

# Day Five

## COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Review scriptures:

**1 Peter 3:8:** “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.”

**Micah 6:8:** “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

**1 Corinthians 12:26:** “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

## **Day Five Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)**

Welcome to day 5, CommUNITY Allies! Today is our final day together and our theme is Community in Action! We are going to start our time together with a story called *A Church for All*, by Gayle E. Pitman, and illustrated by Laure Fournier and this book is being read with permission from Albert Whitman & Company. If you have heard this story before, that is great! This is a book worth reading many times! This book reminds us that we want to create spaces where everyone feels like they belong.

*\*reading of A Church For All\**

(Page 12 refers to the person in the wheelchair as weak, but people who have disabilities are not necessarily weak. They just need different tools and supports than people without disabilities.)

We have been learning a lot during this experience about activism and people who work for justice on social and environmental issues. Today, we will take this one step further and become activists ourselves! That is why our theme today is Community in Action! As we do the activities for today, be thinking about what issues matter to you? Do you have ideas for how to fix them?

## Day Five Role Models



Figure 13 Photo by Manuel Elias/The Associate Press <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-autumn-peltier-14-to-address-united-nations-about-water-climate/>

### Autumn Peltier

Autumn (born September 2004) is a member of the Wiikemkoong First Nation. She lives on Manitoulin Island on Lake Huron in Ottawa, Canada. Autumn has had access to clean drinking water all her life, but at a young age she learned that there are many in the world who do not, including many indigenous communities in Canada.

At the age of 8 Autumn was attending a ceremony at the Serpent River Reservation in Canada when she saw a sign that warned that the water was “toxic” and should not be consumed. This upset Autumn and she chose to take action. In doing so, she was also honoring her great-aunt’s work of advocating for water rights. Her great-aunt, Josephine Mandamin, in addition to being a vocal advocate, walked the shoreline of all five Great Lakes in her effort to raise water awareness.

In 2016, during a First Nation’s annual winter meeting, Autumn was chosen to present Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with a copper water bowl. This bowl was meant to symbolize his responsibility to protect the country’s water. Autumn caught the world’s attention when she took this opportunity to express her frustration about policies the prime minister had supported that were adversely affecting the drinking water of up to 100 First Nations. While she did not have time to deliver her prepared speech, she did have time to say, “I am very unhappy with the choices you’ve made.”

Autumn continued to speak out about the need to ensure that all people have access to clean drinking water. Her work has encouraged others to take action and has gained the attention of world leaders. She has spoken at the United Nations twice; first at the UN General Assembly in 2018 and then in 2019 at the UN Global Landscape forum which focuses on land sustainability. In 2019 Autumn was named the chief water commissioner by the Anishinabek Nation, an honor also held by her great-aunt.

***“I’ve said it once, and I’ll say it again: we can’t eat money or drink oil.”***

**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EodBINYV7A>



Figure 14 Photo by Response Magazine

## Jerrell Davis

Jerrell Davis is an educator, mentor, poet, emcee, hip hop artist, coach and activist. He has a passion for empowering youth and giving back to his community. In 2016, Jerrell co-founded Washington Building Leaders of Change (WA-BLOC). WA-BLOC partners with public schools in its community of SE Seattle, particularly Rainier Beach High School and Emerson Elementary School. WA-BLOC's relationships and programs encourage youth in academic achievement, civic engagement and racial equity through a culturally responsive lens, particularly within their local community.

WA-BLOC youth, with the support of mentors such as Jerrell, led a multigenerational campaign to provide free ORCA transit cards to low-income youth in Seattle Public Schools. This occurred after Seattle Public Schools changed their transportation policy to extend the radius in which families must provide their own transportation to and from school to two miles. Students learned how this new policy was adversely affecting low-income students in regards to punctuality, attendance and grades. Student leaders planned a march from Seattle Public School headquarters to City Hall. They also led and presented at a town hall on transit justice. Eventually, this led to a meeting with the Seattle School Board and other district leaders. Six months after the initial march, the school board unanimously voted to provide their low-income students with free ORCA cards.

Jerrell was named one of Seattle's Most Influential People of 2018 by Seattle Magazine. He leads by encouraging youth to embrace their self-worth and power and develop their own leadership skills.

