

MOSAIC Supplemental Activity

Building Social-Emotional and Character Skills via Analyzing and Creating Art

Virtues & Skills

Integration of all MOSAIC Virtues and Skills

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to appreciate the social-emotional and character elements embodied in art and learn to analyze and create artistic products that embody key MOSAIC and other virtues, especially freedom.

MATERIALS

Activity 1: teachers will find that reviewing <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/story-behind-thomas-hart-bentons-incredible-masterwork-1-180953405/>

Prior to activity 1 will provide valuable background and allow for better framing of the students' work.

Activity 2: teachers will find that reviewing <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/21st-century-reimagining-norman-rockwells-four-freedoms-180968086/> prior to activity 2 will provide valuable background.

Note: both activities would benefit from coordination and involvement with arts and social studies teachers and coordination with the arts and social studies curricula.

Day 1: Murals of Thomas Hart Benton: American Life and History in the 1920-30's

Day 2: Re-creating Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms" for Our Times

Day 1: Murals of Thomas Hart Benton: American Life and History in the 1920-30's

Step 1: Understanding Thomas Hart Benton's "American Today" Mural, in 1931, as history and art

- Explain the following to the class:
- ***“America Today, is a mural that takes up an entire room, four walls, ten panels, floor to ceiling. A mural, technically, is any painting or other work of art directly executed on a wall. “America Today” was created by Thomas Hart Benton after he was asked to create a “large-scale mural,” to be called “America Today,” in 1929. Benton had been traveling throughout America for the previous four years, taking notes and making sketches. He was ideally ready for this task when it was presented to him. His work was completed and displayed in 1931. When it is displayed, the 10 panels often are hung or arranged in such a way as to become the walls and ceiling of a room.***
- ***Benton’s mural is an artist’s way of capturing a period of American history based on living during that time and traveling to many parts of the land being captured in the art. The mural is his interpretation of what he observed and felt during his travels. Someone else making the exact same travels likely would have produced very different art about it. Their feelings would have been different because of who they are (e.g., their gender, age, ethnic group) and their prior relationships and status (e.g., wealth, family life). We look at art—and history—through our own eyes, though it is also helpful to try to look at it through the eyes of the artist, or historian.”***

Step 2: Review Benton’s artwork

- Say to the class, ***“For this activity, you will review three panels of the ten created by Benton. For each one, please use the PLAN problem solving framework to provide an analysis of it. We will start with “The Deep South,” then “The Steel Plant,” and then “Instruments of Power.”***



- Display the **Deep South MOSAIC Projector Display**. Students also will need copies of the **Using PLAN to Analyze Art Outline**. You can make this into a handout, or print a poster of this framework for students to look at during the lesson, or print out a few copies for students to share. In the latter two instances, they can write their responses on separate sheets of paper or their MOSAIC notebooks.
- Lead students through the PLAN outline as a whole class to help them understand the framework and how to apply it to art. Have students discuss particular questions in subgroups as you wish. Encourage students to acknowledge their classmates' responses as they speak and be sure norms of respectful disagreement are followed.
- If you feel students are ready for it, the Action Plan section can be carried out in subgroup or pair-share conversations and then shared with the larger group.
- Repeat with the other two murals, either as a whole class or by having students work in subgroups for all parts of the PLAN process. This gives students an opportunity to practice their social-emotional learning skills, especially emotion regulation, communication, empathy, and problem solving. Be sure to explicitly notice and verbally reinforce examples of these skills being displayed by students.

Step 3: Concluding Reflections

- After you have completed the final analysis of the murals that you will have your class do, ask some of these reflective discussion questions. You also can have students write answers in their MOSAIC notebooks before having a general discussion, to prime their individual thinking:
 - ***What would you ask Thomas Hart Benton if he could visit our classroom?***
 - ***What were the strongest feelings you had while looking at the mural panels and analyzing them?***
 - ***What do you feel you learned about what was happening in the United States in the 1930's? What questions do you still have about this time period?***

- ***If you were to try to capture “America Today” using some other medium of art besides painting or murals, what might you use?***
- ***In your opinion, how might different groups of people shown in the murals have felt about American Today during the time Benton captured? How do those different groups feel about “America Today,” today?***

Follow Up: This lesson can be deepened and extended by coordinating with your Social Studies and Art teachers and potentially adapting some of the

(MOSAIC Projector Display)

MOSAIC Supplemental Arts Activity: Using PLAN to Analyze Art (page 1)

Problem Description

1. What problem or issue was the picture intended to address?
2. What feelings do you have while viewing the picture? What in the picture leads to those feelings? Content? Color? Style? Other?
3. How are different individuals in the picture feeling? How can you tell? What story are those differences telling?
4. What don't you understand in the picture?
5. What would you have wanted to see added or clarified?

