



Who's the Boss

Life Skills:

Self Responsibility, Communication, Leadership

What to Do:

Youth will investigate the similarities and differences between different forms of government.

Measuring Success:

Youth will be able to identify and describe three basic forms of government: Democracy, Monarchy, and Dictatorship; and develop an understanding of the importance of citizen participation to a democratic form of government.

Audience:

4th – 12th grades

Time Involved:

10 to 30 minutes

Group Size:

5 – 30

Preparation and Materials

- Markers
- Drawing paper / poster board
- Tape
- Flip chart

Introduction

When decisions which affect citizens of a nation are made by one leader, the form of government is an autocracy (dictator); by a small group of noble families or the highest social class, an aristocracy (monarchy); by citizens through their representatives, a democracy. The extent of voting reflects the degree of freedom of the citizens or inhabitants in any nation, realm or homeland.

The Activity

Divide the group into teams of two or three and assign each group with one of the three types of government: autocracy (dictator), aristocracy (monarchy), or democracy. Distribute paper/poster board and markers. Ask each team to draw a scene depicting their assigned government.

Reflect/Discuss

Now that you are finished, hang your drawings on the wall. We will go around the room and ask each team to describe their drawing.

- Who leads the government?
- How is the leader selected?
- How is the role of leader transferred from one leader to another?
- What are the duties and responsibilities of executive leadership?
- Who makes laws and rules?
- Who judges whether laws are fair?
- Are the rules/laws just for everyone?

Tell What is Important

The belief in free popular elections is one of the basic principles of a democratic government. Democratic government depends on citizen participation. One type of citizen participation is voting. Voting is both a right and a responsibility.

Generalize to Your Life

Your vote is an opportunity to have a voice in the operation of the government. That government could be in your school, town state or in Washington D.C. Your vote is important. It enables you to express your opinion about your government – even if the majority disagrees with you.

Apply What You Learned

Using a flip chart, have everyone list the similarities and differences between the three forms of government. The more citizen participation, especially through voting, takes place, the more democratic the form of government.

Follow-up:

If you are 18 years old, you should register to vote. If not yet 18, become familiar with the process so that you can register to vote upon your 18th birthday. To register to vote in Arkansas, you must:

- Be a United States Citizen
- Be an Arkansas resident (residing in Arkansas at least 31 days before the first election in which you will vote)
- Be age 18 or turn 18 on or before the next election
- Not be a convicted felon whose sentence has not been discharged or pardoned
- Not be presently adjudged as mentally incompetent as to your ability to vote by a court of competent jurisdiction
- Not be registered elsewhere – in another county in Arkansas or another state

More Challenges

- Run for an elected office in your club, school or class. Develop your platform and conduct your campaign.
- Find a political candidate who seems to believe in the same things you do. Volunteer to help with the candidate's campaign.
- Create your own new and different political party that deals with issues the others do not. Come up with a party that is perfectly shaped around your ideas and beliefs.

Developed from Arkansas Builds Citizens lessons available from the Office of the Arkansas Secretary of State as well as the My Government Exploring Citizenship curriculum available from the University of Florida