

## Meet Your Local League

### Parent Guide

Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

#### SUMMARY

In this activity, children and adults will take a trip to a community meeting and think about the experience with suggested questions.

#### WHY

New experiences and places help children understand how ideas connect with the real world. Learning on field trips can spark curiosity and inspire children to ask better questions about the world around them. The people children meet on field trips can encourage children to think broadly about their own futures and help them to consider other possible careers.

#### TIME

- 1 hour or more

#### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten through 4th grade.

#### GET READY

- Read *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*. This book is a work of historical fiction about the woman suffrage movement. For tips on reading this book together, check out the **Guided Reading Activity** ([http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/suffrage/suffrage\\_reading.pdf](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/suffrage/suffrage_reading.pdf)).
- Read the **Step Back in Time** sheets.

#### YOU NEED

- **Directions** sheets (*attached*)
- **Step Back in Time** sheets (*attached*)
- **ThinkAbout** sheet (*attached*)
- Computer with Internet access
- Transportation or plan for traveling (*possibly*)

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

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For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

**V**oting is one of the main ways that people can direct the government and change laws.

Women had voted in some colonies and early states but after 1807 no women could vote in the United States. In 1848 a group of women, and men, concerned with women's right held a convention and signed the Declaration of Sentiments. The Declaration was modeled after the Declaration of Independence and demanded rights for women, including the right to vote. Despite their efforts, women could only vote in nine states by the time the parade in this story takes place.

Woman suffragists were the first group to organize pickets outside of the White House. They created banners and stood

outside the White House gates to show the signs to the President and members of the public.

Although they were peaceful, some who disagreed with their protests sometimes started fights and hurt the suffragists.

Throughout the woman suffrage movement, over 150 suffragists were put in jail, mostly in Virginia and Washington, D.C. Life in the jails was tough and dirty, and the women weren't treated well.

Some women wanted to show the American public how unfair it was that they were in jail, so they refused to eat while behind bars. They were



Jailed for Freedom pin  
The National Museum of American History owns three "Jailed for Freedom" pins that belonged to Lucille Calmes, Amelia Walker, and Alice Paul.



Mama voting at the precinct  
from *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*

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forcibly fed by their jailers. After they were let out of jail, the suffragists were given special “Jailed for Freedom” pins, to show proudly that they had stayed in jail to help get the right to vote for women.

Alice Paul, one of the leaders in the protests, had been a part of the woman suffrage movement in England. When she came back to the United States, she reused some of the strong British tactics in the American woman suffrage movement.

It took many years for the woman suffrage movement to change the minds of lawmakers and the public; but finally, in August 1920, the United States Constitution was amended to protect women’s right to vote.

The woman suffrage movement’s nonviolent protests were sources of inspiration for Mohandas Gandhi, while he worked for independence in India, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., while he worked for equal rights during the civil rights movement in the United States.

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**amended:** changed the words and often the meaning of a law

**movement:** a series of organized activities in which many people work together to do or achieve something

**tactics:** an action or method that is planned and used to achieve a particular goal

### ***Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* is a work of historical fiction.**

In historical fiction, make-believe stories are set against a backdrop of real events or incorporate them into the story. This means that sometimes things are changed to suit the story or make it more dramatic.

Although there was a woman on a white horse in the suffrage parade it wasn’t really Mama. The rider was a Washington lawyer named Inez Milholland Boissevain. When she later died while traveling to promote woman suffrage she was considered to be a martyr to the cause.

Purple, white, and yellow were the colors used in the parades and by the pickets of the National Woman’s Party although purple, white, and green were used in other places like New York and Connecticut.

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*For adults and kids to follow together.*

1. Visit the following Web site to locate a *League of Women Voters* in your state ([http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Find\\_a\\_Local\\_League](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Find_a_Local_League)). Locate a League of Women Voters group that is close to your hometown. Call using the contact information from the Web site to see if you can set up an interview (either in person or over the phone) or take a trip to see a meeting.
2. Read about the history of the League of Women Voters on the “*Our History*” portion of their Web site ([http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Our\\_History](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Our_History)).