List Options

1. What was the artist's goal in creating this piece?
2. How else do you think he might have achieved his goal?
3. What virtues do you see portrayed in the art work? How are these virtues being communicated?
4. Pick 2-3 other virtues would like to see added, or two other ways the artist might have communicated the virtues he or she selected.
Think about the **pros** and **cons** of adding those options or of communicating virtues in different ways.
5. Pick one option that you would most like to have seen him or her try!

(MOSAIC Projector Display)

**MOSAIC Supplemental Arts Activity:
Using PLAN to Analyze Art (page 2)**

Action Plan

1. If you were asked to create a mural about “America Today,” either now or for different points in history that you are studying, what would you have included?
2. Create Action Steps needed to get the necessary background and prepare to carry out the mural.
3. What bumps in the road might you encounter?
4. What would be Plan B if those bumps got too bumpy?

Notice Successes!

1. What do you feel is most successful and effective in the art you observed? Why?
2. Do you know how appreciated the artist was in his or her time? Later? Do some research to find out if success was noticed, and how. Share what you have learned with your classmates.



This mural panel is titled, "Deep South" and reflected Benton's travels from Appalachia to New Orleans in the 1920's and the poverty and racism he witnessed.



This panel followed a visit to the Bethlehem Steel plant in Sparrows Point, Maryland (closed in 2012). Between 1930-1950, the U.S. had many giant steel plants that dominated the cities they were in, employed many, and were the envy of the entire world.



In his travels, Benton was struck by changing technology and especially its influence on transportation. He illustrated this in his panel, "Instruments of Power."

Day 2: *The Original Four Freedoms of Norman Rockwell*

Step 1: Read Background Information to Students

- In the 1940's, the world was gripped by war. There were genuine fears about whether the American way of life would be preserved, or if the vision of life put forward by the Nazis would dominate.
- Norman Rockwell identified four basic American freedoms and created paintings that he thought would rally and inspire the American people. In this, he was successful. He knew that the brave words of President Roosevelt and others were valuable, but many people would relate better to something they could see, an "image they could hold on to."
- In looking at the following four pictures of freedoms-- Freedom of Speech, Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want (Hunger), and Freedom of Worship-- remember the world of the 1940's was different from now. In Rockwell's day, about 90 percent of Americans were Christians, mostly Protestant. While Rockwell did make some effort to show people of some different ethnicities and religious backgrounds, the people in his paintings are overwhelmingly white, with men usually dominant in the framing of the pictures. Art experts have noted that Rockwell used one white male model—his neighbor Jim Martin, who appears as the father in Freedom from Fear—as a common thread throughout all four paintings. See if you can notice this as well.

Step 2: Review Rockwell's Four Freedoms on MOSAIC Projection Slides

- For each picture, ask students what strikes them most.
- Ask what feelings they get as they look at each of the pictures. You may want to ask them to write down their feelings before sharing. Ask them what about the pictures leads to their feelings.
- Ask what virtues they feel each picture conveys to them. After they volunteer their ideas, ask them if they see any of the MOSAIC virtues in each of the pictures: Positive Purpose, Optimistic Future Mindedness, Compassionate Forgiveness and Gratitude, Constructive Creativity, Helpful Generosity, and Responsible Diligence. Ask what it is about the pictures that communicate particular virtues to them.

Step 3: Create Four Freedoms for Our Time

- Say to students, ***“A group of artists were asked to create their own paintings for Rockwell’s Four Freedoms for the year 2018. Before you look at their paintings, there are three activities we will engage in to help prepare you:*”**

a. “What Four Freedoms would you choose as most important to preserve now, and around which people should rally and become inspired?”

“For (a), write your Four Freedoms in your MOSAIC notebook. Share with several classmates. Note which ones you have in common and which ones are different” Have groups share their choices with the class, putting the list on the board.

b. “How would you create a drawing or other image depicting Rockwell’s Four Freedoms?”

“For (b), join with 2-3 classmates who have selected the same Freedom and work together to create an illustration of that Freedom.”

c. “How would you choose to illustrate YOUR Four Freedoms for now?”

For (c), as appropriate, have students work together on common freedoms or have students who have identified freedoms that other classmates have not work together, to assist and give one-another feedback.

