

Building the Beloved Community

Lesson 3: The Cultural Iceberg

10.4.2020

Objectives: Use iceberg model to identify elements of culture not immediately visible.

Materials: *youth should have a notebook and pen/pencil for every class, teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop, **login to Unity's YouTube account.**

Time allotment: suggested for 60 minute online class.

1. Zoom Welcome (as youth arrive into the breakout classroom)

- Teachers and youth are expected to log on to zoom at 11:15am (15 min before class begins at 11:30am) so that everyone can be organized into correct breakout classrooms. We want to make sure there is an attentive adult in each breakout classroom with youth.
- Greet youth and ask everyone to correct their display name as needed. Ask everyone to select "gallery view" to see everyone else.
- Staff will attend to attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: I Spy (5 minutes)

Ask one youth to be the "spy." The "spy" secretly picks an object in someone's zoom background and says: "I spy..." and gives a hint (e.g. something blue). Everyone else tries to guess what the object is and in which zoom screen it is located. The person who guesses correctly becomes the "spy" and the game repeats as time allows.

Teachers can stage fun objects in their zoom background!

3. Chalice Lighting

Light a chalice at your home, invite youth to light their own chalices and say together:

"We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith, the light of truth and the warmth of love."

Teacher reads: (from philosopher and Zen teacher, Alan Watts)

"We seldom realize, for example, that our most private thoughts and emotions are not actually our own. For we think in terms of languages and images which we did not invent, but which were given to us by our society."

4. Brief Check-in (5 minutes)

Continue weekly ritual/check-in (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. Iceberg Model of Culture (25 minutes total)

Teacher introduces: In 1976, an American anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher, Edward T. Hall, introduced the iceberg analogy of culture. Hall reasoned that if culture is like an iceberg, there are some aspects which are explicit and visible (above the water), and a larger portion which is implicit and invisible beneath the surface (below the water). The more immersed we become in a culture, the more these hidden aspects of culture become revealed to us.

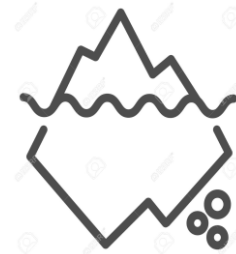
Screen share (with audio) video introducing the concept of culture as an iceberg (5/25 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woPov-2nJCU> (1:50 minutes)

- After viewing, invite youth to offer up a few other elements of culture and identity not addressed in the video (*to help them ready for the following activity*).
- Were any identities from their *Circles of Our Multicultural Selves* exercise (from previous class) represented here?

Activity (10/25 minutes):

Screen share lesson attachment 3a (Features of Culture).

- Ask youth to write down an example for as many features of culture as they can. Begin with concrete features, then try for more abstract and challenging ones. End screen share.



Open a Word document on your computer and **screen share**.

- One third from the top of the page, draw a line across to represent the surface of the water (e.g. type three dashes “---” then click enter).
- Ask the class to decide which features of culture should be placed above or below the surface of the water, visible or invisible. Write them down.

Questions for Discussion (10/25 minutes)

- What item below the water line might influence or shape any item above the water line? How?
- Beneath the tip of the iceberg are deeply rooted ideas, core values, and powerful worldviews that have great influence over our behavior, feelings, meaning, and purpose for our lives. How do you think people acquire these core values?

(Hint: Are we born with them? Passed from generation to generation? Who we hang out with? Formally educated into us? Socialized into us through opinions/ideas we hear in the media? Just “how things are,” structured by our laws and social customs?)

- Are these core values and powerful worldviews changeable? And if so, easily or with difficulty?
- What commonly happens when we compare only the visible feature of one culture (VFC₁) with the visible feature of another culture (VFC₂)?

(Hint: What’s at work subtly shaping HOW we do the comparison, influencing our opinion whether VFC₂ is good/bad or ugly/beautiful or slow/fast or tasty/nasty? **Answer:** the invisible features of C₁)

- What happens when we begin to view the visible features of another culture but with greater awareness of the invisible features of our own culture?

6. Intercultural Activity: Turning the Other Cheek? (25 minutes):

Teacher asks: Does anyone know this saying from the early Christian teachings? “If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also.” What does this saying mean to you?

- Allow youth to share responses (e.g. abuse, nonviolence, nonresistance, pacifism, right to self-defense, etc.)

Teacher guides: Now let’s see what happens to our perspective when we look under the surface and begin to see the cultural worldview of first-century Palestine. Details take on much greater importance!

- Have youth (gently) act out being slapped on the RIGHT cheek, then offering the LEFT cheek. Youth can ask someone in their household to help (gently) act out.

Questions for Discussion (follow sequence):

- (a) Why is it first the RIGHT cheek, then offering the LEFT cheek?
- (b) What if I told you that in that time and culture, (1) people would NOT be caught using their left hand in any public encounter with others, as that would be shameful in a right-handed culture. So with what hand would one slap another person? (Answer: right hand)
- (c) What if I told you that in that culture, (2) the *inside* palm was considered clean while the *outside* back of the hand was generally considered unclean. So with what part of the right hand – inside palm or outside back of hand – would one slap another person without “soiling” their clean hands? (Answer: slap with the right back of hand, so palm stays clean.)

(d) ******So now rethink carefully: What does it mean, “If someone strikes you on the RIGHT cheek, turn to them your LEFT cheek”?

(Answer: Turning the left cheek would dare the aggressor to slap, again with their RIGHT hand, but now be forced to use their PALM. In effect, it’s challenging the aggressor to recognize that they can hit you again, but not without making themselves “dirty” in the act, or vice versa, not without considering you as “clean” and worthy of their palm. Nonviolent resistance!)

Share screen lesson attachment 3b. Read through the story *How Many Birds Left?*

- What do you imagine about the two students that led them to respond so differently?
- How does your identity affect the way you look at things, approach things?

7. **Extinguish the chalice**, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

8. **Leave zoom breakout classroom**: click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”