

Tape on the Forehead

PREPARATION

The tape exercise has to be set up in advance with enough pieces of masking tape to give one per person. I make various colored shapes, one per piece of tape. The multi-colored pack of Sharpies work best. Some markers smear, but Sharpies keep their mark clearly. I make 5-8 of each shape (red triangles, blue rectangles, green parallel lines, etc.). Then I make 2 or 3 unique shapes (circle with two arrows coming out each side). You'll need to have the tape on a surface that it will come off easy--a clipboard, hymn book, leather or plastic notebook. Depending on the size of the group you will want at least 3 large groups and 2 unique individuals. With larger groups you can run more. If you get more than 50 people the logistics become more difficult.

HOW TO LEAD THIS TOOL

Introduce the activity as a game, but don't say too much. Have people close their eyes. Tell them you will put something on their forehead, but to keep their eyes closed until you tell them to open them. You get a volunteer or co-facilitator to help put the tape on people if you have a larger group. If you want at the end you can put tape on the one helping you (with their eyes closed, of course).

Then tell people to open their eyes and "without talking in any language, form groups." Nothing more or less. Then you just observe and be patient. Let things develop. Sometimes people will go one way, then shift around to something else. Give it all time. Watch the dynamics around the unique individuals especially. What is their experience?

After things seem to reach a point of balance or conclusion, call an end. Then begin the debrief with people still standing.

First question always: "What happened?" Let people talk about it, any who want to start. Then steer the debrief first to the larger groups: "How did you come together? What did it feel like? How do you feel now?" Ignore as much as possible the unique ones early in the debrief to establish the mainstream experience and feeling. Then turn to the unique ones: "What about you? What was it like for you?" As they talk, feel free to prompt with questions about particular things you observed that they did or didn't experience. Whatever happens can be a learning. You can ask questions like: "Have you experienced or witnessed these dynamics in other settings? What was it like?"

Then debrief with theory/stories about rank and privilege.

WHERE THIS TOOL COMES FROM

From Rev. Dan Buttry