

Street Resilience

Holiday Shopping

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup; little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: 5-12

Group Size: 4 or more

Time: 15-20 minutes

Introduction: This activity will help students recognize how quickly we can label and discriminate against others. (Note: If you have the WhyTry Curriculum, this lesson also ties in well with the “Tearing Off Your Labels” unit.)

Materials:

- One set of “Holiday Shopping Cards” per group of 4, cut into squares.

Activity:

Divide students into groups of 4. Give each group one set of “people cards” – the cards containing only the name of the individual and a one-word description of that person. Also, give each group one set of “object cards” – the cards containing pictures of a variety of items.

Tell students that they are about to go holiday shopping for six of their relatives:

- Aunt Maria, a teacher
- Great-uncle Abraham, a farmer
- Cousin Mina, a chef
- Uncle Dilon, a motorcycle rider
- Great-aunt Keesha, a senior citizen
- Cousin Wei, a teenager

The items they can purchase for these relatives are on their “object cards.” Allow students a few minutes to decide as a group which gift to give to which relative. Note that there will be several gifts left over – they should still only give each person one item.

After a few minutes, have each group briefly explain what gifts they gave to which relatives. You’ll notice that most of the time, the gift fits the one-word “label” that was given to each individual. For example, Great-uncle Abraham gets the cowboy hat, cousin Mina gets the wooden spoon, cousin Wei gets the movie tickets, Great-aunt Keesha gets a cane, etc. Ask students:

- How did you decide who would get each gift?
- How did labels like “motorcycle rider” or “senior citizen” affect your choices?

Now give each group one set of “fact cards.” Give them a few more minutes to adjust their gift choices based on this new information. Allow each group to explain one more time what changes they made in the gifts they gave their relatives.

Processing the Experience:

- What happens when we focus too much on labels or the things we see on the surface of a person? Would you call this discrimination? Why or why not?

- If someone new joined our class and we knew nothing about them, how could we avoid labeling or discriminating? What could we do to make them feel welcome?
- What other times would it be helpful to learn more about a person before making a judgment?
- In what ways do we discriminate on a daily basis?
- Do you ever discriminate based on age, appearance, or other factors? Why do people do this?
- Have you ever felt discriminated against? What did it feel like? How can you use Street Resilience in these kinds of situations?
- When we experience discrimination, what does it mean to channel our anger toward a cause and not a person?