



Becoming Nelson

Key message

This activity will invite young people to reflect on the role of Nelson Mandela and other peace-makers in solving international conflicts and resolving grievances through non-violent means; and also to better understand the characteristics of a good leader.

Key words: solving conflicts, peace-building, understanding conflict, non-violence

Summary

Some wise words from an inspiring leader Nelson Mandela form the basis of an exercise that encourages participants to explore political and social issues critically, to debate and make reasoned arguments about what's required to make the world a better more peaceful environment to live in.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
• Prevention	• medium • large	• 12 - 15 • 16 - 19 • 20 - 24	• 1 hour

Purpose

- To get participants to examine the contribution made by peacemakers, in solving conflict and overcoming hatred
- To encourage participants to explore the nature of conflict and grievance from a leader's perspective and to seek non-violent solutions to problems in the wider world
- To invite participants to test themselves against the moral arguments for and against the use of violence and to relate their own understanding of conflict and its consequences to a global sphere
- To explore the qualities and functions of a good leader

Participants

Suitable for use with a wide variety of groups but may be most relevant to teenagers and young adults; non-gender specific.

Description

Step 1:

The facilitator reads the Nelson Mandela speech aloud to the group and asks for their instinctive responses. Prompt a brief discussion through asking questions like...What messages are coming through in the text? How is the material and language (which talks about apartheid in South Africa) relevant in today's society? Can you give examples of where this speech would be applicable today?

Step 2:

Get participants to imagine that they are leaders of a free world and write their own version of a speech (individually) that reflects what values they believe should be a feature of today's society, particularly those of relevance to young people. This part of the exercise is done very briefly with each person just jotting down a few lines that summarises their main ideals.

Step 3:

Then in small working groups each participant shares their speeches with the rest of their group and together they talk about the values most important to them. They are to discuss their ideas and feelings about the role of violence in world conflicts and touch on other global social issues and political themes. The group are then instructed to determine what would be their priority areas of focus and compose a group speech that reflects this.

Step 4:

Each group nominates a member to read out the group's speech to the rest of the participants.

Materials needed

Nelson Mandela speech (distribute a copy to all participants on completion of the exercise), Post it stickers or blank sheets of paper, Pens, Markers for flipchart, Flipchart sheets

Methodology

Individual reflection and speech composition, Small group discussions and speech composition, Feedback to main group

Advice for Trainer

Questions for discussion:

- What are the common themes that are apparent across all the groups?
- Who are the modern day visionaries? What is it that appeals to you about their character? What is their position on violence/terrorism?
- Do they take on the role of Rebel or Peacemaker?
- What qualities of a good leader do you value most, what kind of person do you think makes a good leader? What do you think are the functions of a good leader, what does a good leader do? What styles of leadership do you think our current leaders adopt in this modern world? What are the best/worst qualities in their approach?

Alternative approach to exercise:

The facilitator could research and print out copies of various speeches (a good source of inspiration is the book 'speeches that changed the world, the stories and transcripts of the moments that made history' by Simon Sebag Montefiore.) The internet is also useful in this regard and you can find copies of all the speeches from the Nobel peace prize winners online.

Distribute copies of a variety of speeches to participants and ask them to go through each of them individually first and then in small working groups discuss with your peers which ones inspire you and which ones you can relate to the most.

Source / Literature

Nelson Mandela's Speech:
http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS161&txtstr=non-violence

Handouts

[Nelson Mandela's 'Acceptance speech of the President of the African National Congress', at the Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony](#)



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