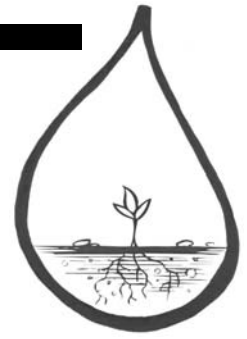


Building Environmental Youth Leadership

A High-School Service-learning Curriculum



TOPIC:

Team-building

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will get acquainted with their co-participants.
- Through small risks, students will begin to trust each other.
- Students will explore their commonalities and differences.

LENGTH:

20 to 30 minutes

ENVIRONMENT:

Indoors or Outdoors.
Need a place for students to form small groups for short discussions.

MATERIALS:

- Copies of the *How We Differ* point tally sheet.
- Scrap paper
- Pencils or pens
- A clipboard for each group.
- Color-coded name tags, color chips, or other ways of splitting students into groups.

Similar and Different

Background:

Depending on the origin of the team, Environmental Youth Leadership participants may join knowing little or nothing about their new cohorts. This activity creates a fun atmosphere for facilitating the get-to-know-you process. In small groups, students compete to discern the highest number of commonalities among members. In two larger groups, they tally differences, trying to earn the most points.

Activity Outline:

Beforehand:

For each group (plan 3 to 4 students per group), place scrap paper and a pencil on a clipboard. As students enter the meeting, provide them with a color-coded nametag, a color chip, a number or some other creative means of splitting them into small groups. For instance, you may have four red-lettered nametags. However, students should not be made aware of their groupings.

Finding Similarities:

Students gather for instructions. Overview the objectives of the activity. Explain that they are going to introduce themselves and learn about others in the group through a friendly competition. Describe how students are grouped. When the activity begins, they should find other members of their group. One representative should grab a clipboard. Working together, group members should identify and write a list of all the things they have in common. Stress that they should strive for intangible things (i.e., all members enjoy tacos instead of all are wearing stripes). Provide 2 to 3 minutes for brainstorming. Then, one reporter from each group should present the tally, describing some of the similarities. The group with the highest number wins the activity.

Finding Differences:

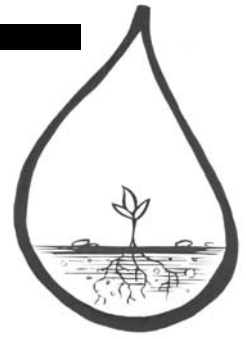
Split each small group roughly in half. Assign each of these halves to one of two larger groups. This helps to maintain some familiarity, while facilitating interaction among new group members. Explain the objectives of this activity. Essentially, they are exactly opposite of the last. When the activity begins, group members will discern and tally all of their differences according to the *How We Differ* sheet. Groups earn one point for each difference, with bonus points for special circumstances. After five minutes, groups choose a representative to report their point tally. The group with the most points wins the activity.

Variety and Likeness:

Gather the group together for review and synthesis. Begin by asking them to describe how they went about solving the challenge in each activity. Did students just randomly spout answers? Did an orderly way of

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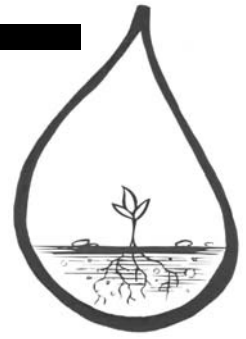
identifying commonalities/differences develop? Which activity was easier/harder? Review the results of both activities in terms of the entire group. What things are common/different for the entire team? Ask students to identify any lessons learned in this activity. Have them apply these to successful completion of their service-learning project. Finally, all members should congratulate each other on a job well done.

References:

This lesson is adapted from *Commonalities and How We Differ* in:
Rohnke, K., & Butler, S. (1995). *QuickSilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership*.
Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

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How We Differ

Tally Sheet

Count 1 pt Each for Any Difference. Add Bonus Points as Written.

For each person who has lived on a shore _____
5pts—If it was an ocean _____

For visiting each of the following:
Any of the Great Lakes, Pacific Ocean,
Atlantic Ocean _____
5pts—for three _____

7pts—for four _____

Points for each birth state bordering a Great Lake _____
5pts—Lake Superior _____

For each state you where have lived in the Mississippi
River Watershed (minimum 6mos) _____
5pts—for visiting Itasca State Park _____

Points for each person who has danced in the rain _____
5pts—If you danced with a friend _____

7pts—danced without an umbrella _____

For each person who has swam in Lake Superior _____
7pts—for three _____

10pts—for all of them _____

20 pts—for a winter plunge in Superior _____

TOTAL _____