accurate record of meetings and student activities, programs, and sessions. You should be organized and like to write if you run for this position.
- **Treasurer:** Are you good with numbers? Interested in bookkeeping or accounting? The treasurer keeps track of funds.

Ask: what position do you want to run for? You don't have to know the answer. Today, we will provide you with the tools to run for all of them!



Mock Campaign

Now that we are clear on why to run for student council and what positions exist, we can begin developing our campaign. The rest of the day will be spent developing a mock campaign.

Campaign Platform (25 min)

The first step in developing a campaign is creating your campaign platform, or your theme. For example, if you are passionate about the environment, maybe recycling is your theme. If you really love food, perhaps the food in the school cafeteria is your theme or maybe you want more clubs?

You will work with a partner.

To develop your campaign platform,

Distribute “Campaign Theme” handout for students to write the answers to the exercise.

Go over the sheet with the students:

First, make a list of issues you are passionate about. Once you have made the list, choose your top 3 issues. With each of the top 3 issues, identify a problem that can be solved. From there choose the issue and the problem that you want to use as your campaign platform.

Feel free to discuss and brainstorm with your partner. Note that the answers to these questions will be the basis of the rest of the day’s activities.

As facilitator, ensure the students are on track. Once they have their theme and problem, explain that they are now ready for form a vision statement.

A vision statement will help guide your promotional materials, your campaign speech, and keep you on track in the year ahead. What you want to accomplish becomes your vision for the year.

Explain what a vision statement is, give examples, and then individually have each student form their statement.

A vision is simply a well-defined statement or description of the future where you have achieved your goals. It is imagining what it looks like when you are successful as class president, vice president, secretary etc. **It must be realistic and easy to understand because this is the basis of the messages you will be sharing with voters.**

To form a vision statement try completing this sentence:

I will be successful when...(we have 5 more school clubs)

or

By the end of the year, I will _____ by

_____.



(By the end of the year, I will have started 5 new clubs by working with teachers and students...)

Ask each student to share their vision statement with the group.

Let students know that an alternative way to form a campaign platform is to do a student survey. This way you will find out what the students want, and you can work towards that goal.

BREAK (10 min)

Advertising (30 min)

Ask: How many Canadians voted in the last federal election? 58%

Ask: What percentage of young people voted? 44% (age 18-24)

Ask: Why do you think that is?

If students don't mention negative campaigning, tell them that is one of the reasons. In a campaign voters want to hear what a candidate will do, not what other candidates will not do.

Another reason cited by youth for not voting is a mistrust of politicians and apathy (explain apathy). If politicians fight and call each other names, it is difficult to respect them. Remember this when you develop your promotional material. Tell students what YOU are going to do, and be respectful of other candidates.

How to positively differentiate yourself from your opponents:

Focus this conversation on "I will" as opposed to "my opponent said or my opponent did".

Positive positioning statements such as "As student council president, I will..." Keep these promises achievable and reliable. Don't promise to have a school dance once a week but keep your goals reasonable.

Have you done something that makes you stand out? Did you organize a school activity? Run on your track record.

Methods of Promotion:

Any good campaign, whether for municipal, provincial, or federal politics, or for student council, relies on voters knowing who you are and what your message is. Politicians go door to door, deliver flyers, place radio and TV ads.

Elicit from the students different ways that they can promote themselves throughout the school.

Students may say: a catchy slogan, posters, social media, give aways, youtube, Facebook, social media, etc.



The goal of advertising and promotion is for the voters to get to know you, to get to know what your vision and goals are, and to get elected!

Making advertising and promotional materials:

Tell the students that the next 20 minutes are for them to make some advertising material. They can make a poster, a pamphlet, or develop an advertising strategy.

Depending on the location and facilitator, students may have the option to create a 30 second promotional spot with a camcorder. When choosing this option, keep the following in mind: time, availability and knowledge of electronics, how to make and provide copies of the 30 second spots.

Encourage the students to be creative, positive, and to remember their vision and campaign platform.

Campaign Speech (45min)

Brainstorm together what should be in a campaign speech. Create a mind map on the board, with “speech” at the centre. The map should have 3 main branches, with shoots off of each:

Introduction

- Welcome your classmates
- Who you are
- What position you are running for
- Why you are the best candidate - Outline your experience

Body

- Why you are running for office
- Outline the issue(s) you have identified and how you will solve it (To be convincing, you've got to offer reasonable solutions; nobody believes extravagant promises)

Conclusion

- Thank the audience
- Tell them you are available to talk to them
- Remind them that the only way to make positive changes in the school is by being involved in the decision-making process.
- Tell them you will be working for them and are open to their ideas
- If you have a slogan, say it here



Once you have finished the mind map, ask students to write a speech that is one or two minutes long (which means their points will have to be short and meaningful). Remind students to be sure to put their individual stamp on it – if they are funny, use humour, if they are good with words, use some poetry. Be creative! And be honest. If you are passionate about what you are talking about, this will show through.

