

Rock the Boat

Teaching with Primary Sources Lesson Plan

Social Studies or Media Studies

Grades 4–6

80–90 Minutes

ROCK THE BOAT

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Someone might tell you, “Don’t rock the boat”
when they want you to hush.
When they are afraid of change.
When they are doing something wrong
or that makes them ashamed and they don’t
want anyone to know.

There is a feeling you might get
when they say that,
when you know someone has done
or said something unjust. Something
that might hurt you or another being.

That feeling might be a tightening in your chest.
Or a tightening of your fists.
And most times you should not thrust out either
but you should follow that feeling and speak up
and speak out.

Even if it doesn’t feel easy,
Rock the boat. Rock the boat.

Practice saying “Don’t do that to her.”
or “You’re hurting him.”
or “I don’t feel good when you...”

Speaking up might make your hands shake,
or your voice small,
or your heart flutter like a bird taking flight,
that feeling, the tightening in your chest,
or the tightening of your fists — you may not have to thrust out either
but trust that your body is telling you to speak up and speak out

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ROCK THE BOAT CONT.

because even if it doesn't feel easy,
Rock the boat. Rock the boat.
And sometimes it might seem you are the only one
who can see or feel that something is not quite right
in how another is being treated,
or in how you are being treated,

and you may want to be quiet
so as not to rock the boat,
but just know
you contain waves,
you are an ocean,
your heart is as large as lakes
and when it quakes
you have to rise,
and rise, and let the tide inside you
shake every single ship
that would attempt to sweep
someone beneath:

Rock the boat, rock the boat,
with love and hope, rock the boat.