

Diversity Circle

(as experienced by the 2008 Council of Synod LYO Presidents)

How to play the game: Everyone stands in a large circle. Everyone is asked to play this game silently. The facilitator will ask the group a certain question, and based on whether each person identifies with the question being asked or not, some people will step inside the circle and step into the trust and comfort of the large circle surrounding them. Then there is a pause and the facilitator asks “notice who is with you and who is not with you.” Then those who walked into the circle re-join the large circle, and the facilitator reads the next “category.” Each category is based on some kind of “label.” The important part of this game is self-identification and awareness of how labels are often deceiving. There should be some time for people to reflect on their experience playing this game afterwards, which is best done in small groups.

*** Tip 1: Put a baptismal font in the center of the circle!

*** Tip 2: Adjust the list of labels to the audience. Allow 30 seconds for each label.

Adjustments can also be made depending on time available. It is recommended that at least half of the time available be used for debriefing.

List of labels: **“Walk across the room if....”**

You have never been to Arkansas before. Notice who is with you, notice who is not. Please rejoin the circle.”

You come from the West Coast. Notice... (etc.)

You come from the East Coast.

You come from the Midwest.

You come from the South.

You live in a large urban area.

You live in a small town.

You just had your first airplane ride for this event.

You are under 18 years of age.

You are in high school.

You are in college.

You are over 21 years of age.

You are a Generation Xer.

You are a Baby Boomer.

You were able to vote in this last week’s political election.

You attend public school.

You attend private school.

You play in a sport back home.

You play a musical instrument.

You’re good at math.

You speak more than one language.

You were born in a country that is not the United States of America.

You are a female.

You are African American or Black.

You are Asian American or Pacific Islander.

You are American Indian or Native Alaskan.
You are Latino/a.
You are Arab or Middle Eastern.
You are multi-ethnic.
You are multi-racial.
You are European American.
You have ever celebrated a holiday from your own cultural heritage (such as Oktoberfest, St. Patrick's Day, Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, St. Lucia Day, etc...)
You know what LEFSE is.
You have a physical disability of any kind (wearing glasses or contacts counts!)
You have a learning disability.
You come from a single parent home.
You come from a mixed family home (step mother or step father)^
One or more of your grandparents lives in your home.^
You share your home with other young people who are not siblings.^
Your biological parents share custody of you.^
You do not live with neither of your biological parents.^
You have ever not had health insurance.
You come from a large family (5 or more people).
Both your parents work.
Neither of your parents graduated from college.
Neither of your parents graduated from high school.
One or more of your parents has graduated from college.
At least one of your parents is no longer living.
You were not born into the Lutheran church.
You know someone who has attempted suicide.
You know someone who is HIV positive.
You know someone who is gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgendered.
You know someone who is addicted to drugs or alcohol.
You know someone who has been sexually harassed or raped.
You know someone who has had their house foreclosed.
You were ever called fat.
You have ever been called a nerd.
You do not have your own cell phone.
You do not have your own computer.
You do not have your own IPOD.
You do not have your own Nintendo Wii.
You have your own car.
You have a part-time job after school.
Either one of your parents is an ordained pastor of this church.
Hip hop or rap is the genre of music you prefer to listen to.
Country music is the genre of music you prefer to listen to.
Classical music is the genre of music you prefer to listen to.
Rock music is the genre of music you prefer to listen to.
Pop music is the genre of music you prefer to listen to.
You were ever a child.

(If there is a font in the middle of the room, then say: The most powerful label is beloved child of God. God has given this label to each of us. Please remember your baptism by making a sign of the cross with the water from the font and help others do so too.)

Closing observation:

“We all have multiple labels. There are some that we can change, and some we cannot. There are some that are assigned to us, and others that we assign to ourselves. There are some that are hidden, and some that are obvious.”

^ = these have been added since 2008 CSLYOPs based on feedback from participants.

Reflection questions—Large Group:

1. What did you notice about the group at this event playing this game?
 - a. Were you surprised when someone walked into the circle at any point?
 - b. Is this group reflective of the people you hang out with most of the time?
2. What was it like inside the circle? What was it like holding others inside the circle?
3. What particular labels might you be struggling with? Why?
 - a. Are labels real or not real?
 - b. Who do you suppose created these labels? And why?
 - c. How will you use these labels in the future?
4. What did this game teach you about diversity overall?

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13

But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:25-28