

Building the Beloved Community

Lesson 4: Values Clarification

2.11.2024

Objectives: Understand what values are, how we determine values, and how they affect everyday choices.

Materials: Flipchart, 2 balls of different color yarn, lesson attachments.

Time allotments suggested for 50 minute class, followed by 25 minute closing service.

1. Nametags and Graffiti Wall (5 minutes before class begins)

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- “Graffiti Wall” questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
 - ▶ What is something you greatly value?
 - ▶ Where do your values come from?
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

2. Silly Fun: Yarn Web (5 minutes max)

Using 2 balls of different colored yarn, youth begin standing in a circle. First person holds one ball and tosses it to another person saying something positive about that person. This continues until everyone is connected. Introduce the second ball of yarn, tossed similarly from person to person, except this time, each person says something positive about their own self. Finally, everyone is connected by 2 different patterns. Which was easier? Why?

3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: *“We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”*

Teacher reads: (from leader of nonviolent civil disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi)

*“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,*

*Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”*

4. **What are Values?** (10 minutes)

Invite youth to offer brief responses: What are *Values*?

- What do people mean when they refer to “family values” or “school values” or “religious values”?
- When someone says that their bicycle is valuable, what does that mean?
Consider: What’s the difference between what something is **worth (price value) and what makes it **worthwhile** (values)?*

Teacher summarizes: Human societies and cultures reflect a *hierarchy of concern* and sense of what is good-better-best, shaped by family, religion, culture, race, gender, social background and so much more. Values reflect what is *important* and *worthwhile* to us – from the individual to the wider culture – and serve as moral codes and ethical standards by which we judge our intentions-behaviors-actions.

5. **Activity: Choices and Values** (15 minutes)

Working individually, have youth complete the attached worksheet *Choices and Values: What’s Important to Me?*

- a. Select all values on the sheet that are important to you.
- b. Narrow down and choose 4-5 values that are MOST IMPORTANT to you.
- c. Find the corresponding characteristic for each value chosen (reverse side of worksheet), and write it out in the space provided.

Questions for Group Discussion:

- Was it easy or difficult to narrow down and prioritize just 4-5 values?
- Do you think the 4-5 values, and their corresponding characteristics, are generally accurate in describing what’s important to you? Were you surprised by any?
- Who or what do you think influenced your priority of values?

6. **Values and Choices** (20 minutes):

Teacher introduces two ethical situations, inviting youth to make choices. After each situation is read aloud, give youth a minute for any discussion as a large group. Youth then individually make their choice, and group themselves with others who made the same choice.

Situation #1: You're paying for school supplies at a local discount store. The store is part of a huge chain with hundreds of stores across the country. When the cashier rings up your purchase, he undercharges you \$10 by mistake. You could inform him of that, or you could donate the \$10 to a local shelter that really needs financial support. You wouldn't be keeping the money for yourself, and the shelter needs it way more than a big corporation that owns the chain stores... right? Do you return the \$10 dollar to the cashier or decide to donate it to the shelter?

Questions for youth, to discuss in their groups:

- What values informed your personal decision, especially any of the 4-5 values prioritized in the worksheet?
- Were there similar, or even identical, values at work among your group members?
- **Asked as a whole class:** How might similarities/differences in values shape how decisions are made as a group?

Situation #2: Your summer job is baby-sitting for a neighbor who's told you not to have any friends over when you sit. Later that evening, after the children are in bed asleep, two friends show up uninvited and you let them in. When one friend spills his root beer on the carpet, you ask them to leave. You scrub the carpet and manage to remove the stain. Do you need to tell your neighbor that you let friends inside the house? After all, you sent your friends home, the stain is completely gone, and it's nearly certain that your neighbor will never know that your friends were there. If you told your neighbor, you may lose their trust, and you may have to find another summer job that's not as good as this one. The job was meant to help your parent out financially. Do you tell or not tell?

Questions for youth, to discuss in their groups:

- What values informed your personal decision, especially any of the 4-5 values prioritized in the worksheet?
- Were there similar, or even identical, values at work among your group members?
- **Asked as a whole class:** Were there certain values that proved to be non-negotiables for you, while other values were open to compromise or even discarded?

7. Extinguish the chalice, saying together:

"May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts."

8. Help clean up classroom before leaving: Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized
- wipe the whiteboard clean
- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets