

41. World Summer Camp

My favourite activity is choosing my favourites!

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| Themes | Discrimination, General human rights |
| Level of complexity | Levels 2-3 |
| Age | 8-13 years |
| Duration | 45-60 minutes |
| Group size | Maximum 20 |
| Type of activity | Prioritizing, negotiation, discussion |
| Overview | Children select 'tent mates' from a descriptive list and discuss the assumptions on which they based their choices. |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine personal stereotypes and prejudices and consider their origin • To promote equality and non-discrimination |
| Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list of 12 campers from the list or create new ones suitable to your group. At least one should be from a non-existent place. • Alternative: write the list on the blackboard. • Make copies of the activity sheet for each child, including the description of the camp, the assignment, and the 12 campers. • Alternative: write the list on the blackboard. |
| Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the activity sheet and a pencil for each child • Paper and markers for each group |



Instructions

1. Give each child a copy of the activity sheet and a pencil. Describe the scenario and the instructions on the activity sheet. Read aloud the descriptions of the different campers.
2. Ask the children to work individually to select the three other campers with whom they would like to share a tent. No-one should talk during this step.
3. When everyone has finished the selection, divide the children into groups of three to five. Explain their task:
 - a. There are four tents in your section of the camp. Each tent holds four people. Counting the people in your group and the three people on each of your lists, there should be 16 people in all. With your group decide which campers will share each tent. Draw four tents on the paper, write on each tent the names of the children who will sleep there, and post your paper on the blackboard.
 - b. If you have more than 16 people, the group must decide whom to eliminate from the list. If more than one member of the group chooses the same camper, the group must pick another camper from the list.
4. Give the children time to look at the tent charts of other groups. Then read out the list of campers in order and find out which tent this person has been assigned to by each group. This will allow the children to see who else has chosen the same campers.

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the results of this activity:
 - a. Was it difficult to select three children to share your tent? Why or why not?

Source: Adapted from 'Euro-rail à la carte', Education Pack in the campaign 'All Different – All Equal', Council of Europe, 1995



- b. Were some children chosen many times to share a tent? Why?
 - c. Were some children not chosen at all? Why?
 - d. How did you decide about the child from a place you had never heard of?
2. How do you feel after this activity?
 - a. Did anything funny come up in your group discussion?
 - b. Was it hard to agree with your group?
 - c. Who is happy about the final result and who is not?
 - d. Did you learn anything about yourself? About the way you make choices?
3. Compare this activity with situations in real life:
 - a. Was this situation realistic?
 - b. Can you think of other situations where you have to choose whom to be with?
 - c. How does it feel to choose?
 - d. How does it feel in real life to be chosen? Not to be chosen?
 - e. What kinds of similar choices do you make in real life?
 - f. Do all children have the right to choose? To be chosen?
4. Discuss how we form ideas about others, even those we have never met:
 - a. What makes children the same? What makes them different?
 - b. How do you get ideas about what children whom you have never met are like?
 - c. How do you get ideas about where they come from?
 - d. Are there people who have stereotypes about you? About children?
 - e. Do you have stereotypes about other people?
 - f. What can we do to avoid making unfair opinions based on stereotypes?
 - g. Why do stereotypes lead to discrimination?

Suggestions for follow-up

- The activity 'DEAR DIARY', p. 99, contrasts perceptions of the same day.
- The activity 'ZABDERFILIO', p. 209, shows the effects of fear of the unknown.
- The activities 'BLINDFOLDED', p. 67; 'PICTURE GAMES', p. 130, and 'WHO'S BEHIND ME?', p. 195, deal with stereotypes of different kinds.

Ideas for action

- The next time the group has to choose partners or teams, take the opportunity to remind the children of this exercise and what they learned about choosing.
- Organize a summer camp yourself: several current European funding programmes already offer possibilities for these kinds of camps. For adolescents from thirteen years on, consult the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission.

Tips for the facilitator

- Be careful not to reinforce stereotypes in any way. That would defeat the purpose of this activity!
- The ideal number of children from the small group is four, with each child making a list of three campers. However, the activity can work for small groups of any size who must then negotiate adding or eliminating campers to their list to make 16 children in all.
- Choose and/or adapt the list of campers carefully to shape the activity towards your desired learn-



ing outcomes. Be sure that no child in your group resembles one of the campers. Simplify the description, especially the origins, for younger children. However, do have at least one camper on the list from a fictional place so that children have to decide without knowing anything.

- If summer camp or sharing a tent is not realistic for these children, choose another setting that involves close proximity (e.g. a shared school desk, a youth hostel or dormitory room).
- Avoid answering questions about the list of campers. Explain that the children should decide on the basis of the list alone.
- Some children may be unable to choose and say they don't care with whom they share the tent. In that case, ask them with whom they do not wish to share the tent. The results can still be compared amongst the children in the small group.
- Some members of the group may decide to share a tent with each other and put the 'foreigner campers' in other tents. Do not intervene, for the results will be very revealing. Similarly, do not give the children the impression that it is bad to want to choose people like themselves. Not all choices relate to discrimination.

Adaptations

- To shorten the activity:
 - Describe smaller tents so that each child must choose only one or two other campers.
 - Reduce the total number of campers to choose from.
 - Leave out the small group work, Step 3.
 - To facilitate small group decision making, make a list of all the campers chosen by members of the group. Then each child in turn chooses one camper until all campers are divided.
- For younger children:
 - Use suggestions above for shortening the activity.
 - Adapt the descriptions of campers to match the experience of the younger children (e.g. Mongolia or a Kung Fu T-shirt may have no connotations for them).



HANDOUT: ACTIVITY SHEET

World summer camp

You and children from all over the world have just arrived at World Summer Camp. Nobody knows each other. The leaders have decided that you can choose with whom you will share a tent for the next two weeks. Each tent sleeps four children. You can choose three other campers to share the tent with you.

World camp campers

Choose 3 children from this list with whom you would like to share the tent!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. A child with a broken leg and crutches
2. A Roma child from your own country with golden earrings
3. A child from Australia with red hair and many freckles
4. A Japanese child wearing a Kung Fu T-shirt
5. A fat child from the USA
6. A shy child from Transmarinia
7. An immigrant child from Africa
8. A blind child accompanied by a guide dog
9. A child with thick glasses and a spotty face
10. A child from the UK dressed in a school uniform
11. A Turkish child from Germany with a black eye wearing a T-shirt with a skull on it
12. A child from Latin America dressed in traditional clothes
13. A child who uses sign language to communicate
14. A child from Mongolia with very long black hair
15. A child from your country who doesn't seem to be very clever
16. A child from Palestine with only one arm
17. A child with blond hair who speaks very properly
18. A child that seems permanently to have hiccups
19. A child dressed in a jacket just like yours
20. A child who listens to an MP3 all the time

