

## Activity Series 3: Applying Principles of Cross-Cultural, Multiethnic Bridge-Builder Leadership

**Objective:** Participants will deepen their knowledge of how to use ethical decision-making, a core bridge-builder skill.

**Time needed:** 90 minutes (varies depending on discussion time taken)

**Materials:** soft, throwable ball; chart paper, marking pens

*Our next activity will give you an opportunity to learn some strategies to lead groups when they are trying to make hard decisions. Ethics is an important principle of leadership to use in such situations. Ethics is concerned with beliefs about how a moral person should behave – and cultures define “moral” differently. Different people have different views about how they and others should behave. These beliefs are based in their own values which may be influenced by their culture. When groups (especially multicultural groups) try to make decisions together members often come into conflict around their different views of how people should behave (ethics). This activity will simulate a problem that could invoke culturally-based differences. Good leadership will help ensure that the solution is a positive one.*

An effective leadership strategy in situations such as in this activity is to use a model of decision-making to guide the group to a common solution they can all support. The Josephson Institute has such a model, the steps of which are summarized below, but you can use a different model. The Josephson model is somewhat mainstream in style. Visit the Josephson website (<http://charactercounts.org>) for more information on their model.

1. Review and clarify the steps (below) of the Josephson Model for Ethical Decision Making, or another model you’ve chosen, and adapt it to the needs/readiness of the participants. Post the names of the steps on the wall for reference by the group. Discuss the model – does it resonate with participants? Why or why not? How mainstream or culturally specific is this style? Participants can keep these questions in mind as they use the model later on in this activity.
  - STOP AND THINK
  - CLARIFY GOALS (*Example adaptation: What are you trying to achieve?*)
  - DETERMINE FACTS
  - DEVELOP OPTIONS (*List possible ways this dilemma could be solved*)
  - CONSIDER CONSEQUENCES (*What will happen as a result of each of your possible solutions?*)
  - CHOOSE A SOLUTION FROM YOUR LIST
  - MONITOR AND MODIFY (*Watch what happens and change as needed*)

*In order to experience what might happen when different people interpret the rules differently, we will play a round of “Integrity Ball” (adapted from Fireball, Affordable Portables, p. 23)*

1. Stand in a circle.
2. The ball will be tossed around the group using the following rules:
  - No one can make any sound.
  - No one is allowed to move except to catch or throw the ball.
  - No one may make a bad throw or a bad catch.
3. Explain that each individual interprets these rules for him/herself. If she feels she broke any of these rules, then she is to step back from the circle – take herself out of the game. No one can decide for anyone else, even if they think that person should or should not go out.
4. If participants want more clarification of the rules, just tell them they are to decide how to interpret them for themselves.
5. Do this for a few minutes, then ask the following questions:

- Without using names, was there a time when you thought someone should have pulled themselves out of the game? What happened?
  - Was there a time when you weren't sure if you should pull yourself or not? What happened? What did you end up doing – staying or going?
6. Discuss people's various interpretations of the rules. (Was it OK even to move their eyes? What about laughing – was that OK?) There are no right or wrong answers.
  7. Invite everyone back into the game and try another round.
  8. Do as many rounds with discussion as appropriate for your group.

Lead the following discussion: *So now that we've seen what happens when different people interpret the rules differently, what have we learned that might be important to remember when leading a group to resolve an ethical decision? (Examples could include: clarify the rules in advance; help the participants understand that the different interpretations may result from deeply held beliefs and they must be respected; keep a focus on the group's goal.)*

2. Activity: Small groups grapple with an ethical decision, identifying the steps they would take and the possible consequences of those steps.

Read aloud and clarify the following problem situation\*\*:

*You are attending a large high school in an urban location. Although the student body is ethnically diverse, in the three years you have attended there has been no one from your culture elected to student body office. You and your friends have finally found someone to run for ASB Secretary. During the campaign some students accuse your candidate of having cheated on a test in the past. You chalk the accusations up to politics and you work very hard to get her elected. She wins! After the elections you find out that the accusations were true. WHAT WOULD YOU DO NOW?*

Divide participants into groups of 3-5. Each group will grapple with the situation above. The goal is to develop consensus on a solution. They should follow the steps to ethical decision-making listed above. They will record on chart paper the steps they might take in response to this situation, including possible consequences of the solution and the actions they would take.

After each group has recorded their possible solutions including actions they would take, pros and cons to each possible solution and consequences of their suggested solutions, all groups should share their responses with the other small groups.

*\*\*If the youth in your program would not consider this an egregious enough ethical dilemma to provoke debate, feel free to use another ethical dilemma that may resonate more with the group. For example: the student may have stolen money or lied in her campaign materials about something significant.*