

JACL

Midwest Office

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Japanese American Citizens League Project Community – Chicago Curriculum Guide*

**Please note that dates and topics are subject to change*

Program Goal: Empower high school youth to be involved in the Japanese American community by developing their sense of personal and community identity.

Session 1: Personal Identity

Wednesday, February 24

6 – 8:30 pm

Session Goal: Participants develop a sense of personal identity related to cultural ancestry.

In this session, participants will explore different aspects of their personal identity. Discussion will also focus on factors that define identity, external forces that can challenge a sense of identity, and the importance of context.

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- Identity Circles – Participants will identify the various aspects of their identity that they consider the most important in defining themselves.
- Defining Groups – Participants will define some of the characteristics associated with the groups they use to identify themselves.
- Find Common Ground – Participants will examine the shared characteristics of the group, as well as some traits that make each individual unique.
- Assimilation and Covering – Participants will discuss the concepts of “assimilation” and “covering,” and their benefits and disadvantages.
- Identity skits – Participants will identify the elements that can either strengthen or challenge our sense of identity.

Session 2: Community Identity

Saturday, March 13

10:30 am – 2:30 pm

Session Goal: Participants develop a sense of community identity (institutions and organizations) connected to personal identity that will lead to community involvement.

In this session participants will explore some of the organizations that serve the Japanese American community in Chicago. They will also learn about the history of Japanese American resettlement in Chicago and the history of the community.

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- Defining “Community” – Participants will identify the elements that form a community.
- Tours of various community organizations – possibilities include the Japanese American Service Committee, the Midwest Buddhist Temple, the Japanese Mutual Aid Society of Chicago and the Buddhist Temple of Chicago.
- The Chicago JA Community – Participants will learn about the history of Japanese Americans in Chicago, from the resettlement to the present.
- Community Mural – Participants will create a mural that represents the holistic Japanese American community.

Session 3: JA History and the Internment

Saturday, March 27

10:30 am – 2 pm

Session Goal: Participants develop an understanding of and appreciation for the history and contributions of Japanese Americans.

Participants will learn about the history of the Japanese American internment and meet former internees who will share their personal stories.

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- Internment history – Participants will learn the historical context of the internment.
- Panel discussion – A panel of former internees will discuss their experiences during the internment.
- Interviews – In groups of 2 or 3, participants will pair up with panelists to begin interviewing them in order to complete a biography to be presented at the end of the program.

Session 4: Current Issues and Activism

Wednesday, April 7

6 p.m. – 8:30 pm

Session Goal: Participants acquire an understanding of major issues affecting the Asian American community and the means for addressing these issues through grassroots organization.

This session will introduce participants to some of the major issues affecting the Asian American community. Participants will meet local leaders working to advocate for the community, and learn methods for grassroots organizing and student activism.

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- Immigration Reform
- Census 2010
- Myths, stereotypes and media portrayals of Asian Americans
- Asian Americans in Public Service

Session 5: Leadership

Saturday, April 24

10 am – 3 pm

Session Goal: Acquire an understanding about the characteristics of effective leadership, how one becomes a leader and preserving ones cultural values while maintaining the ability to operate effectively in a diverse environment.

This session, facilitated by a LEAP presenter, will have students explore their own leadership styles, as well as the challenges faced by Asian Americans in becoming or being perceived as leaders.*

**LEAP (Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics), located in Los Angeles, is one of the foremost leadership training organizations for Asian Americans.*

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- 21st Century Leader – Participants will discuss and assess: what is a leader, what are the characteristics of an effective leader and how does one become a leader.

Session 6: College Prep

Wednesday, May 5

6 – 8:30 pm

Session Goal: Participants gain knowledge about preparing for college life.

This session will allow participants to interact with college-aged peers to learn about college life. They will also meet directors of Asian American resource centers at local universities.

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- Panel Discussion – A panel of college students will talk about the application process, daily life and ways to stay involved in the Japanese American community.
- Resources – Participants will learn about Japanese American/Asian American oriented financial resources and Asian American resources available at schools.

Session 7: Culmination & Future involvement in community

Saturday, May 15 or 22

10:30 am – 2 pm

Session Goal: Instill participants with a sense of commitment to give back to their community and encourage them to remain active following completion of the program.

Planned Activities/Discussion Topics

- Presentation of biographies
- Introduce Project: Community summit