

TEACHER GUIDE

1956 DOC. #2: Democratic Convention Program Cover

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Unlike the Republicans, the Democrats chose not to create special material to target women voters in 1956. But the Democrats did schedule a Women’s Day at the convention that featured speeches by former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt as well as seven Democratic Congresswomen. In an early instance of using television to target specific audiences, planners scheduled them to speak in the afternoon in order to attract housewives as viewers. Surveys showed that many women watched TV in the afternoon hours before the children got home from school.

This document is the cover of the 1956 Democratic National Convention program.

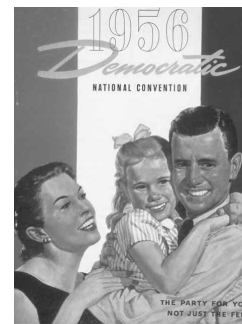
> **Project** the document.

QUESTION | **What is the message that the Democrats want to project about their party?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER | Democrats will serve the interests of families rather than special interest groups.

EVIDENCE | image of a smiling family beneath the Democratic banner; “the Party for you – not just the few”

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Democratic Convention Program Cover

PowerPoint Slide

QUESTION **Who is the target audience for this image?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER Young, white, middle-class families.

EVIDENCE “the Party for you” is represented by white, young, middle-class family

QUESTION **How does the artist use background, composition, and font to convey the themes of family and patriotism?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER Red, white, and blue suggest patriotism; a smiling family and the word “Democratic” written in script is meant to be familiar and appealing; cover layout resembles a magazine cover from *Life* or *Look* to suggest familiarity – just like on the coffee table at home.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

How might Stevenson’s status as a divorced man have helped or hurt him in this campaign?

How have “family values” been used in other campaigns to promote candidates?

ADDITIONAL INFO

The Democrats held their convention in Chicago in August 1956. Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts placed Stevenson’s name in nomination. Stevenson took the unusual step of having the convention select his running mate. Estes Kefauver of Tennessee was the choice over Kennedy.

CONNECTIONS

(see thematic listing)

“Family Man”

Reaching Voters (conventions)

Target Audience (families)