

ROCK YOUR DROP ON THE BLOCK

Soul Peace Flags Presentation Talking Points

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Slides 2-4 Introduction to Cecilia Rodhe & the Drop of Consciousness movement

Bio: Cecilia Rodhe (road-ah) is an artist and certified expressive art therapist who has spent her lifelong career sculpting, mostly in marble, but also in clay and wood. She has had exhibitions at many prestigious galleries around the world. All of her work expresses the dichotomy of strength and fragility that is at the very center of what it is to be human. It is also intrinsic to the nature of stone, her primary medium, and the one in which she began her career. Her work has been exhibited at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and the Palais des Nations in Geneva, in keeping with her commitment to political and social issues.

Cecilia's professional career began as model at the age of fourteen, under the influence of her father, a fashion photographer and the owner of a modeling school. After winning the title of Miss Sweden in 1978, she moved to New York for the first time and signed a contract with the Elite Agency. While living in New York at the age of 45, she went back to school to further her education as an expressive art therapist, receiving her certificate in the creative art therapy program at the New School for Social Research.

Cecilia believes that art is a pure language which speaks to all people. In 2010, along with her son NBA star Joakim Noah, Cecilia co-founded Noah's Arc Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Chicago, dedicated to helping students develop a stronger sense of self. Cecilia's art program Expression from the Inside for Kids® allows students to express how they feel through their art. Cecilia believes that when we are presented with a range of emotions, such as happiness, sadness and anger, and then shown how to apply those concepts to their art, youth learn how to express not only what they see – but also what they feel. After feeling the material and imprinting it with their energy, a form gradually emerges, working through the chosen emotion to discover a more defined and personal concept.

In the summer of 2014, Noah's Arc Foundation launched "Rock Your Drop: The Drop of Consciousness movement" to promote peace, unity, and positive change. The symbol of the movement is the Drop of Consciousness pendant, based on a sculpture of the same name created by Cecilia nearly two decades ago. The Drop represents the tears and strength of the mothers who have lost students to gun violence, and those who wear it pledge to take a stand against violence.

Cecilia was nominated to the Illinois Art Council by Former Governor Pat Quinn in 2014. Additionally, in September 2015, she was named honorary chair for the Be Creative: The Creative Schools Campaign, a capital campaign raising money to make arts education available for all students in Chicago Public Schools.

Cecilia was born in Sweden and has two adult children, Joakim Noah, an NBA star and Yelena Noah, a model and jewelry designer. She splits her time between Chicago, New York City, and Maui.

NOAH'S TIP: Share the information you think your teens will be most interested in learning!



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Drop of Consciousness Movement

The Drop of Consciousness™ is a movement for peace inspired by a sculpture created by the co-founder of Noah's Arc Foundation: Cecilia Rodhe. The pendant is a metal teardrop whose scarred surface recognizes the pain of losing someone to violence, while the precious metal and solid feel of the drop symbolize strength and commitment to positive change.

Joakim Noah and Cecilia Rodhe, co-founders of Noah's Arc Foundation, are asking others to help spread the message of positivity and non-violence by wearing a Drop of Consciousness™ pendant and taking a pledge. The key message is that it's not "their" problem. It is OUR problem, and together we can try to solve it! When you Rock Your Drop, you are not alone!

Drop of Consciousness pledge

When you join the movement and Rock Your Drop, you take the following pledge (*read aloud together*):

I pledge to help end violence

I promise to take responsibility for positive change

And I commit to spreading this message

NOAH'S QUESTIONS:

1. *Have you ever taken a pledge before?*
2. *What does the Drop of Consciousness movement mean to you?*
3. *How do you think you can use your art to create positive change and spread this message?*

Slide 5 Introduction to Rock Your Drop on the Block

Rock Your Drop on the Block

Noah's Arc Foundation and After School Matters are joining forces to inspire peace in Chicago communities through arts programming and the Drop of Consciousness movement. With both organizations' deep connection to the city, its communities and its youth, the Rock Your Drop on the Block event provides a platform for Chicago's youth to have their voices heard. Youth draw inspiration from the pillars of Noah's Arc as well as the Drop of Consciousness to develop visual and performance art that will be showcased at the Rock Your Drop on the Block event as well as peace flags that will be carried by hundreds of youth and community members as they march to the event.

Throughout the summer teens participating in the arts programming throughout the city of Chicago will be discussing, reflecting, and creating artwork that is influenced by the pillars of Noah's Arc including awareness, consciousness, unity, and gratitude as well as the Drop of Consciousness movement for peace.

NOAH'S TIP: Play the video with the volume on to get the teens excited and feeling the energy of the event!



