

Culture Game

Adapted from the "Free the Children" Educators Resource Guide, who adapted this activity from "The Kit: A Manual By Youth to Combat Racism Through Education," The United Nations Association in Canada, March 2002.

Purpose:

To explore cultural differences through intercultural communication

Time: 30-45 minutes.

Age Group: All Ages

Group Size: 10 or more, good for large groups.

Materials Needed:

- 6 different coloured sheets of cardboard (or coloured name tags) and tape or pins to identify the different culture each person belongs to.
- At least one copy of the relevant instructions for each cultural group

Background:

Through this activity, participants explore their reactions when faced with behaviours and characteristics different from their own. This activity can serve as a great icebreaker too.

Activity:

- Divide the group into 6 smaller groups and hand out the coloured cardboard/name-tags and the photocopies with instructions for each culture. Give each group time to go over their cultural instructions. Warn participants that the groups are not allowed to tell others about their cultural characteristics.
- Once everyone is ready, ask all participants to walk around the room and communicate with the members of the other cultures according to the instructions they have been given.
- After 10 minutes, or whatever time feels right with your group, ask everyone to stop.

Discussion and Further Suggestions:

Initiate a discussion with the whole group using lead-in questions:

- What do you think about the game?
- How did you feel towards the members of the other cultures?
- Were you frustrated at any time? Can you explain why?
- Was there one culture in particular which was easy to communicate with? Was there one that was difficult to communicate with?
- What methods could you have used to allow you to better understand the members of the other cultures?

Wrap-Up:

At this time you may want to say something like the following in your own words: “When faced with something we don’t know, we often tend to feel afraid or frustrated because we feel misunderstood within that specific situation. With this game for example, we were easily frustrated by the behaviour of others. We often experience similar situations at school or in our surroundings when we interact with people of different backgrounds than ours. Our challenge as youth is to find ways of communicating with each other instead of reacting negatively to each other and nourishing stereotypes and divisions.”

Note:

- If the interaction / mixing exercise goes on too long, participants may get bored. If you see that the group gets the idea and are slowing down, ask them to stop and initiate the discussion right away.
- Students in certain cultures must know what a salutation, taboo, superior, inferior, idolize, subtlety, and appreciative mean but speak to the groups privately (when they are in group and learning their cultures)

Blue Culture

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

- **Taboo:** Never use your left arm or hand
- **Salutation:** Cross your arms
- **Attitude towards the Yellow Culture:** You feel sorry for them and try to defend them. Make sure you let other cultures know how you feel!

Yellow Culture

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

- **Taboo:** Never communicate without touching
- **Salutation:** touch all 4 thumbs
- **Attitude towards the Green Culture:** You feel inferior to the Greens.

Green Culture

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

- **Taboo:** Never use your left arm or hand
- **Salutation:** Gently touch the other person on the shoulder
- **Attitude towards the Red Culture:** You feel superior towards them

Red Culture

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

- **Taboo:** Never touch others
- **Salutation:** Double Wink
- **Attitude towards the Orange Culture:** You think they are funny and strange.

Orange Culture

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

- **Taboo:** You can't look someone in the eyes.
- **Salutation:** Shake hands with the right hand only
- **Attitude towards the Purple Culture:** You think they are interesting and idolize them.

Purple Culture

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

- **Taboo:** No negativity! You are very appreciative and everything is beautiful to you.
- **Salutation:** Shake hands with the left hand only
- **Attitude towards the Blue Culture:** You Subtly try to avoid them

