ACTIVITY:
Tin Can Victory Garden

BACKGROUND:
During World War II, food was rationed because the United States had troops stationed all around the world. One of the government’s efforts to make sure that there was enough food for everyone was a campaign promoting citizens to grow their own vegetables. Millions of Americans grew victory gardens in their backyards, on rooftops, and in window boxes to supplement their wartime rations. During World War II, victory gardens provided 40 percent of vegetables grown in the country.

OBJECTIVE:
Students will learn about the role of victory gardens in World War II and plant their own vegetable in a tin can that they’ll scrap themselves!

POINT VALUE:
8 points

PROCEDURE:
Step 1
Have your students save a used tin can from home.

Step 2
Print out one label template per student.

Step 3
Have your students analyze the provided propaganda poster using the background information and primary source analysis questions.

Step 4
Students can then select the vegetable seed and use art supplies to decorate their label. Once decorated, tape the label to the tin can.

Step 5
Students should fill the tin can 3/4 of the way with gardening soil. Have your students select their vegetable or herb seed and plant it about two inches under the soil. Your student can use their fingers to push a small hole up to their knuckle into their soil to plant their seed. Cover the seed and lightly water.

MATERIALS:
+ Tin can
+ Small bag of gardening soil
+ Selection of vegetable or herb seeds such as cherry tomatoes, peas, green pepper, basil, or parsley
+ One label template per student
+ Art supplies to decorate label

KEY THEMES:
Scraping  Art  History
PLANT A VICTORY GARDEN

OUR FOOD IS FIGHTING

A GARDEN WILL MAKE YOUR RATIONS GO FURTHER
PRIMARY SOURCE: Propaganda Poster Analysis

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions below about your artifact.

PRIMARY SOURCE: Original items or records that have survived from the past and were part of a direct experience of a time or event. Primary sources can include: photographs, letters, speeches, newspapers, journals, artifacts, works of art, film footage, and oral histories.

What kind of primary source do you have? What sort of insights and information can this kind of primary source provide to us?

Describe what you see happening in the poster. Why is it important that the image include both adults and young people?

How does gardening help contribute to the war effort?

Why do you think people needed to “prepare tin cans for war?”