

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

Grades: K-adult
Time: 5-10 minutes
Grouping: Community/Group
Materials: none

Objectives:

1. To encourage active decision-making
2. To encourage the expression of opinions
3. To accept individual differences
4. To encourage influence

Instructions:

1. Have the community/group sit in a circle
2. Demonstrate three different ways the group can vote or express their opinions on an issue:
 - a. Thumbs up – agree
 - b. Thumbs down – disagree
 - c. Thumbs sideways – no opinion or pass
3. Then, in rapid-fire sequence, ask controversial questions appropriate to the age level and interests of the group and have participants vote.

Examples: “How do you feel about eating at McDonalds?”
“Playing soccer? Skateboards? Jumping Rope?”
“People helping each other in community learning groups?”

Note: This activity can be related to lesson topics by having the participants vote on decisions made by characters in books or history, or by having the participants express their opinions on lessons, activities, etc.

Suggested Reflection/Debrief Questions:

Content/Thinking

- What other issues could you vote on?
- How did this type of voting differ from other voting you’ve done?
- Why is discovering different ways to vote important?

Social

- How is this type of voting helpful to our group/community

Personal

- How did you feel about making your opinions known in public like this?
- Why might you have been tempted to change your vote as you looked around?

Appreciation

Invite statements of appreciation:

- “I felt good when...”
- “One thing I liked about this group is...”

Resource: Tribes, A New Way of Learning and Being Together by Jeanne Gibbs – Strategies & Energizers