

## Brainstorm!

### The **BIG** Idea

- What class project will most benefit our community?

## AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: What is a Community? (5 minutes)
- II. Brainstorm! (15 minutes)
- III. Narrowing Choices (15 minutes)
- IV. Election & Consensus (5 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

## MATERIALS

### STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 41, Judges' Rubric For "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"
- Student Handbook pages 42 and 43, Project Pros and Cons

### FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, Project Ideas
- Facilitator Resource 2, The Cost of Lending a Hand (Optional)

- White index cards, enough for every team of four to have one card

- A hat or bag

- Poster based on the "Gripes and Fixes" list generated by the class during **Intro to Makeover** lesson, one per class, specific to that class

- Overhead projector

## OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Identify the various communities to which they belong.
- Examine some of the needs of these communities.
- Brainstorm ways to meet these needs.
- Debate project ideas.
- Decide on a class project for "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"

## OVERVIEW .....

In this lesson, students take a broad look at the communities they belong to, and brainstorm ideas on how to improve them. In small groups, they'll debate the pros and cons of each idea, and vote for their favorite. As a class, they'll tally the scores, and select a project to pitch for "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"

## PREPARATION .....

- List the day's BIG IDEA and activities on the board.
- Prepare a poster for each class, based on the "Gripes and Fixes" the class generated the previous week during the **Intro to the Makeover** lesson. Make sure each poster only reflects the "Fixes" of that particular class, and does not include ideas put forth in other classes.
- Make overhead transparencies of copies of **Student Handbook page 41, Judges' Rubric For "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"** and **Student Handbook pages 42 and 43, Project Pros and Cons.**
- If your students are not already divided into teams of four, consider how to group them for **Activity II, Brainstorm!**
- If you think your students will need extra guidance to come up with a viable project, copy a class set of **Facilitator Resource 2, The Cost of Lending a Hand.** Refer students to it during **Activity II, Brainstorm!** and use it to spark a discussion.
- Note:** After the completion of this lesson, you will need to talk to your school administrator to approve the students' project ideas. This should be done before next week's lesson. If the project is not approved, you will need to brainstorm a new topic with the class at the start of next week's lesson.

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS .....

In **Activity III, Narrowing Choices**, if your students are effectively discussing the pros and cons of each project idea, you may choose to skip using **Student Handbook pages 42 and 43, Project Pros and Cons.**

You may wish to contact your school administration or other local organizations to generate a list of local issues students can feasibly design a project for. These can then be shared with the class and added to the “gripes/fixes” list. Students could brainstorm solutions to these problems.

If you think your students need to conduct more research for feasible project ideas, you can make packets of important ideas and information from the websites cited in Lesson 1.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### I. Warm Up: What is a Community? (5 minutes)

1. [On the board, write “community” in large letters. Greet students as they enter. When students have taken seats, direct their attention to the board.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Before we continue to brainstorm our makeover projects, we need to think about the communities that we belong to, and what each community needs. Can anyone help me out with a definition of community? [As students brainstorm and offer suggestions, write them on the board. Make sure that they cover the concept that a community is a defined geographic area (neighborhood) where people live, work and play together AND a community is a group of people who share common interests and goals around a variety of things that include education, recreation, and religion.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Great! Now one example of a community that we all belong to would be residents of (your state). What are some other communities that we belong to? [Some examples that you might want to offer if they don’t come up are students at \_\_\_\_\_ school, members of religious organizations, clubs, teams, etc.]
4. [Write the communities on the board. Include some of your own ideas, based on what might be relevant for your students; for example in a neighborhood with many immigrants, you might list “people learning English as a second language,” or in a school with a popular basketball team, you might add “Basketball Fans.”]
5. [Point out that all these communities have needs, and jot a few on the board. For example, many communities need places to gather: religious groups need a quiet place to worship, and sports teams need fields, courts, or gyms to play and practice. Other communities need specific materials to accomplish their purpose: readers need books, musicians need instruments. Ask students to offer their own suggestions of needs that these different communities have.]
6. [Put up the poster of “Gripes and Fixes” to remind students of some of the community problems they found ways to solve last week during class. Tell them it’s now time to come up with some ideas for their class to pitch in the “The RTS Makeover Challenge!”]

### II. Brainstorm! (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now it’s time to select our class project for the Community Makeover. We’ll collect ideas from everyone, spend a few minutes discussing the pros

and cons of each, and then vote on the best choice. Before we begin, let's take a look at what a good project should look like, so you know what to aim for.

