

ACTIVITY: COMPARISONS

Creating a safe space where group members can develop their likes and dislikes is an important piece of the foundation for strong relationships. Even when the space you create is a safe one, group members may be timid about speaking their preferences, ideas, and opinions. One way to overcome this shyness is by inviting group members to share their thoughts on a wide array of choices. When participants feel comfortable defending their preference of chocolate or vanilla ice cream, they're more liable to feel comfortable discussing their opinions on the heavy topics associated with community change and youth-adult partnerships.

OVERVIEW

This icebreaker will help people better understand one another while establishing a safe, fun environment. The comparisons can be as simple or as deep as you like. The questions you choose will depend on the comfort level of your group.

OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate different types of people getting to know one another
- To help young people better understand adults and vice versa
- To help people of different backgrounds better understand one another
- To create a safe environment for learning and playing

TIME REQUIRED

20–30 minutes

ADVANCE PREPARATION

You'll need to come up with a list of comparison questions (e.g., car or truck; visionary or legacy; ice cream or popsicle; MySpace or Facebook).

SUPPLIES

The only material you need for this activity is the list of questions you put together – paired choices to ask the group.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Setting the context	5 min	Tell the group, "We're going to do an activity that gets us talking about our preferences. I'm going to give you two options, and you're going to pick the one that best describes you and explain your choice. For example, if I say 'Extrovert or introvert?' think about which word describes you best and why. People who chose 'extrovert' will go to one side of the room; people who chose 'introvert' will go to the other. If you can't decide between the two choices, there's a middle place to stand."	List of comparison questions
Step 2: Making it easy	10 min	Begin with a few easy comparisons like "Car or truck?" and "Ice cream or popsicle?" Each time you give choices, point to the side of the room participants should go to for each option (e.g., point to the left side of the room while saying "car" and the right side of the room while saying "truck.")	

continued next page

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 3: Upping the ante	10 min	Continue with the easy questions until you feel it's time to move on to more thoughtful comparisons, such as "Thinker or doer?"; "Planned or spontaneous?"; "Behind the scenes or in front?"	
Step 4: Sharing with the group	5 min	After each choice, ask a few people on each side (and in the middle if there are any) to volunteer to explain their choice. If nobody volunteers, call on a few people at random.	
Step 5: Reflecting on the experience	5 min	Ask a series of discussion questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What did you notice? ■ How did it feel to be part of the group? ■ How did it feel to be alone with your choice (if that happened)? ■ Were you surprised by anything you saw? ■ Were you surprised by anything you chose? ■ What did you learn? 	