

# 7 Civic-Minded Things You Can Do With Your Kids This Winter Break

*Tis the season of teaching kids the nuts and bolts of healthy civic advocacy!*

ELMHURST, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, December 20, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- You've been busy resisting. Your kids will be out of school soon. What's your strategy to keep fighting—and keep them from fighting each other? Joanna Spathis, author of social activism handbook [Wake, Rise, Resist: The Progressive Teen's Guide to Fighting Tyrants and A\\*holes](#) recommends that you get them involved.

No doubt your kids have noticed your frustration, worries, and rage this year. Resist as a family, and give them a chance to express their emotions in an inspiring, productive way. It'll set the stage for a lifetime of civic engagement, and it might just put a little enthusiasm in your civic sails.

1. What's your sign? Make a family sign that represents what you care about. This one is easy and a perfect activity for a blustery day. Brainstorm some ideas, lay out supplies, and let your kids do the rest. (This is a surprisingly useful tip, activists. Sometimes adults feel a little funny about making signs. Enlist your kids! You wouldn't think twice about proudly carrying a Please, Love Everybody sign if your little one designed it!) You can display your family sign in a window or make a few and have them ready for the next time you need to take to the streets. For a green bonus, use supplies you have in the house. Inside-out cereal boxes make pretty good canvases!

2. Representative fact-finding mission. Help your kids research their representatives. Walk the kids through the layers of government as they gather the intel so they can get an idea of how things work. Challenge them to visit each rep's web site and see where they stand (or lie!) on the issues your family cares about. Have the kids make a handy call sheet. (And ask them to enter the numbers in your phone contacts if you haven't done so already.). Take it a step further and call one of the offices on speaker phone so you can model what such a conversation sounds like. Go ahead and introduce your young constituents to the staffer and let her/him know that your family is counting on them to make good decisions.

3. Study your young role models. There are so many young people doing so many amazing things. It's important that kids know they have valuable talents and ideas to contribute today. Pick a name each day. Research and discuss who they are and what kind of work they're doing. This is also a good time to talk about what makes a good role model and upstander. Here are a few names to get you started: Gavin Grimm, Joshua Williams, Cristina Jimenez, Lydia X. Z. Brown.

4. Visit a museum in your pajamas. Of course you can go to visit, but it's cold out there ... plus many of us don't live by fancy museums. Many cultural museums have online exhibits that do wonders at bringing a larger world into our homes. Here are some amazing virtual walls to wander when the kids have a little (Little. Ha!) screentime: The National Museum of African History & Culture ([www.nmaahc.si.edu](http://www.nmaahc.si.edu)), America's Islamic Heritage Museum & Cultural Center ([www.aihmuseum.org/](http://www.aihmuseum.org/)), Arab American National Museum ([www.arabamericanmuseum.org/](http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/)), Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center (<http://smithsonianapa.org/>).

5. Tread lightly on the planet. Make a challenge out of reducing your family's carbon footprint over break. Maybe experiment with a no-waste day or no straws for a week? Or pick one area where you can all do better, like commit as a family to turn the water off while brushing your teeth or decide as a family to wrap presents in pillowcases. Challenge each other to live more mindfully and gently this holiday season.

6. In addition to Dear Santa, try Dear Editor. Write a letter to the editor as a family. We know you talk about what's going on in the world—now introduce another outlet for your kids to air their concerns. For example, my 7-year-old came home from school worried about a friend of hers who said she's afraid of being deported. My daughter was confused. She learned that being deported means being sent out of the country. She wanted to know why that would happen to a friend of hers. That's a good question to share with her community, right? Teach your kids to write a short, respectful, impactful letter, and they'll learn that their voices deserve to be heard.

7. Watch a move that matters. Grab your popcorn and choose to watch a documentary as a family and, as an added bonus, maybe have some addressed postcards handy in case any of you feel riled to action by what you see. [Common Sense Media](#) has fabulous lists of age-appropriate documentaries.

Oh, you've been so good this year: here's another one:

8. Interview a marcher. Know someone who went to the Women's March on Washington? Have your children interview them. Make a list of questions, questions like Why did you march? What did you learn? What was your favorite part of the experience? What do you think the march achieved? This would be a great time to talk about other important marches in history, plus open a discussion about what would inspire them to take to the streets.

Joanna Spathis is a writer, volunteer, and mother who lives outside of Chicago. You can find more ideas on raising civically engaged children in the book she co-authored with Kerri Kennedy: *Wake, Rise, Resist: The Progressive Teen's Guide to Fighting Tyrants and A\*holes*. She also blogs at [www.wakeriseresist.com](http://www.wakeriseresist.com).

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