Give students up to 30 minutes to write their speech.

For the last 5 or 10 minutes, go over presentation tips.

Distribute Public Speaking Tips

If there is time, give students the opportunity to practice speaking in front of the group (they will be presenting their speeches after lunch).

Public speaking tips:

Know your audience

Know how many people will be there and know the layout of the room. This will determine how loudly you speak, and where you will look while talking.

How familiar is the audience with your topic? You should have done your research to know what is important to the students. This way you will ensure their attention!

If you find out about some key people in the audience, you can use them in your opening comments to gain rapport with the audience.

You can use some opening remarks and responses from the audience to give you an idea of the direction of their interest and perhaps their mood. If the audience seems in a light mood, perhaps you could sprinkle in a few jokes to keep their interest. If they seemed to be very serious about your topic, you could get right to the meat of the matter.

Be prepared

Write your speech and make sure you believe in it. If you are passionate about your message, it will be easier to remember what you want to say. You can use notecards during the speech, but try not to read from it. You want to sound sincere, and reading your speech or reciting it word for word will make it sound more like an assignment than a speech that you are truly passionate about.

Practice, practice, practice.

Stand in front of a mirror and watch yourself. Don't be a statue; you should move your head and arms in a normal manner. After you're comfortable in front of the mirror, use your parents or your best friend as an audience. Ask for their constructive criticism and take their advice. If your speech is too short, add to it, but don't add things just to fill time. Make sure it's relevant to your campaign. If your speech is too long, cut some things out, but don't eliminate your most important issues.

Eat a light meal and drink some water.



You don't want to feel hungry and light-headed while you're speaking, and you don't want your mouth to feel like the Sahara Desert. Just don't eat too much--you don't want to throw up, either.

Dress appropriately.

People are more likely to take you seriously if you are well groomed. Make sure your clothes are clean and pressed, and shine your shoes. If you want people to think you really care about the school, you have to look like you really care about yourself. Avoid high heels--they are uncomfortable and difficult to walk in when you're nervous. Also, don't wear anything that is too tight--you need to be able to breathe.

Look at your audience

Making eye contact with members of the audience will make them look at you and keep them engaged in your message. Ask your close friends to sit in different areas of the room so that you won't focus on just one place. Keep your head up: look at the audience, not your shoes.

Smile

Look like you're excited about running for office. No one will vote for someone who looks like they don't really want the office.

Don't talk too fast.

Everyone has a tendency to rush when they are speaking in public. Make sure your audience can actually understand what you are saying. Force yourself to slow down.

Pause at impact statements. Impact statements are statements that are important for your audience to listen to and to think about. Give them the opportunity to do this by pausing briefly. For example, I might say "Only 58% of Canadians voted in the last federal election." I would then pause to let the audience think about the impact of that statement.

Breathe and root your feet

By breathing evenly and standing strong you will feel calm and in command.

Don't rush off the stage.

After you finish speaking, look at the audience, make eye contact with several people, nod at your opponents, gather up your notecards, and walk off the stage. The last thing you do will make a lasting impression.

Remember, everyone gets nervous when speaking in front of an audience, and the world won't come to an end if you mess up. Just do your best, be sincere, and have fun. Good luck!

LUNCH (45 min)

Presentations (1 hour)

Each girl will present their speech to the group. In attendance may also be mentors and other elected officials who will be able to give positive feedback.



Emphasize to the students that this is a practice run. It is OK to make mistakes. This is an opportunity to practice, gain confidence, and get feedback.

If there are public officials in attendance, take time to introduce them to the group, and a few minutes for each to say a few words.

Wrap up (20min)

Connect all of the day's learnings to running for political office, or to other aspects of their lives (employment, clubs etc).

Creating a vision, having a goal, promotion, and public speaking, are all skills needed to run for public office. However, these skills are also important in other aspects of your life. Being able to define your goals will help you with career planning; knowing how to promote yourself positively will help you in job interviews; public speaking skills are good for class presentations, and for many jobs as well. So whether or not you run for student council, the skills you learned today will help you in all aspects of your life.

If you would like to learn more about what it is like to be an elected official, I encourage you to sign up for the Experiences mentorship program, which will give you the opportunity to ask questions about what it is like to be an elected official, the skills they needed to become one, and to potentially job shadow.

Hand out certificates (to be done perhaps by public figures)

Thank the students for attending.

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Campaign Theme Worksheet

1. List of issues you are passionate about.

2. Choose your top 3 issues.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.



3. With each of the top 3 issues, identify a problem that can be solved.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

4. Choose the issue and the problem that you want to use as your campaign platform.