

Trading Places

Description:

Cross-cultural marketplace simulation

Aim: experience how cross-cultural conflict affects Christians workers overseas

Audience:

teenagers through adults, minimum 15 participants

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment:

scissors, photocopied sheets, optional food, clothing, tools & cloth

Scripture to Study:

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

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Leader's Instructions:

1. Before the meeting, prepare enough Culture Cards, currency and merchandise for participants to use. (Photocopy masters are included.) One third of the participants need a Seller Card and two thirds of them need a Buyer Card. You decide how much money and merchandise to use. Go big, or stay small and simple.
2. Divide participants into two groups so that the larger group consists of two thirds of the participants. The smaller group contains one third of the participants. Then ask the larger group to leave the room with another leader.
3. The smaller group, who remain in the room, are the market place sellers. Give each seller some *merchandise*, some *currency* and a *Seller's Culture Card*. Practice the cultural rules together and encourage the participants to really throw themselves into their roles when the buyers return. Sellers then each choose an area of the floor and lay out their merchandise directly in front of themselves. If using real merchandise instead of the paper cards, each seller should arrange his/her things on a brightly colored cloth.
4. Meanwhile, another leader should be giving the larger group of buyers their *Culture Cards*, and some *currency* to spend. It is helpful to have another leader talk through these cultural rules with the buyers and allow them time to practice, too.
5. Once the sellers have set up their displays, ask the buyers to come back into the room and open the market for trading.
6. After about 10 minutes of buying and selling, use the Discussion and Application section below to debrief participants.

Discussion and Application:

1. Focus on what *happened* during the simulation:
 - *Did anyone manage to buy or sell anything?
 - *Can the sellers name the buyers' rules and vice-versa?(If everyone had kept rigidly to their cultural rules, no one would have bought or sold anything! Any trading that took place was because someone adjusted to the other person's ways. One, or both sides made what are called "cross-cultural adjustments." The cultural rules used in this simulation are real-life rules used somewhere in the world today, although not all of them may appear in any one culture.)

2. Focus on how the participants *felt*:

*What sorts of feelings did the simulation bring out?

*Which cultural rules made the participants feel most uncomfortable and why? Have you had this experience with people in your school or neighborhood? Did you ever think that they might also be stressed out by all these differences?

(What you felt in this simulations is close to what everyone experiences in an unfamiliar culture. Communicating cross-culturally is disorienting and stressful, but deeply rewarding when you manage to get it right! Here in the USA, we can reach out to newly immigrated people in our schools and neighborhoods. We can be *Jesus with skin on*, as one little boy said.)

3. Focus on what can be learned from this simulation:

*What aspects of American culture might a foreigner find strange?

(In the United States we line up in grocery stores, drive on the right hand side of the road and wear shoes almost everywhere we go. These are things which often seem strange to people from other cultures. Cultures are different, but no one culture has it all right or wrong.)

*How do cultural differences affect a Christian who works with a people group other than his/her own?

(Christians planning to work in a different culture need training in how to adapt cross-culturally. They also need specific orientation to the culture of the people group with whom they'll live so that they can behave and communicate in a culturally appropriate way. Just like Jesus identified with the Jews of the first century, demonstrating God's love to them in their homes, in fishing boats, and in the market places, Christian workers need to love people in the cultures where they work. Ask God to help your missionary make these cross-cultural adjustments so that people will listen to the Word of God.)

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Preparation Notes:

1. Culture Cards

Photocopy and cut out a card for each participant. One third of the participants need Seller Cards and the other two thirds need Buyer Cards. *Notice that the bottom two Buyer Cards on the Photocopy Master are identical so you will automatically copy twice as many. Make sure the participants understand that they are not to let the other group see their cards. The rules must remain secret until the simulation is over.

2. Currency

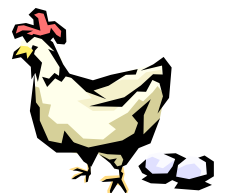
Copy and cut out enough currency so that each participant has some money to spend and some to use as change. One sheet, or one half sheet, per person should be plenty.

2. Merchandise

Each market seller needs about 10 items to sell. Gather fruits and vegetables, clothing and hardware items from your house and grocery store and have sellers arrange them on a colorful cloth right on the floor, or ground. Sellers sit and stand behind their wares. For a scaled down activity, copy and cut out the items from the Photocopy Masters and arrange them on the floor as if they were real.

Feel free to add more types of ‘stalls,’ such as meat, poultry and fish, but use canned or dried varieties to avoid spoilage or exposure to dangerous bacteria in such raw items.

Feeling adventurous? Consider a live laying hen or two in a cage for farm fresh eggs! If you can do this outdoors, go all out with farm animals, kittens and puppies. (Someone *always* has kittens they’d love to give away or loan to a room full of potential owners!)



SELLER'S CULTURE CARD

1. You always shake hands before beginning a conversation and like touching someone's arm or shoulder while talking.
2. You always stand very close to the person you're talking to and look them straight in the eye. You will crane your neck to make eye contact with them.
3. You ask your customers how each family member is doing before getting down to business. If they don't ask about your family, too, you won't serve them.
4. You sell by bargaining with your customers. You have no fixed prices.
5. You serve people in whatever order you want to and don't pay any attention to who stands next in line.
6. You never serve anyone who disrespects you by wearing red anywhere.
7. You never serve a member of the opposite sex.

Notes:

- Do not let the Buyers see this card!
- Stick to these rules as closely as you can.



Trading Places

Bright Ideas!

BUYER'S CULTURE CARD

1. You don't ever look anyone in the eye.
2. You like to get down to business rather than casual conversation. You believe that your personal and family life is nobody's business but your own.
3. You prefer no physical contact except to shake hands *after* you have finished buying something.
4. You expect to pay the listed price and don't bargain.
5. You always line up to be served and wait your turn.
6. You spit when you get bored or tired of waiting!

Notes:

- Do not let the Sellers see this card!
- Stick to these rules as closely as you can.

Trading Places

Bright Ideas!



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1 Money 

5 Money 

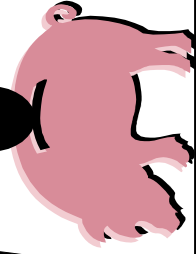
10 Money 

50 Money 

1 Money 

5 Money 

10 Money 

50 Money 

Pineapple

Bananas

Limes

Starfruit

Mangoes

Grapes

Kiwi fruit

Papaya

Lemons

Oranges

Carrots

Cabbage

Tomatoes

Cucumber

Dry Beans

Potatoes

Onions

Spinach

Coffee Beans

Squash

Deoans

Skirts

T-shirt

Jacket

Slacks

Nuts & Bolts

Glue

Hammer

Scissors

Broom

Dress

Socks

Blouse

Pajamas

Sandals

Pliers

Paint

Nails

Rope

String