

Three Worlds

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Overview

This physical activity helps increase student awareness of hunger and the privileges that many people take for granted in countries such as the United States. Students also learn that not all people in the United States have the same degree of food security.

Goal

- The students will experience what it is like to live at different levels of socioeconomic privilege.

Materials Needed

- 20-30 empty, plastic water jugs.
- One box of cocoa powder.
- Boxes of crackers
- Different toppings for the crackers, such as different types of cheese, peanut butter, jelly, cream cheese, banana slices....
- Paper plates and plastic spoons/knives for putting toppings on the crackers
- Coolers of ice, jugs of fresh water, solo cups (base quantity on # of children in class), and a track for children to walk on.
- Slips of paper that say “First World,” “Second World,” and “Third World.” Make approximately 10% first world, 30% second world and 60% third world. So for a class of 30 – 3 slips say First World, 9 say Second World, and 18 say Third World

** In case of bad weather, be prepared to conduct project inside in the gymnasium using cones to designate the track for members of the second and third world countries to walk around.

Instructions

Preparation

1. Fill half the number of water jugs with water and cocoa mix. This is in an effort to make the water appear cloudy and contaminated much like the water is in many communities in third world countries.
2. In the front of the room or area, so First World Members can watch the others, set up the ice in coolers and stack paper cups near the ice with clean water in pitchers. Spread out the crackers and toppings at a table all for the members of the First World Country.

Completing the Activity

1. Provide students with the following background information:
 - HUNGER is the body's way of signaling that it is running short of food and needs to eat something. Hunger can lead to malnutrition.
 - UNDERNOURISHMENT describes the status of people whose food intake does not include enough (calories) energy to meet minimum physiological needs.
 - Today, one in nearly seven people do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life, making hunger and malnutrition the number one risk to health worldwide.
 - Hungry children are weak and vulnerable, making them unable to fight off diseases because they have a weakened immune system.
 - Hunger and poverty claim 25,000 lives every day.
 - 226 million children are stunted physically and mentally from malnutrition.
 - 2 million babies a year are so weak from hunger that they die when they get a bad case of diarrhea.
 - Drought as shown to the left has been a main reason for much of the hunger problems in second and third world countries. Clean, filtered water is not an option for drinking or for the nourishment of crops which was a major supplier of food for most in these countries.

Now explain First, Second and Third World (adjust explanation according to the ages of the students):

- **“First World”** refers to so called developed, capitalist, industrial countries, roughly, a block of countries aligned within the United States after World War Two, with more or less common political and economic interests: North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australia. These are countries that are democracies, which are technologically advanced, and whose citizens have a high standard of living.

- **“Second World”** is a phrase that was used to describe the former Communist states within the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence. Today, this term would refer to industrial states, such as: Russia, Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland), and some of the Turk States (e.g., Kazakhstan) as well as China.

- **“Third World”** includes all other countries generally referred to as **“developing countries”** such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. This would also include capitalist (e.g., Venezuela), communist countries (e.g., North Korea), and very poor countries (e.g., Darfur, Mali, India).

2. Have each student draw a slip of paper from a basket. The paper will say one of three groups: First World Group, Second World Group, or Third World Group. Each group of students should sit together.
3. Invite the First World group to come up and relax, get a cold bottle/cup of ice water, and select crackers and toppings to eat. Wait until most have finished their snacks and invite the group to go back for seconds. Invite the First World group to sit down, relax, and watch the other two groups. Note that they do not have to worry about getting water or food for themselves or their families.

4. Next, invite the Second World members to get 2 empty jugs and ask them to walk around the track twice with the empty jugs and then to trade them in for filled, room temperature water jugs. Ask them to walk (“walk back” from the water well to their village) around the track two times again. When they get back to their village, hand each member of the Second World a cracker with a slice of cheese. Tell them that is all they get.
5. Finally, ask the Third World members to get 2 empty jugs and walk around the track four times. Then ask them to trade in their empty jugs for filled jugs with the cloudy water and to walk (“back from the water well to their village) back around the track three times. Explain that the cloudy water is just a cocoa powder and water mix, but it represents the contaminated water that would come from the wells in third world countries. Give the members of the Third World countries one cracker for every four people. Instruct them to share.
6. