

The Dinner Party Curriculum Project

Classroom Connections: Who Has Made Great Contributions To Our World

Grade Levels: Upper Elementary, Middle, High School



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Art teacher Andrea Horn created a unit of study for lesson for Grade Five entitled *Mothers of Mother Earth*. What follows is Lesson One of that unit of study, "Who Has Made Great Contributions to Our World?" in which fifth graders consider why more men, as opposed to women, are generally recognized as contributors to our world. After creating a list of people who have made great contributions, the students surmise why there are mostly men on their list. Students determine what counts as a contribution and consider those people who have made great contributions to our world. This lesson can be adapted for older students.

Enduring Ideas:

1. Across cultures and throughout history, women have made great contributions in improving our world.

Lesson One: Who Has Made Great Contributions To Our World

Grade: Five

Time Allotment: Two forty-five minute class periods.



Overview:

Lesson Summary:

The lesson will begin with a class brainstorm about the term "contribution." Students will then be required to list three to five people who have made great contributions to the world. A class discussion will take place around these individual lists of people. Students will then work in small groups to identify images of important people in American history. Another discussion will take place to "set the table" for the introduction of artist Judy Chicago.

Artworks, Artists, and Artifacts:

1. Five photographs of various American men in history
2. Six photographs of American women in history
3. Power Point presentation on artist Judy Chicago
4. Exhibition poster of *The Dinner Party*



Key Concepts Addressed in Lesson One:

1. Women have made great contributions to the world that should be considered of equal importance to those of men.
2. Women have made contributions to the world that have been undervalued, ignored, and erased.

Essential Questions Addressed in Lesson One:

1. What defines a “great contribution”?
2. Why is it important to learn about the contributions of all human beings?

PA Standards:

9.2.5 Historical and Cultural Contexts

- E. Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques, and purposes of works in the arts.
- F. Know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

History, Writing

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of “great contributions” through participation in a group brainstorm/discussion and a writing activity.
2. Demonstrate their understanding of “women’s great contributions being undervalued, ignored and erased” through participation in small and large group discussions.
3. Demonstrate their understanding of “why we are exploring the life and art of Judy Chicago” through participation in group discussion.

Assessment:

1. Objective #1: The students will know that they have a better understanding of “great contributions” through using key words learned in the group brainstorm/discussion and through constructing lists of great contributors to the world and evaluating why they are great contributors.
 - ▶ The teacher will observe the efforts and successes of students in their discussion.
 - ▶ The teacher will also monitor students’ success at naming three to five great contributors and listing their contributions.
2. Objective #2: The students will know that they have a better understanding of “women’s great contributions being undervalued, ignored and erased” through participation in small and large group discussions where specific examples are discussed.
 - ▶ The teacher will observe the efforts and successes of students in their small and large group discussion.
3. Objective #3: The students will know that they have a better understanding of “why we are exploring the life and art of Judy Chicago” through their participation in the group discussion and through naming one contribution made by Judy Chicago.
 - ▶ The teacher will observe students’ efforts and contributions to the group.

Sequence of Action:

Instructional Strategies/Activities:



Engage:

1. “What is a contribution?” This question should be used to stimulate a class brainstorming session. Ideas should be documented on chart paper as well as in student sketchbook/journals. Students should be encouraged to make personal connections to the concept of “contribution.” “Have you made contributions in your life to friends, family, community?” “Do you know someone who has made contributions to friends, family, community?”

2. “What would be considered a great contribution to the world?” This question should be used to prompt the next part of the discussion. Again, ideas should be documented on chart paper as well as in student journals.

Develop:

1. “Who have you learned about in school—art, music, history, science, math, language arts, etc.—that you feel has made a difference in the world? Maybe you have read books about great contributors to the world. Perhaps your family has taught you about great people in history. Students will then be encouraged to create a list of three to five people who they feel have made great contributions to the world. They should also justify their selections by stating each person’s contribution. If students are having difficulties, encourage them to share ideas/questions with partners or small groups.

2. Each student will then be given the opportunity to share one of her/his ideas, which will be documented on large chart paper. The teacher should categorize the ideas as they are shared, without explaining the categories to the students. Record all of the female contributors on one list and all of the male contributors on the other list.

3. After recording all of the ideas, ask students to make observations about their lists of world contributors. More than likely, the majority of the contributors mentioned will be men and this is a key point for discussion. Inquiry to prompt dialogue might include:

- ▶ “Why are there mostly men on our list of great contributions to the world?”
- ▶ “Does your personal list consist of mostly men or women?”
- ▶ “Why do you think this occurred?”
- ▶ “What have you learned about great women in history?”
- ▶ “Is it possible that there are just as many women in the world who have accomplished and achieved just as much as men?”
- ▶ “Why don’t we know as much about women’s contributions to the world?”
- ▶ “Is this fair?”

