Youth Conversation & Action Guide

Let Your Table Take You Places

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2018

on the table.
Your voice matters.

THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST AND AFFILIATES
Thank You for Participating in On the Table

On a single day, Tuesday, May 8, 2018, you’ll be part of an exciting, region-wide initiative to explore the ways in which we can collaborate in order to make our communities stronger, safer and more dynamic.

For the past four years, On the Table has proven that Chicago-area residents—young and old—share a desire to come together, collaborate more, become more civically involved and more committed to our community. Young people are our future. Engaging your students and encouraging them to share their views, values and voices in this discussion only strengthens our community. We appreciate your facilitation and support in this powerful exercise of civic discourse.

About On the Table

The issues facing our region don’t often offer a “quick fix.” On the contrary, progress will only result from residents and organizations working together to make contributions that add up to a greater solution that helps unite the place we call home.

Your voice matters. Through On the Table, your students will join thousands of others throughout the Chicago region who are coming together to have conversations about what matters to them. By learning from and with each other, we have the power to impact both neighborhoods and lives.

About The Chicago Community Trust

The Chicago Community Trust, our region’s community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. The Trust connects the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to nonprofit organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. Since our founding in 1915, the Trust has awarded approximately $2 billion in grant funding to more than 11,000 local nonprofit organizations—including more than $236 million in 2016.

Thanks to Allstate for their generous support of On the Table 2018
Why Participate in On the Table?

*On the Table* is an excellent learning opportunity—a great way to model civic responsibility, learn about other perspectives and explore ways to become more engaged in your community. *On the Table* can help your students:

- Deepen their knowledge and understanding of local issues.
- Explore ways to make a difference in their community or for the causes they care about.
- Enhance their sense of connection and commitment to their communities, schools and peers.
- Have fun and learn together.

What You Will Find in this Guide

- Instructions for organizing an *On the Table* conversation
- Prep lesson to do with your students prior to your *On the Table* conversation
- A facilitation guide and discussion prompts for the *On the Table* conversation (ideally held on May 8, 2018)
- Follow-up lesson to do with your students after your *On the Table* conversation

More information is available at www.onthetable.com.

How to Use this Guide

We have provided a list of suggested ways to engage in *On the Table*. However, do not feel constricted by these options, as they are only suggestions. We encourage you to customize your *On the Table* experience to best suit the individual needs of your school/community. The goal is for young people to gather and discuss ideas to improve their schools, communities and region and think about ways they can act to make our region stronger in the future.

Mikva Challenge and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Service Learning have partnered with The Chicago Community Trust to develop this conversation guide to support your engagement.
Conversation Menu of Options for On the Table

There is no one way to host On the Table, but we have compiled some ideas to help you get started. You should not feel limited by the choices provided. Consider the following:

- Host an On the Table conversation within your class
- Partner with another teacher(s) at your school to host On the Table conversations across classrooms/grade levels
- Invite community members (parents, local business people, clergy, community based organizations, your alderman, etc.) to join your students for an On the Table conversation
- Organize some after school clubs to participate in an On the Table conversation together (e.g., get the basketball team talking with the drama club)
- Host a school-wide On the Table conversation in the lunchroom
- Partner with another school to host an On the Table conversation in the lunchroom

Before Your On the Table Conversation

Be sure to visit www.onthetable.com to register your event.

After Your On the Table Conversation

In today’s world, this act of coming together has never been more important. On the Table 2018 will connect individuals and communities of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Talking—and listening—to our neighbors is an important first step toward making our community better. But we won’t stop there. We’ll turn our discussions into actions that can make our communities and lives better.

We encourage you to use the “Follow-Up After On the Table conversation, Post-Lesson Reflection” (page 07) so the Trust may learn more about your experiences.

On the Table participants can receive up to $5,000 to put their ideas into action through the Acting Up awards. Visit www.onthetable.com to learn more about how to apply.

Thank you for coming to the table—we’re excited to have you as part of this important conversation.

For more information, visit www.onthetable.com, email us at onthetable@cct.org or call 866.737.6951.
Youth Conversation Lesson

Overview
The purpose of this lesson is to facilitate a group discussion where students generate ideas for improving Chicago.

Objectives
- Reflect on positive work occurring in communities
- Identify work that still needs to be done
- Discuss ways in which youth can make a difference
- Collaborate with peers in a civil discourse

Materials
- Facilitation Guidelines
- Guiding Questions
- Note-taking Template

Preparation
Have students sit at tables that seat 8–10 people. Depending on the composition of your group, we recommend mixing up ages, grade levels, and schools (if applicable). In other words, to the greatest extent possible, try to get youth talking with other youth they don’t normally get a chance to talk with. We also recommend trying to have at least one adult at each table, but DO NOT require that the adult act as the facilitator. Instead, the adult can act as a participant at the table with a student facilitator. You can prep students to facilitate discussions prior to the On the Table event. Use the facilitator guide and prompts provided here to help prepare students.

Bell-Ringer: Introductions
Welcome everyone and explain that they will be participating in a momentous event where people from across metropolitan Chicago are meeting today to discuss how we can create a stronger community through a program called On the Table sponsored by The Chicago Community Trust. Explain that the hope is that conversations will generate new ideas, inspire community-based action, and cultivate relationships and collaborations that help to build and maintain strong, vibrant, safe and dynamic neighborhoods.

BEFORE: Assigning Roles
Have each group assign a note-taker, a facilitator and a time-keeper.

