

Cross the Line

Summary

This activity encourages students to explore issues of identity, diversity and discrimination. All students line up in front of a symbolic boundary. The teacher makes statements and everybody for whom they hold true, crosses the line. No comments or interactions are allowed at this stage. When the task is completed, the teacher facilitates group discussion. Students are encouraged to share personal experiences and to reflect on what they have learned through the activity.

Description of the activity

1. Tell your class to consider anything that is said during the session as strictly confidential. Ask them to promise that they will not discuss it with anyone else.
2. Draw a masking tape line on the floor. It should be long enough, so that the whole class can line up facing it from the same side.
3. Explain to the class that they must remain silent during the activity - no talking or laughing. They will have a chance to talk about it later.
4. Point out that strong feelings like sadness or anger might arise. Ask your students to be attentive and caring about one another's feelings so that everyone feels safe during the activity.
5. Tell the class that you are going to call out an experience and people who have had that experience will cross the line, turn around to face the students on the other side of the line. It is alright if someone does not feel comfortable crossing the line, even though they had the experience. They should just be mindful of feelings they are having at that time.
6. Start with the first statement. When you have two groups facing each other, instruct your students to:
 - Notice how it feels to cross the line
 - Notice how it feels to watch other people cross the line
 - Notice who is in their group
 - Notice who is not in their group
7. Ask everyone to come back together behind the masking tape.
8. Have 10-25 rounds. Here are some sample statements:
 - I was born in another country.
 - I am the oldest/youngest child in the family.
 - I am an only child.
 - I have a step parent.
 - I have a step brother/sister.
 - My parents are divorced.
 - My family is proud of me.
 - I have lost a family member or a close friend.
 - I am proud of my cultural heritage.



Project Number: 2017-1-IT02-KA201-036784

- I believe in God or spirituality.
- I am a Christian / Muslim / Jew / Hindu / Buddhist.
- Everyone treats me with respect.
- I have felt discriminated against.
- I have been a target of racist comments.
- I have felt alone, unwelcomed and afraid.
- I have always felt safe at school.
- I belong to a strong community.

9. Sit in a circle and invite students to reflect on the activity. Encourage sharing of personal experience and first person statements. Ask every student:

- What feelings did you have during this activity?
- What was the hardest part for you?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you discover about those around you?
- What, if anything, do you want to tell others about this experience?
- What do you want to remember from this activity?

10. Wrap-up the session highlighting the important discoveries and the accomplishments of the class. Praise courage and honesty.

TIPS:

- ✓ Carefully choose statements according to class composition and setting.
- ✓ Safeguard students who become vulnerable during the activity.
- ✓ Make sure to check in with pupils who seem upset at the end of the session.

Activity structure

- **Preferred premises of the activity:** In class or outdoors.
- **Resources needed:** Masking tape.
- **Recommended number of people participating:** 12-24.
- **Previous knowledge of participants necessary:** None.
- **Activity duration:** 45 minutes.

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this activity is to explore the diversity in the classroom, give voice to identities and find common ground. Students learn about their similarities and differences in an intense and personal way.

Expected Outcomes

Students develop empathy and deeper understanding of each other. Facing challenging issues with the support of the class builds resilience and group cohesion.





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Target group

Students between 10 and 18 years of age.

Subject of the curriculum in which the activity could be implemented

Social studies

Philosophy



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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