Step 4: Review the 2018 Version of Rockwell’s Four Freedoms on the MOSAIC Projection Slide

- For each picture, ask students what strikes them most.
- Ask what feelings they get as they look at each of the pictures. You may want to ask them to write down their feelings before sharing. Ask them what about the pictures leads to their feelings.
- Ask what virtues they feel each picture conveys, to them. After they volunteer their ideas, ask them if they see any of the MOSAIC virtues in each of the pictures: Positive Purpose, Optimistic Future Mindedness,

Compassionate Forgiveness and Gratitude, Constructive Creativity, Helpful Generosity, and Responsible Diligence. Ask what it is about the pictures that communicate particular virtues to them.

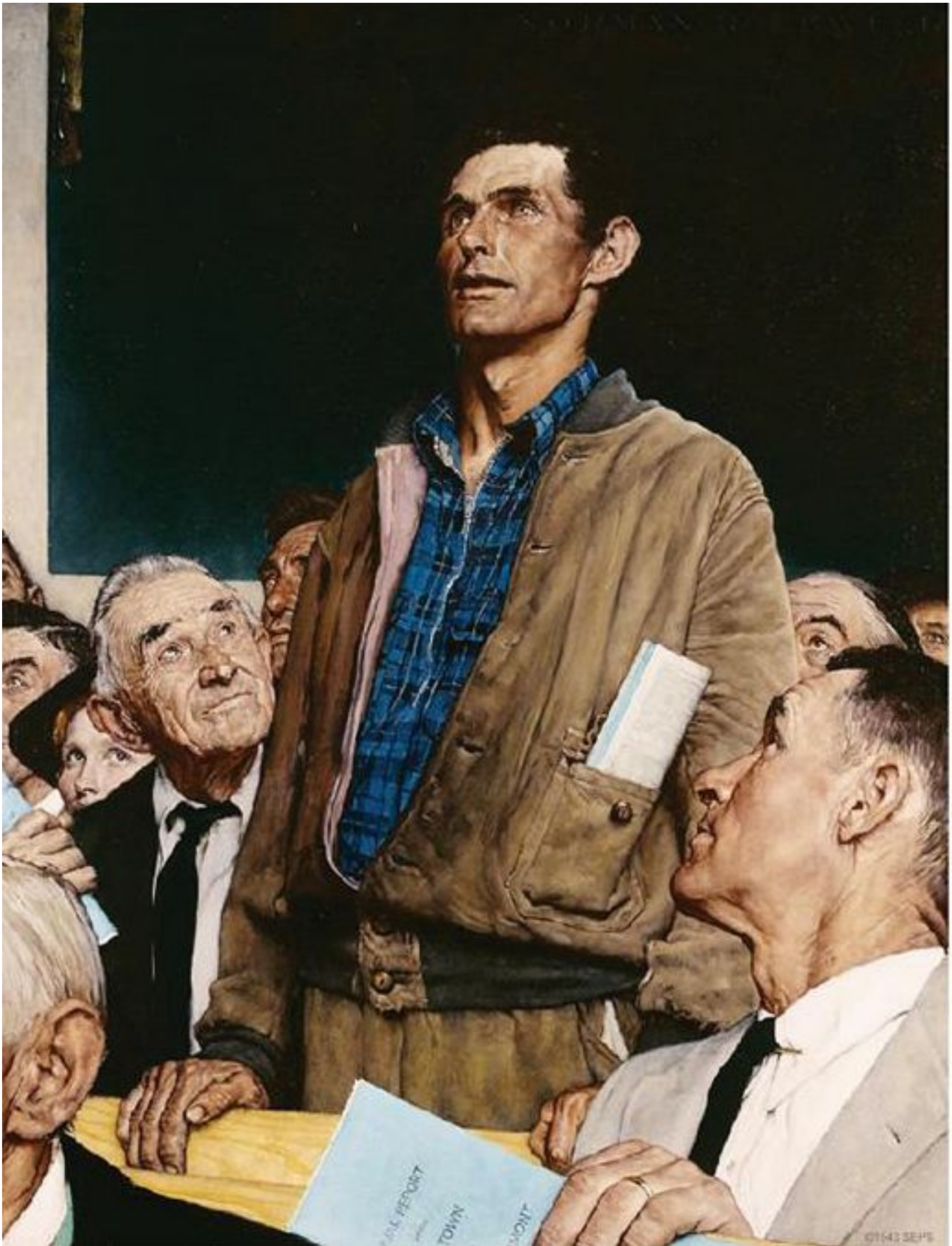
- Have students compare and contrast Rockwell's pictures and those of the artists recreating the Four Freedoms for 2018. You may want to ask them to do this in small groups and then share with the class.