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Slide 6 What to Expect

- Hundreds will join together from across Chicago to march for peace and wave our Soul Peace Flags - the Soul Peace Flags are being created by teens and we can create our own flag, too
- Teen led press conference - opportunity for a few teens who are deeply committed to this initiative to share their messages of peace with Chicago
- Large stage featuring teen performances in spoken word, African drums & dance, hip hop DJs, etc.
- Art exhibit showcasing teen art ranging from painting, sculpture, murals, collages, and more
- We will all participate in a Drop ceremony where we will receive our Drops and take the pledge - we will want to memorize the pledge so we are ready!
- Tshirts, food trucks, basketball, and other fun activities

NOAH'S TIP: *Tailor this message to the medium of your class, highlight how your teens art will be displayed*

Slide 7 What Does Peace Look Like to You?

Last year, over 500 teens created art that represented what Peace looked like to them, inspired by the Drop of Consciousness movement. They were asked "What Does Peace Look Like to You?" Let's think for a minute about how you would respond to that question.

NOAH'S TIP: *If you were part of Rock Your Drop on the Block 2016, please infuse your personal stories and experiences to bring this discussion to life in a very personal way!*

Slides 8-12 Examples of Rock Your Drop on the Block 2016 art expressions

Drops of Society: created by a teen using papier-mache inspired by the Drop of Consciousness

Reaching for Peace: painting by a teen showing how he is reaching into the depths of the ocean for peace, represented by the Drop of Consciousness

Rock Your Drop: many students create graffiti murals and we hope you'll do the same on your Soul Peace Flag

Pieces of Peace: collages are a great way to share a powerful message about peace

Glass blown Drops of Consciousness: a teen created glass blown Drops with words representing peace to them like perspective, honor, respect, awareness, unity, and gratitude



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Slide 13 **Noah's Arc Foundation Pillars**

This year, Cecilia added to the event four pillars - awareness, consciousness, unity, and gratitude - to further inspire our work together for peace and positive change.

NOAH'S QUESTIONS:

1. *What do these pillars mean to you?*
2. *How do they fit with your own core values or pillars?*
3. *What does awareness mean to you?*
4. *What comes to mind when you hear consciousness?*
5. *How do you create unity?*
6. *When do you experience gratitude?*

Slide 14-17 **Awareness, Consciousness, Unity, and Gratitude defined**

NOAH'S TIP: *Read these aloud as a group and capture how the teens react including any keywords they say in response to the pillars. Encourage the teens to write these keywords down in their journals to read again for inspiration later, especially when creating their art throughout the program session.*

Awareness: First we want to help bring awareness to our group by not telling each other what to do but listening to each other. We want to help each other be aware of our surroundings as well as our place in those surroundings. It is also important that we learn how cause and effect are acutely present at all times, meaning how different types of energy affect the result of a situation. We want to help each other to be aware of our power, our fragilities and strengths, the polarization of good and bad, empty and full, helping and breaking, empathy and ignorance. Through the art, we allow ourselves to get in touch with that voice that is our own.

Consciousness: This pillar aims to help us find solutions through our awareness and to apply consciousness to the program and also to life outside the program to be able to make the right choice of how to handle situations, be open to learning, and get beyond ignorance by not knowing. Consciousness is essential as the bottom line of how we choose how to react to, be part of, and have a key role in what's happening around us.

Unity: The unity pillar helps ground the idea that you are not alone. It is important to discuss the fear of not daring to truly express your own feelings of not being alone and we look at this through the art. We want to allow ourselves to discover the power of a group for the good and the bad, and how being united together fighting for a common goal as well as the feeling of protection in a group can create great strength and a sense of security. The diverse knowledge, strength, and skills brought into our group can change the world.



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NOAH'S TIP: *If time allows, show the teens the Noah's Arc Foundation short film [You're Not Alone \(8:46\)](https://noahsarcfoundation.org/supportingprogramcontent/notalone) featuring Joakim Noah, Derrick Rose, Taj Gibson, and other compelling speakers. The video can be found at noahsarcfoundation.org/supportingprogramcontent/notalone*

Gratitude

The gratitude part of this initiative is the pillar that makes everything else possible. Without gratitude, there is no growth, love, empathy, or advancement. This pillar is the staple of how mindset, attitude, application of thought and energy are essential. The energy of gratitude fills the power of creativity. The fact that we are the artists of our own lives with the energy that we put into it and how we fill our days. This pillar is really about depicting what we are grateful for in our lives and bringing awareness to that. The energy of gratitude opens doors, creates friendships, makes life fuller, and brings meaning to almost everything.

Slide 18 **Soul Peace Flag Project**

Another exciting addition to the Rock Your Drop on the Block initiative this year is a peace march starting at Major Adams Community Committee and ending at the event hosted at Marillac House. Hundreds of people from across Chicago will join together to march for peace and wave Soul Peace Flags in the air as we march.