DURING: On the Table Conversations
Using the conversation prompts, the facilitators should guide a conversation while the note-taker uses the template to capture the main ideas of the discussion and the time-keepers monitor the clock.

AFTER: Next Steps
- Allow enough time for groups to begin to think about and discuss actions that they could take to address some of the issues they raised in their discussion.
- Each student presenter (one per group) shares the main ideas from his or her group discussion.
- Ask students to join the On the Table discussion online using the hashtag #OnTheTable2018 and on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and YouTube. If your school has a policy against using social media during school hours, encourage your students to join the conversation at home. You may also send your notes or other materials to the On the Table team at onthetable@cct.org.
Facilitator Guidelines

- Create a friendly and welcoming environment
- Keep the group focused and on task
- Make sure everyone is participating and has time to talk
- Make sure no single student is dominating the conversation
- Identify one note-taker at each table

Facilitator Prompts

Use the prompts below to spark conversation. You need not use all of the prompts nor go in any particular order. Allow the conversation to flow organically and work to get everyone participating.

- After welcoming everyone, go around the table and have participants introduce themselves and share a personal experience about their community.
- Describe a strong, well-functioning school, community or region. What are the qualities and characteristics? What makes it strong?
- What is the most important issue facing our community?
- What can we each do to make our school, community or region better?
- Let’s choose an issue affecting our community and talk more specifically about how we’d address it—with unlimited resources and then, as a challenge, if we only had $100 and one day to create change.
- Which idea discussed at your On the Table conversation do you think has the most potential to bring about change in your community?

Note-Taker

- Capture the main ideas suggested by members of your group.
- Complete the note-taking template sheet.

Timekeeper

- Monitor the clock.
- Keep the group focused on task.
- Be a participating member of the group.

Presenter

- Have your group select the main ideas to share with the class.
- When presenting, be sure to state the issue your group focused on first, followed by the solution(s) your group identified.
- Be a participating member of the group.
Note-Taking Template

Issue(s) Discussed as a Group (for Example, Education, Employment, Health, Safety, etc.):

Notes:

Summarize the Main Ideas Discussed as a Group:
Share Your Notes, Ideas or Commitments

Starting on May 8, you can share your discussion notes, ideas or commitments in the following ways:

• Email your notes, ideas or commitments to onthetable@cct.org.
• Share your notes, ideas or commitments on social media using #OnTheTable2018.

Follow-Up After On the Table Conversations: Post-Lesson Reflection

Overview

This lesson can be done immediately following the On the Table conversations or within the following days to have students reflect on their experiences. Teachers across the region will share feedback from their students. The Chicago Community Trust would like to share the youth voices in the region.

Explain to your students that we want to hear from them. Their voice is an important part of the On the Table Conversations. We value their thoughts, feelings, ideas and actions.

Objectives

• Reflect on their On the Table Experience
• Share their thoughts and hear from others
• Plan next steps

Materials

• Big sheet of white paper or flip chart paper, colored
Head, Heart and Feet

**BEFORE: Bell-Ringer Activity**

Starting on May 8, you can share your discussion notes, ideas or commitments in the following ways:

- How did it feel to participate in the *On the Table* conversation?
- What did the conversation make you think about?
- If there are ideas you did not have a chance to share during the conversation, share them here.
- Would you want to participate in a conversation like that again? Explain.
- If you had to choose one issue that was discussed in your conversation to address, what would it be and why?
- What actions could the class or group take to address this issue?

**DURING: Student Group Activity**

Lead a discussion using the questions below, permitting as many students to share their ideas as possible. You may want to utilize a “one and done” rule so that once a student speaks, they cannot speak again until everyone in the class has spoken. This can help prevent a small group of students from dominating the conversation. It also will encourage all students to participate.

Create an outline of a person. Chart ideas that capture what students most care about on the heart, promising ideas on the head, and what students will do (the action) on the feet.

Explain to your students that on a big sheet of paper they will create an outline of a person, put promising ideas on the head, what they care about on the heart (or passions!), and what they will do (the action) on the feet.

Have students respond to the following questions:

- For the heart, what is the most important issue facing your community that you care about?
- For the head, which idea discussed at your *On the Table* conversation do you think has the most potential to bring about change in your community? Additional prompt: Are there other ideas with the potential to bring about change in your community that you did not have a chance to share during the conversation?
- For the feet, share examples of an action you are most likely to take. What actions could the class or group take to address the issues discussed? Please document student responses. To make the head, heart, and feet comments more distinguishable, you may want to use different colored markers. An example is provided on the next page.

**AFTER: Next Steps**

Take a picture of your completed classroom drawing and upload the photo(s) to any social media platform and tag them with #OnTheTable2018. You may also e-mail them to the *On the Table* team at onthetable@cct.org.

Explain to your students that their feedback and reflections will be shared with thousands of people participating in the *On the Table* conversations. Their feedback and reflections will be part of the youth voice for all to see and hear.
Head, Heart and Feet

- What issue do you care about most in your community? Place it next to your heart.
- What idea discussed in your conversations has the most potential to bring about change in your community? Write it next to your head.
- What can action could you take to address this issue? Write it next to your feet.
- Take a picture of your completed drawings and share them via #OnTheTable2018.
We want to hear from all *On the Table* participants about what matters to them. Please fill out the survey and ask your guests to do the same by texting ChiOTT to 797979 to receive a survey link. In the coming weeks, we will be sharing the results of the survey with the community.

Your Community Matters.

*your voice matters.*