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Dear Educator,

I am passionate about advisory discussions for all ages and am happy to share these free lessons with you.

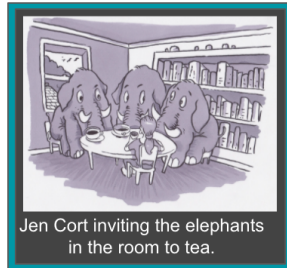
Lessons Topics Include:

- Understanding Equity, Equality and Justice
- Expressing Strong Feelings So All Can Hear
- Exploring Fairness, Sameness, and Differences
- Being Critical Consumers of Information
- Being A Change Agent
- Making Decisions versus Having Reactions
- Labeling and Unlabeling Others

Please share these lessons with others and provide feedback on how they work for you!

For the full list of lessons and resources, please visit my website at <http://www.jencort.com/elections>. Please let me know how these work for you!





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Middle & Upper School Expressing Strong Beliefs So Others Can Hear

Election Connection: Throughout the campaign we have heard candidates talk over each other, using bigger and stronger language to convey their points while appearing to “reload” (preparing responses while the other person is speaking) before than listening and responding thoughtfully.

Quakerism Connection:

Sitting next to questions and challenges are among Quaker practices, especially when strong and differing opinions are expressed. Allowing for silence to reflect on thoughts shared and reminding ourselves of Friends' focus on peaceful conflict resolution support these efforts .

Objective:

Students will create a framework for talking and listening so all can speak and be heard.

Preparation:

Time: 10 minutes to read lesson

Materials:

- [Creating Community Norms](#) or <https://goo.gl/9Jx3HQ>

Lesson Steps:

1. Gather the group together
2. Share with the group that you will create community norms for having conversations about topics eliciting strong reactions

3. Spend a few minutes brainstorming the term “Community Norms”. **Answers should include, but not be limited to:** “Community Norms are agreements for how the group works together”
4. Ask the group to sit quietly for a minute and then pose “Let’s think about a topic about which you have strong [feelings](#)”
 - a. While still in silence, prompt “Think about how others respond verbally, nonverbally and/or on social media to the situation”
 - b. Remaining in silence, ask “What makes having that conversation easier? And what makes the conversation more difficult?”
5. Write or project the following on the board with space under each for writing answers:

Challenging Verbal	More Supportive Verbal	Community Norms Verbal
Non-Verbal	Non-Verbal	Non-Verbal
Social Media	Social Media	Social Media

- a. Ask “What were some of the things you thought made the conversations more challenging?” (list responses on board)

Answers should include but not be limited to:

 1. Appearing open (having open body language)
 2. Resisting distractions
 3. Being welcoming (consistent between words, tone of voice and actions)
- b. Ask “What makes these conversations easier?” (list responses on board).

Answers should include but not be limited to:

 1. Waiting to respond rather than interrupting
 2. Being distracted, such as talking to others
 3. Using dismissive language or put downs
- c. Break the group into triads or quads and ask them to spend a few minutes discussing “How can we use some of the items on both lists to create *our* ‘Community Norms’?”
- d. Bring the group back together and share responses
- e. Have the group read the list of Community Norms in silence. Suggest they think again about the passionate topic from the beginning of the discussion while looking at the Community Norms. Would you feel more

comfortable discussing that topic with the group if we used the Community Norms? Are there Norms missing?

- f. Take a few minutes to hear additions and subtractions
- g. Challenge the group:
 - i. Take the next few days and try to demonstrate these norms in your lives, on teams, in classes, at home, reacting to the news and/or on social media
 - ii. Look for times when these kinds of norms are visible and when they are needed

Parent Note:

We have heard concerns about the impact of the election on our students. We recognize that focusing our time only on the election process dilutes the elasticity of the skills we want to stretch beyond the election cycle. Therefore we are spending our time on skills relating to the topics through an Election Connection.

Today we discussed the differences between what is happening when conversations are more challenging and when they are easier (noting verbal, nonverbal and social media responses). We also created a set of [community norms](#), and are spending the next few days noting when these norms are visible and demonstrating them when absent.

Resources:

Looking for resources on talking about the elections with your child? Check out www.jencort.com/elections.