2. [Place a transparency of **Student Handbook page 41, Judges' Rubric For "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"** on the overhead projector. Explain that these questions will be used to evaluate and compare Community Makeover proposals in order to choose a school winner. Read each question aloud.]
3. [Explain to the students that they will be working in their groups from last week's lesson, and distribute an index card to each team. Ask all "facilitators" from last week's lesson to raise their hands (show of hands). Remind the class that these students will solicit ideas from their team members. Then instruct all of the "reporters" from last class to raise their hands. Ask one of the reporters to explain their role (student who will write down all of the team members' ideas). The team's assignment is to come up with one idea for consideration for the class project, which will be written on the index card and shared with the class.]

Explain the following rules for brainstorming:

- The object is to come up with as many ideas as possible. As members share their ideas, *the rest of the team is not to comment in any way—positively or negatively.* Rather, they should keep the flow going so that all the ideas are on the table.
  - After brainstorming, the team facilitator prompts team members to look at all of the ideas, and to say, one at a time, which idea they like best and why. If the majority selects the same one, they are to go with that idea. Ask students who will make the final decision if the team is not in complete agreement. (Accept any reasonable solution.)]
4. [Give the students ten minutes to work. If students need some ideas, provide suggestions from those listed on **Facilitator Resource 1, Project Ideas**, and also from the "Gripes and Fixes" poster.]
  5. [Collect the cards, and put them in a hat or bag.]

### III. Narrowing Choices (15 minutes)

1. [Place a transparency of **Student Handbook pages 42 and 43, Project Pros and Cons** on the overhead. Ask students to turn to this page in their handbooks. Read the directions aloud. Pick a card out of the hat or bag, and read it aloud. Then pass the hat or bag to the nearest student, and tell him/her to do the same. As each suggestion

is announced, write it in one of the choice boxes, and instruct students to do the same. Continue until all the cards have been read.]

2. [Explain that the class will now consider the pros and cons of each suggestion. Remind students that someone in the class liked each of these ideas, and provide examples of constructive (rather than hurtful) criticism. Suggest that groups think about the following when considering each project:
  - How much will it help the community?
  - How psyched will you be to complete the project if you win?
  - Can the class realistically accomplish this goal?]
3. [Take notes on the overhead as students consider the pros and cons of each project, guiding students where your input is needed re: cost considerations or administrative approval. Make sure students select a project that is feasible to execute. Instruct the students to write the pros and cons discussed for each project on their student hand-book page.]

#### **IV. Election & Consensus (5 minutes)**

1. [If no clear winner emerges during the discussion above, conduct a vote by secret ballot.]
2. [If everyone is happy, then do a lot of back-patting and psych everyone up to create a project that will rock! If there's dissent in the ranks, try to get everyone on board by pumping them up to compete and win. Find a way to include the dissenters in the grand scheme; suggest creative inclusions in the pitch proposal, such as "ads" that feature their testimonials or a group song describing the project. Remind students that it will take everybody's help to create the winning pitch.]

#### **V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)**

[Commend students on their choice, and suggest that they keep their project idea confidential, so other classes still selecting projects will not be influenced by it. Tell students to spend some time this week thinking about special talents they have which might make their project pitch stand out, such as artistic abilities, computer skills, etc. Instruct them to come to the next class ready to begin preparing their class pitch for "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"]

## PROJECT IDEAS

- Clean up a park.
- Make and distribute “we care about you” cards and gift baskets to homebound seniors, or to seniors in a retirement center.
- Organize a tutoring program to help elementary school children.
- Host a party for someone who deserves it (such as children from a homeless shelter, grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, your local volunteer firefighters). Make food, decorations, provide entertainment.
- Organize a coat and/or toy drive for a homeless shelter.
- Volunteer to paint, or create artwork for any wall that needs it: in your school, at the library, in your community center.
- Raise money to send homeless or needy children to a child-friendly theatrical show.
- Collect donations of stuffed animals to give to children in your local hospital.
- Create a website for the teenagers in your community, offering information about teen programs, and giving teens the chance to write articles and share stories.
- Create a teen or children’s section in your school or local library. Collect donations of books, and organize an attractive space for reading.
- Lobby for a designated area to skateboard.
- Spruce up the school cafeteria.
- Create educational pamphlets about safety, social, or health issues.

## The Cost of Lending a Hand



There are tons of different things you can do to improve your community. When you are brainstorming ideas, be sure you think about all the costs involved with your ideas. Below are some examples of projects, and examples for how much these projects can cost. These are just ideas to get you started - the more ideas you can brainstorm, the better, so be creative!

### Painting Projects:

1. Paint a mural on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade floor with a specific theme.
2. Paint new hop-scotch boards on the playground.
3. Paint a room in a shelter or food kitchen.