Step 5: Reflecting and Sharing Student Creations



- In their MOSAIC notebooks, ask students to reflect on three things they are taking away from this activity. Provide time for students to share their reflections, if they wish to.
- Ask students, ***“Now that you have seen the 2018 version of the Four Freedoms, what changes, if any, might you make in YOUR versions of the Four Freedoms? Did you get any new artistic ideas from what these artists did?”***
- Consider when, where, and how to display some of the students' work. Note that this can be done digitally as well as via the artwork in whatever media the students chose to use.

Freedom of Speech

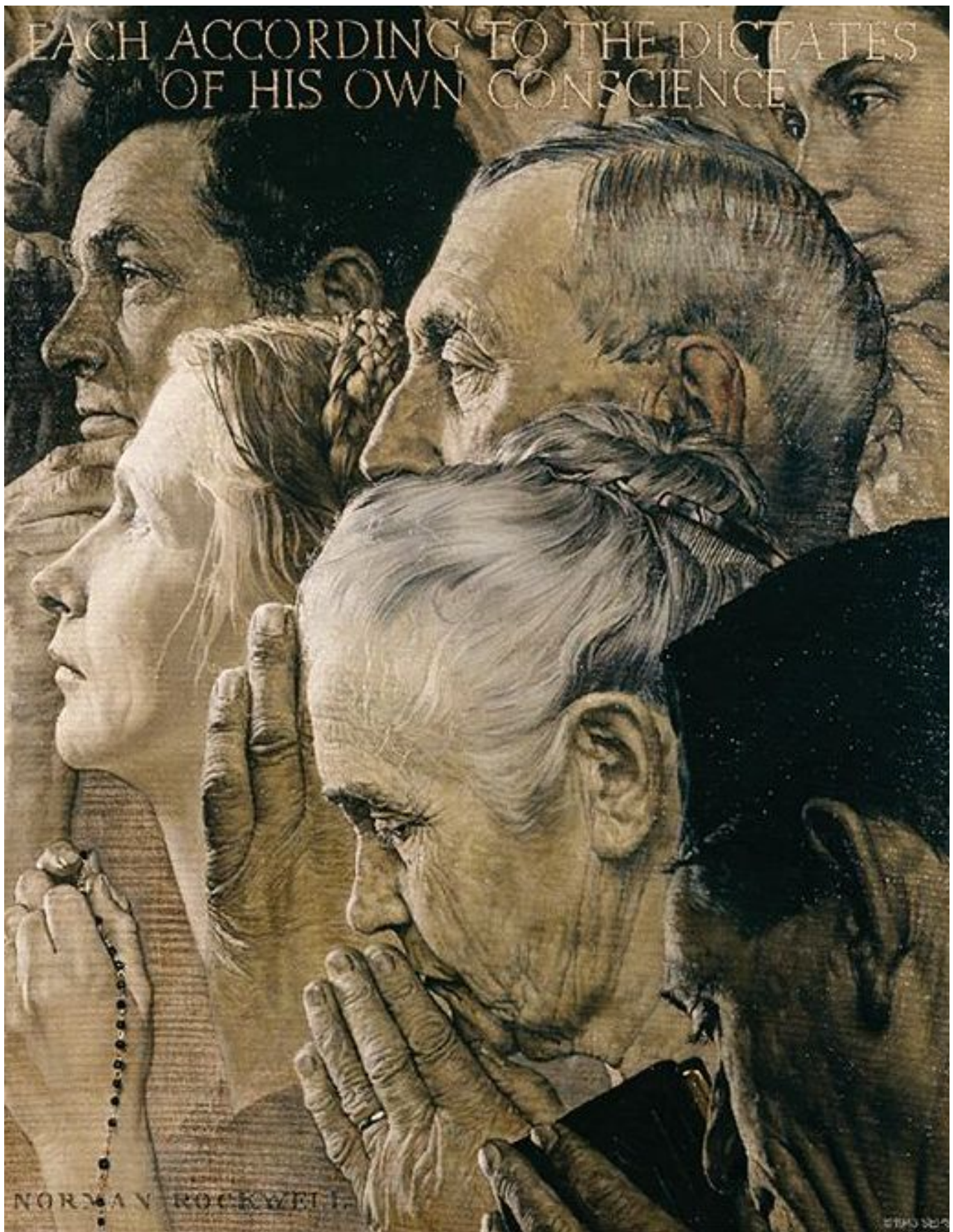




Freedom from Fear



Freedom from Want



Freedom of Worship



The new Four Freedoms, in 2018, clockwise from upper left:

- Freedom from Want by Ryan Schude
- Freedom from Fear by Edel Rodriguez
- Freedom of Worship by Tim O'Brien
- Freedom of Speech by Melinda Beck