



**Workshop Plan:
After-School Middle School**

VISIONQUILT
visionquilt@gmail.com
www.visionquilt.org

These activities took place with “GEMS”(Girls Expressing Many Strengths), an after school program through the nonprofit organization LIFE Art Studio and Cultural Center based in Medford, Oregon. This program is focused on using art as a tool for youth suicide prevention.

Objectives:

Students will:

- View Vision Quilt panels made by a variety of people and reflect on the impact of gun violence on their personal lives and in their communities.
- Generate possible solutions to preventing gun violence through short visual and written exercises, followed by discussion. These activities will allow students’ voices to be heard and introduce the power of art to create dialogue and social change.
- Create their own 18 x 24-inch panels, with modeled, guided support. These Vision Quilt panels will be displayed at community locations.

Inspiring kids about the Vision Quilt:

Vision Quilt panels will be delivered to the GEMS leaders at White Mountain Middle School so that students can see examples. Designated person will show examples of the Vision Quilt to the students before the Vision Quilt workshop so that the youth will have an idea about what they will be producing in these four workshop sessions. Students will be given this info:

*The Vision Quilt is a national grassroots project using the power of art to prevent gun violence. You will be creating panels for the Vision Quilt using spray paint, drawing, painting, stencils and the power of writing, with visiting artists offering guidance and support..
No art experience is needed.*

Your Vision Quilt panels will become part of the national Vision Quilt and displayed in community centers, libraries, places of worship, etc. They will also be used in rallies and marches.

Logistics:

All students will participate in all sessions. There will be four sessions for 90 minutes each. Vision Quilt staff will work with GEMS mentors.

Session #1: Introductions and Overview of Vision Quilt Project

Setting the Stage: 10 minutes

Introductions: Give overview of project, why project was started and hopes for four sessions. Show image of AIDS quilt panel displayed on Mall in Washington, D.C. in 1987. Tell youth they are helping to create a model for other youth in the future. Their ideas, panels and feedback will shape this national project.

Review ground rules for sessions:

Respect

Everyone participates: Staff and Youth

Confidentiality: what is said in room, stays in room

Ground rules are agreed upon before session starts

Ask students to fill out two Vision Quilt release forms, one for the release of their panel to the national project and one for permission to use photography and video.

Engaging with the Project: 20 minutes

Introduce the topic of increasing gun violence in America. Ask students to share what they have heard or experienced related to guns.

Display 15-20 Vision Quilt panels, or photos of panels. Have students walk among the panels and stand by one that they either like, dislike or one that speaks to them. Ask individual students to comment on the panel they have chosen. Have VQ members tell the story behind the panel as appropriate. Ask group: What is the power of these panels?

Delving Deeper: 55 minutes

Handout: Share Brady Campaign statistics about gun violence in the U.S. Think about 100 people in a room. This many would be murdered by a gun in a year This many would be wounded..... This many would die from suicide..... This many would...

Creative Imagery: Coordinator walks students through a guided meditation (attached) to prepare students for panel making. Students begin to sketch their panel ideas on 18x24-inch newsprint.

Reflection: 5 minutes

Ask youth to write in their journal: draw pictures, draw cartoons, write sentences. What is one thing you learned during this session? What is the power of these panels? Can art change anything?

Hand out origami butterflies (as appeared in the creative imagery exercise) as rewards for hard work and reminders of the day's lesson. These butterflies can be folded in advance using instructions found on the internet (search "origami butterfly").

Session #2: Introduction to theme of Vision Quilt, generating potential solutions to preventing gun violence, creating panels

Setting the Stage: 15 minutes

Review what we did in last session and what we are going to do today. Show 15 different Vision Quilt panels. Pick one panel. What do you think this person is saying? How do these panels make you feel?

Engaging with the Project: 10 minutes

Introduce theme of Vision Quilt Project: *"It is possible....."* Ask: what changes have taken place since you were born that no one thought was possible in the year you were born? List things that people did not think were possible, but became possible since they were born. Connect the idea of it being possible to change our gun culture and to prevent gun violence. Add ideas here in case youth get stuck. Point out the necessity to have a *vision* in order to create change.

Delving Deeper: 50 minutes

Finish sketches of panel designs on paper. Point out various techniques used in panels. Demonstrate how to work with fabric paints, acrylics, stencils, making rubber stamps, needle and thread, etc. Point out that this is what they will be doing in session #3 and #4. Point out the use of background colors in specific panels that emphasizes the message in the panels. Decide if you want a background color on your panel.

Make computers available for research if requested by students.

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Reflection: 10 minutes

Ask them to write in their journal:

What surprised you?

What inspired you?

What touched your heart?

Write that in your journal and make notes about how to incorporate the messages you want to convey about preventing gun violence into your panel.

Session #3: Discussion of effects of gun violence, students draw and paint on canvas

Setting the Stage: 10 minutes

Review what we did last session and what we are going to do today. Show 15 more panels and ask youth to select a panel that speaks to them and ask: what message is being conveyed? How does this panel make you feel?

Engaging with the Project: 70 minutes

Hand out blank canvas or Evolon panels. Help students as needed to use art materials to create panels. Clean up.

Reflection: 10 minutes

Acknowledge their work, cooperation and creativity and thank them for their support.

Ask students to write in journals and discuss: Do you believe in the power of art to make changes? This is a national movement. Where would you like to see the Vision Quilt exhibited in your community? What message do you want your panel to say to the whole country? What did you like best about tonight? What could we do better next time?

Session #4: Completing panel and a writing statement about their panels

Setting the Stage: 5 Minutes

Review what we did last session and what we are going to do today. Point to empty clothesline. Tell youth that the focus of today is to finish their panels and that their panels will be hanging on that clothesline as they finish. Ask each youth to report on progress to a staff member and get materials they need to finish the panels. Tell them they need to be focused to finish and ask them to continue their cooperation and support for this project.

Engaging with the Project: 60 minutes

Students finish art panels. If possible, play music chosen by staff while they work. Ask each student to write an artist statement about their panel before leaving the session. As youth complete their panels, they clean up the art supplies and room. Staff circulates and assists 1:1 as needed.

Reflection: 30 minutes

Ask each youth to present their panel to the group and ask: What are you saying in your panel? How does it make you feel? Staff member will acknowledge student.

Each youth will receive an origami “GEM” (star) as a reward for participation because the name of the after school program is “GEMS,” an acronym for Girls Expressing Many Strengths. These gems can be folded in advance using instructions found on the internet (search “origami star”).

If time, students will be asked to write in their journals: What is one thing you would be willing to do to prevent gun violence?

Give the students and staff the present of Kim Stafford's poem, "Proclamation to Peace," which has become the anthem of the Vision Quilt project. Tell them it was set with metal type and letterpress printed on an antique printing press. Ask for volunteers to read one line aloud until the whole poem is read.