***"I love the imagination of children; I would rather work with young people any day."***

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=qV9WexE8MWI&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=qV9WexE8MWI&feature=emb_logo)

***Food for thought:*** Autumn recognized a problem in her own community that she has been fighting to change. She has also used her understanding of the issue to advocate for rights to clean drinking water globally. Jerrell uses his talents and passion to give back to and uplift his local community. Sometimes making changes on a big scale, like changing national or international policies, can seem overwhelming. But making changes at a local level can also have a big impact on local communities—and local changes also have the potential to snowball into affecting changes on a larger scale, too.

*Do you have stories of people making a difference in your community during Covid-19? It could be something that helped a lot of people like food banks and schools getting food to families. It could also be small acts of kindness that made a difference.*

## Activist research – What would you do?

This week we have seen examples of youth (and even a couple adults ;) ) who are working to make a positive change in the world. What are you passionate about? Today your challenge is to think about an issue that is important to you. It might be something broad that is affecting the whole world (like climate change), or maybe it's something very specific to your own community, like a problem at your school or in your neighborhood. Identify that issue, learn about it, and consider how you can use your special talents to affect change.

**Remember to think about these questions when looking at tackling an issue. It will help you better understand what the problem is and how you might address it.**

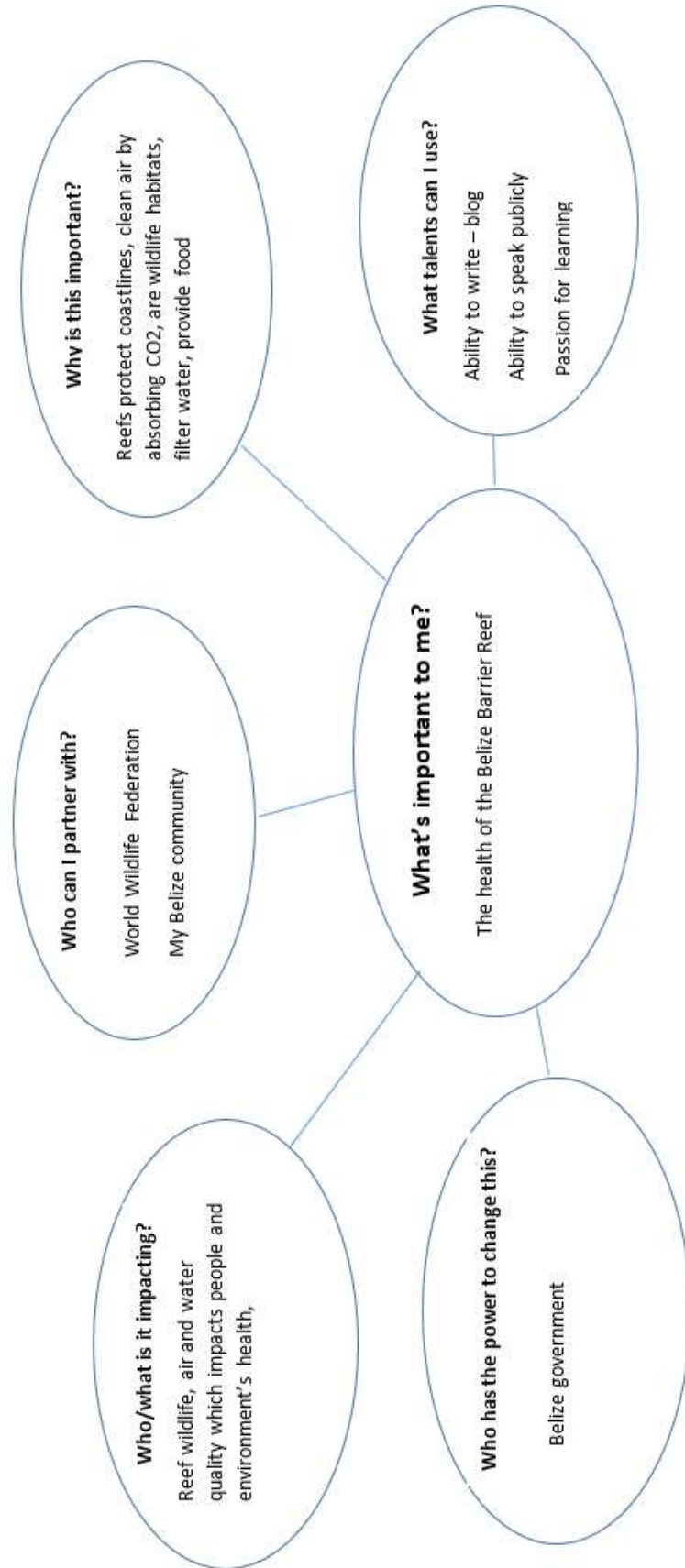
1. What is the issue and why is it important to address?
2. Who/what is it impacting? Is this something that is directly impacting you or is it an injustice that is not affecting you, but is impacting others. If the answer is the latter, then you are an ally. Refer back to the sheet on allyship.
3. Are there groups or organizations that are already working on this who you can partner with? If not, are there other individuals who are interested in this issue as well?
4. Is this an act of charity that is connected to a bigger social issue that requires change? If so, how can you support both?
5. Who has the power in this situation? In other words, who do you need to talk to in order to bring about change?
6. What are your talents? How can you use your talents to make a positive difference?

