



Conflict Between Communities

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Challenging prejudice: 11-14



Identifying the problems:

Your project should respond to a specific need in your community. It is important to involve Scouts in this part of the project using participative and dynamic methods. Here are some creative ways of exploring the issue of conflict between communities with Scouts aged 11-14.

Activity 1: Where is the conflict?

There are many conflicts that exist between many different communities on local, national and international levels.

Scouts are asked to list all of the conflicts that they know of. These may be at a very local level, eg between different families; or between people of different communities within a country or they could look at the different countries that are in conflict with each other

Activity 2: Our communities

Each patrol is asked to prepare a list of different communities that exist in their local area. For each community, Scouts are asked to identify the prejudices that each of the communities listed may have towards other communities. What is the kind of prejudice? What level is the prejudice? Why is there prejudice?

Activity 3: Stereotypes

Produce a list of communities / cultures / countries. For each of the different communities Scouts should find pictures and words describing the different communities from their perspective, for example foods, clothing, colours from a range of material including magazines, travel brochures, websites etc. The first responses are often the most revealing. Also are there

any items or stories that you associate with the community? Ask 1 Patrol to look at an aspect of the community in which they live to compare stereotypes.

Developing awareness and empathy:

After actively participating in identifying the issue, Scouts need to be helped to develop their awareness.

Here are some activities which will help Scouts to explore the issue of conflict between communities and develop skills and empathy. These activities use the Scout method of active participation and exploration. The project in the community should help the Scouts use the skills that they have developed.

Activity 1: Back to the future?

Throughout the history of humans, there has also been fighting and tension between different groups of people. Look at different conflicts from history to find out how their troubles were resolved. These could be on all levels including family, tribal, regional, national and international. Scouts could look at one geographical location away from their own area and see how conflicts have varied over several hundred years. By looking at past conflicts, Scouts should be able to pick out the key factors that lead to the conclusion of the conflicts.

Activity 2: We are all the same.

The most common cause of conflict between people is lack of understanding of our differences. Rather than focus on the differences between different communities, encourage Scouts to identify the similarities between different communities. Scouts can engage with different communities locally, nationally and internationally to find out what similarities they have, for example meals that are eaten, television programmes that are watched or newspapers that are read.

Activity 3: Who tells us what to think?

There are many influences on what we think and how we develop our opinions. Leaders and Scouts should bring to a meeting newspapers and magazines that are topical and relevant to the local area. Scouts could do a cut and paste collage about the way their community is portrayed in the media, with them grouped into positive messages about communities and negative messages about communities. Scouts can then use an opinion line to discuss if they agree or disagree with the statements.

Taking action:

Your project should make a difference in the community. Actions need to be developed which are appropriate to the community and are challenging and fun for the Scouts involved. Here are some projects which may be appropriate for Scouts to respond to the subject of conflict in your community.

Project 1: Joining together

Having identified the different communities within the local area, Scouts can investigate different ways of organising events that will bring the different communities together. This could be in the form of a festival that would celebrate the richness and diversity of the local area and would encourage people from different communities to learn about each other and appreciate the similarities that they have.

Project 2: Youth Exchange

One of the best ways to understand different communities is to experience life in them. With careful planning, Scouts and young people from different communities could spend a few days living each others lives. By the end of their time together Scouts may be able to better understand the other community in which they have stayed and also shown a young person from a different community more about their life.

Project 3: Mobilisation

A project could be carried out to help change the opinions of the wider community and those who have out of date prejudices about a different community. Scouts could prepare a presentation and information event with the community in question to explain how they work together and also to explain the real facts and how these are different from the preconceptions that other people may have.

Measuring change:

The project is designed to help young people to develop their capabilities, attitudes and values in response to situations where there is conflict, and then apply these to a project in their community. Scouts can make a difference in their communities and develop capabilities and empathies related to peace education. Two dimensions of change should be measured - change in the communities and change in the Scouts themselves. Measuring change should be built into the design of the project in a fun, participative way. Here are some activities which will help to measure change.

Activity 1: Friendships

Identify the range of backgrounds of the Scouts friends. The Scouts can explore how the project has developed their range

of friends and those of their families. Looking at the wider community, carry out surveys of the different communities to discover if there has been more interaction as a result of the project.

Activity 2: On Going Events

After the main part of the project is over, study how many of the actions that the Scouts have carried out have continued. For example the festival of the local community could continue to bring different groups together.

Case study:

Here is a story from Ireland on how Scouts have been working to overcome conflict between communities.

Ireland: a small island to the west of Great Britain, has experienced conflict between communities for many years. The island, once integrated into the United Kingdom, is today divided up into the Republic of Ireland (an independent state 'the south', comprising 26 counties) and Northern Ireland (6 counties which remain as part of the United Kingdom). Some citizens believe that Northern Ireland should remain as part of the UK and others believe that it should be reunited with the other 26 counties. There were years of violence, from the late 1960s to the late 1990s when street violence, tit for tat murders, indiscriminate bombings and intimidation and fear were common place. Communities were deeply divided along political, religious lines. Relative stability has been achieved since the Good Friday Agreement was negotiated.

Scouting however, has been working throughout to break down the barriers, through cross-community and cross border initiatives. There have been joint initiatives, joint training courses and youth exchange programmes. A peace programme on citizenship has been developed to help Scouts understand their own community, learn about stereotypes and prejudice and accept diversity in their communities and country. The final outcomes are cross-community exchanges.

Scouts are contributing to building and securing peace across the island.