



The Adventure:

Have you ever experienced “culture shock”? This is a feeling you get when you’re overwhelmed by a set of different rules and norms for another culture. This can lead to difficulties when you interact with people from a culture you don’t know very well.

As a group, get together in an open area. Your facilitators will invite a few volunteers (10–20% of the group) to go where they can’t see or hear what is happening.

Those left in the big group will then invent a new culture—one completely foreign to the volunteers. You do not speak the same language so you do not talk to each other. What unique traditions might your culture have? For example, in your culture people wearing black shoes might only make eye contact with other people who wear black shoes. People who are not wearing black shoes only make eye contact with people who do not have black shoes. When someone tries to make eye contact with you when they are not supposed to (because their shoes are the other colour), you must look away from them.

Now invite the others back into the room. Mingle a while, and see how the volunteers react and adapt to your new culture!

Plan:

- Where will you share this adventure?
- What materials (if any) do you need for this adventure?
- How will you invent a unique tradition for your culture as a team?
- How long might you let the activity go? How will you know to end it?

Do:

- Get mingling!

Review:

- What do you know now that you did not know before?
- Why was it difficult to pick up on the rules of the other culture?
- If you were in the majority, how did you feel walking around and talking with everyone?
- If you were a minority or outsider, how did you feel?
- When were other times in your life you’ve felt confused or excluded because of cultural barriers? How did you react?

Online Resources:

Symbols, Values & Norms

Safety Note:

- What hazards (if any) are there in the place where you plan to do this activity?
- How can you ensure your culture’s unique traditions are safe, especially for others who do not understand them?