**One more note:** When we look at solving a problem, we need to make sure that we are not just doing our research on the problem, but that we are also thinking critically about our solutions and their greater impact. Remember to consider different voices and perspectives so you can come up with responsible solutions. That's part of being in community!

**You may use the Activist Bubble Brainstorming sheet in the Student Activity Pack to help you organize your research. There is an example of the Activist Bubble Brainstorming sheet on the next page that was completed based on Madison Edward's story.**

Example using Madison Edwards' story

## **My activist bubble brainstorm!**



## Allyship

To be an ally means to stand up *alongside* a group who is being treated unfairly (other words for this are being discriminated against, or oppressed) even though you are not part of that group. The first thing an ally does is listen to and learn from those who are receiving unfair treatment. Allies can be helpers in many different ways—and they play an important role, even though they are not the leaders of a movement!

### Why is it important to understand your role as an ally?

An ally doesn't have the same personal experience or lived perspective to fully understand and know the situation. When we try to act, but do not fully understand, we are likely to make mistakes, cause more harm, and damage relationships.

Secondly, allies have to trust that other people are the experts in their own lives and experiences, and that they know what support they want or need. It is not our job to exert our power over a group by thinking that we know what's best for them, or that they need us to lead—we are here to support and help.

### Why is it important to be an ally?

Because an ally is not a target of oppression, they have that as an advantage. It is often easier to speak up as an ally in the moment because there is more emotional and physical distance from the harm occurring.

Allies can also be particularly effective at helping change the hearts and minds of people who are acting harmfully, since people are often more receptive to hearing from members of their own identity group or social group. For example, if you saw your friend hurt someone else, you might be able to get your friend to understand the harm she caused, and get her to repair that harm more easily than the person she hurt.

Allies have been important for every social justice movement throughout history—there have always been people willing to stand in solidarity with others and fight against oppression.

*Review In Lak'Ech and our Bible verses for the week. What did we learn about how we are to be in community with one another? How does being an ally align with these teachings? What would the world look like if we chose to ignore these teachings? What would the world look like if we carried out these calls to love one another, be compassionate, humble and act justly?*

**One more note on allyship:** What happens when we make a mistake? None of us are perfect, so while it's important to try our best, at some point we will probably get it wrong. As allies, when we make mistakes, we do what we should always do when we hurt someone: We apologize sincerely, and we listen and learn so that we understand what we did wrong. Making mistakes feels uncomfortable, but they happen when we learn and act! (And not acting—so that we never make mistakes—is a worse option!) Whatever you do, don't give up! Your support is important! This is what you do when you are part of a community!



## Day Five Closing Discussion

We have spent a lot of time learning about problems in the world and how people are working to solve those problems. All of the people we learned about imagined something better for themselves, for their community, and for the world. Today is a call to action. We want you to imagine the most beautiful version of the world you can imagine. What would it look like? What would it feel like? It does not matter if your vision seems impossible to you, or to others. Every person who has ever changed anything about themselves, their life, the community, or the world, first started with imagining that things could be better. Once they imagined something better, it made it possible. Once we create an image in our hearts, our minds can start thinking about ways to make it happen.

So, start by thinking of your vision for something better. Then, begin to think about how your vision can become reality. This might be where you begin to research an issue of your own.

We would love for you to share your vision with us. You can do this by creating a video, drawing a picture, or writing about your vision. You may then add your vision to our [Discussion Board Day 5](#) AND email it to us at [info@communityalliesVBS.com](mailto:info@communityalliesVBS.com) so we can share our visions with others.

We would also love to see your completed coloring pages. Please share them on our Padlet page as well!