



Women's History Month: Rosie the Riveter

Because March is Women's History Month, we decided to celebrate by creating a program about Rosie the Riveter. During World War II, many women joined the workforce to help in the war effort. Their stories are important! Many people have women in their families who changed their lives during the war by working in nontraditional jobs, growing food, volunteering and taking care of soldiers. March is Women's History Month. But "History" = HIS story. We need to include HER story! (And the stories of minorities, too!) We suggest you prepare for this activity by giving participants some questions to ask their relatives about the women in their own families and their experiences during World War II. Let's keep their stories alive for future generations!

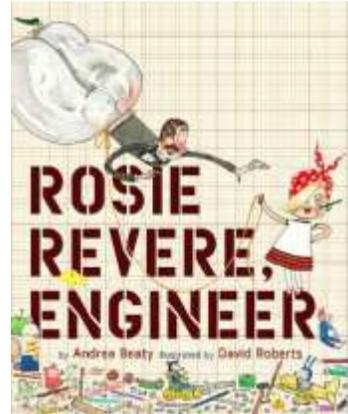
1) Icebreaker Activity

Icebreaker activities are quick and easy activities used to help group participants relax and get to know one another. When participants talk about something familiar and easy, they begin to feel comfortable hearing their voice in a group while they get to know each other. A successful icebreaker can set a positive tone for the rest of the meeting.

For this program, have people pair up and share their favorite method of transportation and where they would like to go.

2) Mini Lesson

- **Read *Rosie Revere, Engineer* out loud to the group.** (Picture books can be used as resources and discussion starting points for people of all ages.) Then share **context, tidbits and vocabulary** so everyone learns.
- **Context: Introduce the history of Rosie the Riveter to the group.**
 - During WWII, propaganda was aimed at American housewives in an effort to encourage them to join the workforce while the men were away. Model for the image of Rosie the Riveter was a young telephone operator named Mary Doyle Keefe. The artist Norman Rockwell used her picture for his Rosie the Riveter cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*.
- **Tidbits:**
 - During wartime, the average man made \$54.60 a week and the average woman made \$31.50 a week for the same job.
 - The average weekly wage for the average man in 2015 was \$907. For women, the average weekly wage in 2015 was \$729.
 - Women worked in factories, shipyards, farms and other places that traditionally employed males. After the war, women were encouraged to leave work and return home.
 - Rosie is known for her polka dot scarf.
 - Mary Doyle Keefe, the Rosie the Riveter model for *The Saturday Evening Post*, died at the age of 92 in 2015.
- **Vocabulary:**
 - Riveter: Someone who operates a riveting gun, which is a manufacturing tool
 - Aviator: A pilot
 - Engineer: A person who designs, builds or maintains engines, machines or public works
 - Inventor: Someone who creates something, typically a process or device
 - Resilience: The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, toughness



3) Discussion Questions

Review the questions from home. Other questions might include:

- What were some obstacles these women overcame?
- Have you ever encountered difficulty when you wanted to accomplish something?
- What did you do to fix the problem?
- Are there certain jobs for just women or just men?
- When have you been resilient?

4) Activity

We always like to think of the Smarts Theory when planning programs. Everyone has different strengths, so when planning activities it helps to have activities geared toward the different smarts. Here are some idea for this theme using the Multiple Intelligences/Smarts Theory:



- **People Smart:** Work in small groups
- **Self Smart:** Answer discussion and reflection questions
- **Music Smart:** Find musical pieces that go with the theme. The song Rosie the Riveter written in 1942 by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb
- **Body Smart:** Learn popular dances from the 1940s
- **Nature Smart:** Research the vegetables that were commonly planted in victory gardens; plant your own garden
- **Picture Smart:** Make your own Rosie the Riveter posters, perhaps for people in your own family
- **Logic Smart:** Research the aviators using technology (see list below)
- **Word Smart:** Read the book online at storytimefromspace.com

In small groups, students and older adults will be given a name of a female aviator to research. Each group will share what they learned with the while group. This is a great way to use technology.

Female Aviators:

- Elizabeth Thible
- Harriet Quimby
- E. Lillian Todd
- Bessie Coleman

- Amelia Earhart
- Lynn Rippelmeyer

5) Summary Discussion

- What did you learn from our small-group discussion?
- What is one thing that surprised you?
- What is one thing you want to remember about today?

6) Reflection Time

Put on some quiet background music. Give participants time to reflect on their experience. Hand out plain paper for people to write their reflections or draw pictures. Give a minute for people to think about what they have learned.

7) Snack!

End the program with a snack. This allows for more information discussion and socializing.