

ACTIVITY

40
MINUTES

VALUES VOTING

Participants choose to agree or disagree with controversial statements, then defend their positions. Participants are also encouraged to explore their personal values and reflect on their position as role model for their children.

MATERIALS

- ✓ Sufficient floor space for the whole group to stand and move around
- ✓ Leader Resource, "Values Statements"
- ✓ Signs labeled "Agree," "Disagree" and "Unsure"

PLANNING NOTES

1. Keep in mind the following points when conducting this activity:
 - ✧ *When only one or two people in the group express a particular value, it's important to support this minority viewpoint. Stand beside them to show your support. However, make it clear that it's not necessarily their value you support, but the fact that these participants took the risk and stood up for a value that is unpopular in this group. You might say, "It's tough to be the only one who feels a certain way, but it shows that you are strong enough to stand up for what you believe."*
 - ✧ *If there is a commonly held value position that is not expressed, it's your role as a leader to remind the group convincingly of that position. You can stand in that value position and say, "Some people who would stand here believe..." The point is for all viewpoints to be discussed.*
 - ✧ *If there is a commonly held value position that is not expressed, it's your role as a leader to remind the group convincingly of that position. You can stand in that value position and say, "Some people who would stand here believe..." The point is for all viewpoints to be discussed.*
2. Review the list of values on the Leader Resource and choose four to eight statements that are relevant for your group.

Session II:

Values

VALUES VOTING

3. Prior to the session, post signs labeled "Agree," "Disagree" and "Unsure" along an imaginary line in the meeting room.
4. Plan for sufficient time at the end of the activity to emphasize the important role that parents play as role models for their children.

PROCEDURE

1. Tell the group that they are going to get out of their seats and have some fun. Give the following directions:
 - ✧ *I will read several controversial value statements.*
 - ✧ *Go and stand beside the sign to indicate how you feel about each statement. Do you agree, disagree or feel unsure?*
 - ✧ *If you feel too unsure, try to decide which way you're leaning—agree or disagree. The "unsure" position can sometimes be a cop-out.*
 - ✧ *Once you've voted, I'll ask a few of you to explain why you chose this position.*
2. Emphasize the following ground rules:
 - ✧ *No positions will be considered "right" or "wrong," since people have differing beliefs and opinions.*
 - ✧ *Don't criticize or judge other people's values.*
 - ✧ *This is not a debate. The point is to understand each other, not to persuade people to a different point of view. Peer pressure can interfere with a person's freedom to express his own view. However, participants should feel free to change positions if someone else's explanation of his view truly causes them to see things differently.*
3. Read the first statement. Allow everyone to position themselves. Beginning with the minority viewpoint, ask participants to explain to the group why they've chosen to stand where they are in response to the statement. Remember to commend those willing to express a less popular opinion. If a commonly held opinion is not expressed, express it yourself so that all viewpoints can be discussed.
4. When the first statement has been fully discussed, go on to the next one. Pacing is important; don't drag out the discussion, but make sure most points of view have been heard.
5. Continue in this manner for about 30 minutes. Close with the discussion questions. Use Discussion Questions 4 and 5 to emphasize the importance of parents as role models for their children.

VARIATION

Eliminate the “unsure” position, and tell participants that this is a forced-choice activity. They must choose “agree” or “disagree”. This pushes participants to focus more on their real values.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does your behavior in the real world fit with the way you voted here in the group? *(Ask for examples. Perhaps some of the men have said that a man who cries often is not weak, but never cry themselves. Or perhaps some have said that it's not okay to quit a job without having another, yet they've done so. How do they explain the discrepancies between what they say they believe and how they act?)*
2. What happens when people don't behave according to their values? *(They might feel guilty or uncomfortable. Sometimes, the person doesn't really hold a particular value, but just thinks he should feel that way. People who act according to their values are more likely to feel comfortable with what they do.)*
3. On which of these values would you have voted differently five years ago? *(Share examples of how your own values have shifted. Make the point that values are not static. They can change as we gain knowledge, experience, and exposure to different points of view.)*
4. Which of the values we discussed today do you want to pass on to your children?
5. How are you trying to teach any of these values to your children? *(Stress the importance of acting according to their values. Explain that children learn more from watching parents than they do from listening to them and that they notice if parents say one thing, then do another. For example, if you tell your children not to use drugs, you should not use them yourself. Also, point out that if fathers are not "on the scene," children don't have the opportunity to see or hear about their father's values.)*

**LEADER
RESOURCE**

VALUES STATEMENTS

1. Men and women are equally capable of caring for children.
2. Fathers should stop hugging and saying "I love you" to their sons when the sons become teenagers.
3. Men who father children should be forced to pay child support.
4. You become more of a man once you've fathered a child.
5. If a father has no money, it's best to stay out of his child's life.
6. It's okay to use violence if you've been disrespected.
7. In general, men who are dating women should pay for the dates.
8. A man who cries easily is weak.
9. Police should stop and question men who fit the description of drug dealers.
10. It's a woman's responsibility, more than a man's, to take care of birth control.
11. It's not important to use protection if a man's having sex with his steady woman.
12. It's okay for a man to marry a woman of a different race.
13. It's okay to carry a gun to protect yourself.
14. When a couple splits up, it's best if the children live with the mother.
15. A man should be willing to take any type of job to support himself and his children.
16. It's not a father's job to do things like change diapers, bathe and feed young children, etc.
17. If a parent is having serious problems on his job, it's okay for him to quit before having another job.
18. It's more important for women to take care of their health than for men.
19. The biggest barrier between a man and his children is the child's mother and her family.
20. There are things a man should never tell his woman.

LEADER RESOURCE

21. Marriage messes up good relationships between men and women.
22. It doesn't matter what a man does to earn money (even things that are "off the books") as long as he supports his children.