The flag shown here was created by Yelena Noah, Joakim's sister and board member of Noah's Arc Foundation. Yelena is also a jewelry designer who started her career creating wearable art with silk pieces. Yelena is leading the project to create these Soul Peace Flags with teens in partnership with her mother Cecilia Rodhe and After School Matters and Peace Makers instructor Javier at the Lutz Center.

NOAH'S QUESTIONS:

- 1. What are some of your favorite flags? How do these flags use symbolism? * If not mentioned by the teens, share about the Chicago flag and its symbolism*
- 2. What do you see in the Noah's Arc Foundation symbol? It represents both an anchor and a boat, representing that we need to be anchored in order to move forward*

Slide 19 **Yelena Noah, Board Member & Jewelry Designer**

Bio: Yelena Noah celebrates individuality through handcrafted jewelry design inspired by her Cameroonian and Swedish heritage. Each piece is charged with powerful symbolism and tells a story. Born in New York City, with roots in France, Cameroon and Sweden, Yelena is a citizen of the world and her work is a reflection of her multicultural heritage.

As a successful fashion model, Yelena has lived between Paris and New York all her life. She graduated from the New School in New York City with a Bachelor's degree in political science and international affairs. She has



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done internships at the United Nations and is on the board of her family's Noah's Arc Foundation, created by her brother, NY Knicks NBA player, Joakim Noah.

Yelena started painting symbols at a very young age. These organically evolved onto linen and silk canvases, into ceramic and stone mosaics, and now into a precious jewelry collection. Yelena sees jewelry as a fundamental aspect of culture and a celebration of our diversity and individuality. She believes in jewelry with a narrative. Her jewels carry the story of a journey, a place or moment in time, a family's history, a personal memory or spiritual belief. Her jewelry is charged with symbolism and meaning and carries a message.

Many of the designs begin with a center that expands into four cardinal directions, creating a type of compass. The focal point represents our "selves". Within which lies intuition, the heart, and higher consciousness. From there stems four opposing directions. These directions and their relation to the center represents the need to strike a balance within the dualities of life; Good and evil, male and female, light and dark, life and death, the yin and the yang.

Yelena blends influences from her bohemian lifestyle and her multicultural heritage and this can be seen in her jewelry line. On her many travels, she finds the inspiration that tell the story of her pieces. Charged with symbolism and meaning, every piece is founded on geometric principles, while inspired by indigenous cultures, Buddhist Mandalas, and West African symbolism. Each Yelena Noah Jewelry piece is handmade and is designed by Yelena herself. Yelena Noah creates meaningful jewelry.

NOAH'S TIP: Share the information you think your teens will be most interested in learning!

Slide 20 **Symbolism in Art**

Symbolism is the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. An action, person, place, word, or object can all have a symbolic meaning. When an author wants to suggest a certain mood or emotion, he can also use symbolism to hint at it, rather than just blatantly saying it. Objects are often used to symbolize something else:

- A chain can symbolize the coming together of two things
- A ladder can represent the relationship between heaven and earth or ascension
- A mirror can denote the sun but when it is broken, it can represent an unhappy union or a separation

Symbolism, as you see, can be found almost anywhere. Any time there is something that represents more than its literal meaning, this can be an example of symbolism.

Here are some examples of how Yelena uses symbolism in her jewelry.



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- Ring: this ring was a drawing sketched by Yelena's grandmother to represent a dagger which can be seen as something dangerous or violent but for her, it represented her grandmother's strength
- Headdress: this headdress shows a third eye which is familiar in many cultures. Can be seen as a way to ward off evil but also represents intuition

NOAH'S QUESTIONS:

1. *What symbols come to mind when you think of peace? Maybe the standard peace signs or two fingers? Do any other images or scenes come to mind? Maybe a rainbow, sitting by a river, baking cookies with grandma, etc.*
2. *What other symbols do we wear on a regular basis, and what do they represent?*

Slide 21 Plan to Create

Sketch your design and symbols ahead of time, inspired by...

- Noah's Arc Foundation pillars
- Drop of Consciousness movement
- What does peace look like to you?

Plan to fill the entire 2ft x 4ft space, this is a BIG space! We hope everyone can create their own flag, but we can also get in groups and create our own symbols to add to one or two flags as a group

Keep in mind the dye flows easily, meaning you need to create borders to images to keep colors separate

Don't be afraid to make mistakes! This is important as the creative process is one that evolves in the moment

NOAH'S TIP: *If your class cannot create Soul Peace Flags at the Lutz Center, adapt to think of other ways your teens can create their symbols or use this as a point to talk about how you will use the Noah's Arc Foundation pillars, Drop of Consciousness movement, and/or the guiding question What Does Peace Look Like to You? to inspire your work this program session.*