### COST FOR MURAL PROJECT

ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
Paint Roller Frame (\$1.89)	8	\$15.12
Paint Roller Pad (\$1.99)	8	\$15.92
Paint Roller Pan (\$1.98)	8	\$15.84
Plastic Drop Cloths (\$1.35)	4	\$5.40
Roll of Painter's Tape (\$3.16)	3	\$9.48
Can of Paint (\$35.00)	5	\$175.00
Paint Brush Set (3 brushes for \$6.88)	2	\$13.76
8oz canister of Acrylic Paint (\$6.74)	5	\$33.70
Set of 12 Art Brushes (\$11.24)	3	\$33.72

### Beautification Projects:

1. Plant flowers for elderly people in retirement homes and deliver them.
2. Plant flowers for teachers and community members as an "Appreciation" project.
3. Teach students in lower grades how to plant and care for plants.



4. Create “Clean Up Patrol” for the halls to help collect garbage and teach other students how to keep the school clean. Create posters and other advertisements to help keep the school clean.

ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
1 flat of marigold flowers (\$20.00)	2	\$40.00
Plastic Pot (\$.39)	40	\$15.60
Ceramic Pot (\$1.00)	40	\$40.00
Miracle Grow Potting Mix (\$6.99)	3	\$20.97
Plant Tags (\$2.95 for 50)	2	\$5.90
Seed Flats (\$4.20 for 10)	10	\$4.20
Seeds (\$2.45 for 200)	200	\$2.45
Heavy Duty Garbage Bags	100	\$25.98
Box of Crayola Markers (\$5.49)	3	\$16.47
Poster Board (.\$33)	10	\$3.30
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$174.87</b>

### Community Engagement Activities:

1. Toy Drive for a local shelter.
2. Read to students in kindergarten.
3. Organize a food drive for a local soup kitchen.
4. Improvement of a small area of the school.
5. Hold a school supply drive for incoming sixth grade students.
6. Create a recycling program at your school.

### Fundraising Activities:

(Note: fundraising activities require a lot of advance planning. You will need extra adult help to plan and promote a charity event.)

1. Jump Rope-a-Thon to raise money for a charity.
2. 3 on 3 basketball tournament to raise money for a charity.
3. Bake sale to raise money for a charity.

## **Some Good Causes to Raise Money for:**

1. The Heifer Foundation: Money goes towards donating livestock to families in developing countries. These animals provide food and money for these families for generations to come.
2. The Red Cross: Helps millions of people world-wide prevent, prepare for, and cope with emergencies. Your money will be used in helping people such as the hurricane victims of New Orleans as well as the Tsunami victims.
3. Big Brothers and Big Sisters: A worldwide mentoring program that pairs children with adults who can help them make big decisions and focus on reaching their potential. Your money would help to support that cause.
4. East Side House Settlement in the Bronx: Money goes to supporting their cause of helping young people in the south Bronx create opportunities for themselves by pursuing their educational goals.

There are thousands of causes to choose to donate your hard-earned money to. If you have any other ideas, check with your RTS Facilitator and they will help you find an organization that will put the money your class has raised to good use.

In the space below, list any other organizations you would be interesting in raising money for.

Name of project: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Ranking (circle one): 1 2 3 4 5

## Judges' Rubric: "The RTS Makeover Challenge!"

(Circle one response for each question.)

### Introduction

1. Has the class presented its idea clearly?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

2. Does the project address a real community need?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

3. Does the project set a realistic goal?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

4. Does the pitch make you want to jump out of your seat and go do the project?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

### Plan of Action

5. Are the steps written clearly and in an order that makes sense?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

6. Does the plan include all of the necessary steps needed to carry out the project?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

### Budget

7. Is it clear how the money will be raised?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

8. Are all items needed to carry out the project included?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

### Inspiration and Evidence

9. Does it include statistics (facts), stories, or graphics that make this project convincing?

not really      somewhat      well      excellent

**Pros:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cons:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Considerations:** \_\_\_\_\_



## PROJECT PROS & CONS

**CHALLENGE:** To create a project that will benefit the community.

You can use the **CHALLENGE-CHOICE-CONSEQUENCES** strategy to choose a Community Makeover Project.

List a possible project in each box on the left, and write the **PROS** (reasons to select the project) and **CONS** (reasons not to select the project) next to it.

### CHOICE

### CONSEQUENCES

	Pros
	Cons

### CHOICE

### CONSEQUENCES

	Pros
	Cons

### CHOICE

### CONSEQUENCES

	Pros
	Cons

**CHOICE                      CONSEQUENCES**

	<b>Pros</b>
	<b>Cons</b>

**CHOICE                      CONSEQUENCES**

	<b>Pros</b>
	<b>Cons</b>

**CHOICE                      CONSEQUENCES**

	<b>Pros</b>
	<b>Cons</b>

**CHOICE                      CONSEQUENCES**

	<b>Pros</b>
	<b>Cons</b>

**CHOICE                      CONSEQUENCES**

	<b>Pros</b>
	<b>Cons</b>