

## **Preliminary Activity Option 2: Knowing the Community – Sharing Activity**

Adapted from EdChange Multicultural Pavilion by Paul Gorski  
[www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/activity2.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/activity2.html)

This activity begins to build the community through showing difference within groups and similarities among members of different groups. Diversity proves to be the one thing we all have in common.

### **Objectives:**

- (1) Participants will get to know the names of each person in the class, group, or community, as well as something about each person's background.
- (2) Participants will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity within the group, while realizing that they have things in common with some of the people they have felt most removed from.

### **Activity Description:**

Participants should sit in a circle for this exercise if possible. Facilitator should hand out a list of questions for each participant to answer for the group. Possible questions could include name/nicknames, ethnic background, where they are from and where their parents were born, which generation they represent in America for their family, and one custom or tradition their family practices. Give participants time to write down some ideas for answering the questions.

Before you begin the exercise, instruct the participants to identify one or two people in the group whom they do not know, and to think about what answers they expect from those people. This part is not to be shared among group members, but can help people realize how they formulate ideas about people based on appearance.

Now you are ready to begin. It is important to tell the group that each person will be limited to about two minutes in order for everyone's voice to be heard. Once everyone has had an opportunity to share their information, ask the group to discuss what they have learned from the exercise.

### **Facilitator Notes:**

- (1) The facilitator could begin this exercise in order to model the kind of information that should be shared.
- (2) This activity can be emotional for certain people. The participants who find this emotional are often those who don't know about their heritage and those who have been adopted. If someone seems to be getting emotional remind them that they only have to reveal what they feel comfortable revealing.
- (3) Certain themes usually emerge:
  - **Even members of the same "groups" have very different backgrounds.**
  - **Often members of different "groups" have more similar backgrounds than they realize.**
  - **Cultural diversity transcends black/white.**
  - **Many people find out information which allows them to connect somehow with someone else in the group.**
- (4) Ask participants why this is an important activity.