

Hearts on Fire Teacher's Guide

CREATING GLOBAL CITIZENS

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Facing History and Ourselves

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Using Hearts on Fire in the Classroom

The Hearts on Fire Visionaries have had a lasting impact on causes for which they are passionate. But what ignited that passion? And how did the Visionaries move from passion to action? How can learning about the experiences of others help us identify our own inner fire and take steps to make a difference in our communities?

You can use the following suggestions with your students to deepen their investigation of the lives, choices, and motivations of the Visionaries included in the Hearts on Fire book and [accompanying website](#). The prompts and activities can be used for whole-group discussion, or students can choose one Visionary to write about in their journals or notebooks and then use their responses for class discussion or a jigsaw activity.

Hearts on Fire in the Classroom

I. THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY

FRAMING QUESTION

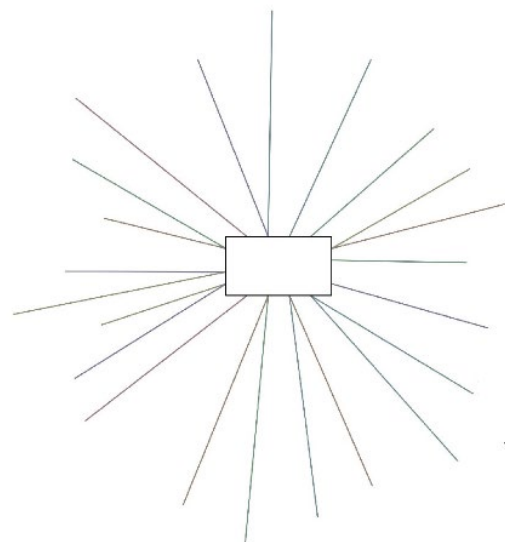
To what extent does our identity influence the choices we make?

While the Visionaries' stories are about social and community change, they all begin with an individual story and an exploration of where the Visionaries grew up, their home lives, and the pressures they saw as young people. Why do these stories start in their childhood homes? Who we are, the messages we receive from our family and community, and our internal responses to those messages can impact the decisions—large and small—that we make throughout our lives.

Facing History and Ourselves uses the concept of an Identity Chart—made up of phrases that individuals use to define themselves, as well as words that others use to define them—to think about the many internal and external factors that impact the choices people make (see the sample below).

ACTIVITY

As a class or individually, choose one or more Visionaries to study more carefully. To begin, make an Identity Chart for your Visionary as a class or in your journal/notebook, using the blank chart as a template. What do we learn about this person in the first pages of the story? What do we know about the personality, values, family structure, and culture of this person—anything that goes into shaping the younger version of the changemaker? Is there a difference between how the Visionary sees her/himself and how others see him or her? How does the Visionary understand the relationship between him/herself and the community?



Hearts on Fire in the Classroom

II. RESPONDING TO ETHICAL DILEMMAS

FRAMING QUESTIONS

How do the choices people make, individually and collectively, shape a society?

What inequity was the Visionary responding to?

Civic participation (i.e., getting involved in the community) requires the ability to recognize that something is wrong and requires fixing. What seems unjust? What is unethical? What is harmful? What needs to be changed in order for the community to be safe for everyone? Looking critically at our community and asking ethical questions can be the spark that ignites the fire to make change.

ACTIVITY

In your journal, reflect on the ethical dilemmas that helped shape your Visionary. Respond to the prompt: What were some of the first experiences that exposed the Visionary to particular ethical dilemmas?

III. TAKING STEPS TO LASTING CHANGE

FRAMING QUESTIONS

How can individuals and groups organize to correct injustices?

What are the risks and challenges of choosing to participate in your community?

The Visionaries often identified an ethical dilemma early in their lives. But identifying an ethical dilemma is one thing, taking it on and creating lasting change is something else altogether. How does one go about changing the world? Change often starts with small steps. What were the Visionary's first steps in responding to the ethical dilemma (refer to your response to the prompt above)? Remember that small steps are just that: small. Perhaps the Visionary met with a friend or mentor, took a class, or interviewed someone.

ACTIVITY

In your journal, list three of the first steps the Visionary took down the path of participation, and then answer these questions.

- How do these first steps connect to the Visionary's Identity Chart?
- What about her or his personality and early experiences may have inspired these first steps?
- What skills and dispositions did the Visionary use to address the ethical dilemma?
- What obstacles did the Visionary face throughout his or her work?
- What were the possible consequences of these early actions and decisions?
- What did the Visionary learn—about her/himself, the community, and the world—from this process?

Hearts on Fire in the Classroom

IV. CHOOSING TO PARTICIPATE

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What can we learn by studying the choices others make to participate in their communities?

What possibilities are available to us to affect change?

With their “hearts on fire,” the Visionaries continued their community work by building on their early decisions. Where has that path taken the Visionary or Visionaries you are focusing on? How is their current work related to, or different from, their initial efforts? What sacrifices did they make along the way?

ACTIVITY

In your journal, record what your Visionary does now and how this connects to the past and future.

- How does his or her current work connect to the Identity Chart you created?
- Make a Road Map—charting the path, turns, obstacles, successes—representing the journey the Visionary has taken.
- What might be the next step in this work?
- What else do you want to know? Write three questions that you would like to ask your Visionary.

V. BECOME A CHANGEMAKER: CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE

FRAMING QUESTIONS

Who am I? What factors influence the choices I make?

How can I make the change I wish to see in the world?

Now, it’s your turn. Just like the Visionaries, your first step in becoming a changemaker is to understand who you are and define what matters to you.

ACTIVITY

First, create an Identity Chart for yourself. Draw a circle in the middle of a blank page in your journal (or on a separate sheet). Add words or phrases that describe the way you see yourself. How would you describe yourself to others? What is important to you about your values, your preferences, your hobbies, and your style? How do others describe you? Is there a difference between how you see yourself and how others describe you?

As you think about your community—local, national, or global—what dilemmas do you see? Record which of these dilemmas you are most passionate about. What are three questions that you need answered about this dilemma in order to understand it better?

Write these in your journal, along with your ideas about how you can get those questions answered.

Where might you start in addressing this ethical dilemma? Who in your community—a peer, a mentor, a leader—shares your passion? If you met with them, what would you tell them about your dilemma? What would you ask?

TAKE A STEP

What are steps that you can take this week, this month, and this year, to further understand and address the problem?

TAKE ACTION

Visit www.heartsonfire.org/get-involved for resources about how to get involved in social change.

PEOPLE MAKE CHOICES.
CHOICES MAKE HISTORY.

Be the Spark