4. Explain to students that they are going to do another exercise involving those who have made great contributions to the world. At this time, students should be put into groups of three to five. Each group should be given an envelope containing 11 pictures—five men and six women. One person should be selected to act as a recorder for the group. The object is for each group to try to identify each person’s contribution.

5. After the exercise, each group should have at least one opportunity to identify a picture to the entire class. This process should also be documented on two pieces of chart paper. This time the students should have an understanding of why there is a list of women and a separate list of men. Again, chances are the majority of the pictures identified will be men. Inquiry to provoke dialogue might include similar questions as the last exercise:

- ▶ “Why were we able to identify more men than women?”
- ▶ “What have you learned about great women in history?”
- ▶ “Is it possible that there are just as many women in the world who have accomplished and achieved as much as men?”

- ▶ “Why don’t we know as much about women’s contributions to the world?”
- ▶ “What can we do about this?”
- ▶ Students should first participate in a small group discussion. Then, each group should have an opportunity to share their reasoning with the entire class. Again, this process should be documented on chart paper.

6. After analyzing the ideas on the chart paper and coming to the conclusion that more is known of men’s contributions than women’s, students will be made aware of the unit’s big idea: Across cultures and throughout history, women have made great contributions in improving our world. Explain to students that during this unit of study they will be exploring achievements and accomplishments of women throughout history. They will do so through discussion, writing, research and creating art.

7. Power Point of Judy Chicago. As new terms and ideas are presented to students it is important to give grade-appropriate definitions.



▶ *Slide One:* Provide students with a grade-appropriate idea of what it means to be a feminist. Feminist – A person who believes in and advocates equal rights for women. Intellectual – A person who has a highly developed ability to think, reason, and understand. Inquiry to accompany the slide might include: “Has anyone ever heard of Judy Chicago before?” “Why do you think I’m including her in this lesson?”

▶ *Slide Two:* Publications - magazines, newspapers, journals, books, etc. Inquiry to accompany the slide might include: “What does it mean to be a professional artist?” How does an artist fit under the theme of “great contributions?”

▶ *Slide Three:* Again, give students a grade-appropriate idea of the meaning of Feminist Art. Feminist Art – Art that is about women and advocates equal rights for women. Inquiry to accompany the slide might include: “Why do you think it was important to Judy Chicago to create special art programs for women?” “Why would it be important to create art about women and their experiences?”

▶ *Slide Four:* Obligation – duty, responsibility. Inquiry to accompany the slide might include: “What valuable life lessons have your parents/family taught you?” “Is it possible to learn valuable life lessons from people other than members of your family?”

▶ *Slide Five:* Inquiry to accompany the slide might include: “What kind of research have you done in the past?” Why is research important?”

▶ *Slide Six:* Inquiry to accompany the slide might include: “What does collaboration mean to you?” “What kind of collaborative work have you experienced?” “Have you heard of this work of art before?”

Closure:

1. At the end of the Power Point presentation, prompt students with questions related to Judy Chicago and her life/art. Inquiry to provoke discussion might include:

- ▶ “How does artist Judy Chicago fit into this idea of ‘great contributions?’”
- ▶ “Why are we learning about the life and art of Judy Chicago?”
- ▶ “What questions do you want answers to based on the contributions of women and/or Judy Chicago?”



Preparation:

1. Teacher Research and Preparation:

- ▶ Development of Inquiry
- ▶ Acquire and copy images of five various American men/six various American women/Research their contributions
- ▶ Create fifth-grade definitions of key terms for lesson
- ▶ Create Power Point presentation of Judy Chicago

2. Instructional Resources:

- ▶ Large chart paper
- ▶ Five photographs of various American men in history for each group
- ▶ Six photographs of various American women in history for each group
- ▶ Power Point presentation introducing Judy Chicago

3. Instructional Resources available from Through the Flower <http://www.throughtheflower.org/store/>:

- ▶ Exhibition poster of *The Dinner Party*
- ▶ Postcards of installation overview of *The Dinner Party* (one for each group)
- ▶ Chicago, J. (2007) *The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation*. Merrell Publishers Limited. New York, NY.

4. Student Supplies:

- ▶ Journal-sketchbooks.
- ▶ Pencils.