**Tip** The page is quite long, so focus on the first three paragraphs at the top.

3. Take a look at the *image gallery* on the League of Women Voters Web site ([http://www.lwv.org/AM/Images/historic\\_images/gallery.html](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Images/historic_images/gallery.html)). Focus specifically on the photographs from before and during the 1920s and then from the 1990s to see how things have changed or stayed the same over time. Just from looking at the pictures, can you tell which were taken a long time ago, and which were taken more recently?

**Tip** The clothes in the pictures might help you figure out how old the pictures are. Also look for hints in the background of the pictures, like cars or how the streets or homes look.

4. Decide if you would like to do an interview with a member of the League of Women Voters or if you would like to go to a meeting.

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**Tip** You may want to contact someone at your local chapter of the League of Women Voters to see if they recommend doing an interview or going to a meeting. Consider how long it will take to travel to the meeting and ask about how long meetings usually last. Some children find it hard to pay attention during long meetings, so you might want to attend only part of a meeting or do an interview instead.

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5. **If you will be attending a meeting**, find out how long the average meeting lasts. Make a plan to stay for all or part of the meeting and let your contact at the League know your plan.

**If you will be conducting an interview**, make your appointment to visit a member of the League of Women Voters or to call them to interview over the phone.

**Tip** It is best for an adult to do either of these tasks. Invite children to listen in via speakerphone to the conversation, but many young children have trouble with these planning tasks.

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6. Choose the best **ThinkAbout** sheet for your field trip or interview.

For more activities and information about *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* and the woman suffrage movement, visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

*Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* by Kathleen Karr. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishing.

## Meet Your Local League

### *ThinkAbout for visiting a meeting of the League of Women Voters*

#### BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Are you a part of any organizations (clubs, teams, service organizations, or groups)? What made you want to join the organization? What kinds of activities do you do with your organization?
- Imagine what the meeting will be like. Think about meetings you have attended at school or in clubs. Think about the information you read on the League of Women Voters' Web site.

#### DURING YOUR VISIT

- Watch the members of the League. Are they standing? Are they sitting? Are they speaking or listening? Do members take turns?
- Does someone appear to be the leader? How can you tell?
- What kinds of things are they talking about?
- During a break, or before or after the meeting, ask a member of the League:
  - Why did you join the League?
  - How long have you been a member?
  - What does the League do?

#### AFTER YOUR VISIT

- Draw a picture of the meeting place. If someone was in charge of the meeting, where did that person sit? Were there any special decorations for the meeting place?
- Write down 3 facts you learned while watching the meeting.
- How is the League like or unlike the organization you belong to?

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

## Meet Your Local League

### *ThinkAbout for conducting an interview with a member of the League of Women Voters*

#### BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

- Are you a part of any organizations (clubs, teams, service organizations, or groups)? What made you want to join the organization? What kinds of activities do you do with your organization?

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

- How did you become a member of the League of Women Voters?
- Why did you become a member of the League?
- When did you become a member of the League?
- What kinds of activities do you do as a member of the League?
- What issues are most important to you as a member of the League?
- How many women are involved in your group? How many usually go to each meeting?
- *(optional)* Is there an address where I can send you a thank you note?

#### AFTER YOUR INTERVIEW

- How do you think your interviewee feels about being in the League of Women Voters?
- How is the League like or unlike the organization you belong to?
- Write a thank-you note to your interviewee or draw a picture and send it to her.

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

## Meet Your Local League

*For Teachers, page 1 of 1*

*Read the “Parent Guide” and “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.*

### OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Students will be able to describe the contribution of women to society as voting members.

### STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Demonstrates skills in observing ways that stories and people are alike and different.
- Effectively communicates with one or more member of the League of Women Voters.

### STANDARDS

#### *NCHS History Standards*

##### *K-4 Historical Content Standards*

2A: The student understands the history of his or her local community.

4B: The student understands ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

#### *21st-Century Skills*

##### *Learning and Innovation Skills*

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration