

I CARE Values Activity

This is a very fun, engaging and introspective activity that can be used for almost any group and is ideal for students age 13 through 100!

INSTRUCTIONS:

It is ideal to prepare the students for the activity by involving them in some type of discussion regarding the meaning of the words "Ethics" and "Values". Very soon we will be posting a PowerPoint presentation that can be used for this very purpose. Following the discussion simply hand each student a packet containing the 40 value cards. Instruct them to clear their desks and lay the cards out in front of them face up so they can see each of them. Remind them that there may be one or more "blank" cards that are to be used as "Wild Cards". The Wild Cards can represent a word or "value" that they feel is important to them but may not be represented among the 36 other values. If you wish, allow them to write their own values on one or more of these blank cards.

Ask them to study the cards for several minutes and try to identify a meaning that pertains to them. If you are using the set of cards that contain definitions, remind them that the definitions are subjective and somewhat arbitrary and they do not have to agree with or accept the stated definition. These are provided simply to provide some context for the word. They can use any definition or meaning they like for any of the words.

Once they have had some time to reflect on the words, challenge them to identify the five values that best represent them as an individual. Instruct them to gather all the other cards face down in a pile and to end up with only those five "Core Values" face up in front of them. This may take a bit of time for some students and others will identify their values very quickly. Be patient and allow plenty of time for everyone to select their five. Listen to the discussion as students struggle to whittle it down to only five.

Once everyone has only their five face up on the desk in front of them. Ask if they are comfortable with allowing others to see what they have chosen. If everyone is okay with this then encourage the students to move about the room and see what others have chosen. Discuss any surprises and ask students why they may have chosen a particular value. Allow students who may not feel comfortable sharing their values to turn them face down if they wish. While I have not had this happen, it is nice for students to know they have the option.

Once the discussion has calmed down, ask everyone to return to their seats and challenge them to divide their five values into those that would be considered "Ethical" values and those that would be considered "Non Ethical" values. Have them place the ethical values on the left and the non ethical values on the right. Listen and watch as they make their distinctions. You may have to explain what is meant by ethical and non-ethical values. For instance, the desire for wealth or the desire for health are not ethical values. Integrity and honesty on the other hand ARE ethical values. For the most part, students end up with a balance of both ethical and non ethical values.

Next I ask students to select the value that they feel needs the most work, the one that they could improve upon the most and share it with someone sitting next to them. Ask them to share with the same person why they feel it is the weakest of their values. Once that discussion is over I then ask them to select the card that represents their strongest value, the value that they feel the most possess at this time. Again I ask them to share this with a different person sitting next to them. Have the explain why it is the strongest of their values.

The final step here is to ask everyone to narrow their list down to just one card that represents their most important "Core Value". Give them plenty of time for this as it may be as challenging as the first selection. If everyone is comfortable, ask each person to hold up their card and state the value out loud to the entire class. Go around the room until everyone has stated their value. If anyone is too uncomfortable doing this, allow them to simply say "Pass" when it is their turn.

I usually end the activity with a discussion around questions, "Would five random people from their lives identify the same core value as each person selected? Do you walk the talk when it comes to your value and the way that you live your life? If so, provide some examples. I have also ended by asking students to share in small groups their most recent ethical dilemma.

I hope you have fun with this activity and enjoy facilitating it as much as I do. I have provided links to two templates below for the 40 value cards. One includes definitions for most of the words while the other has no definitions. I have conducted the activity using both sets and find the most people prefer to use the cards with the definitions.

I want to encourage your feedback and your experiences after conducting this activity with your own groups. Please email me at chris@icarevalues.org with your comments and suggestions.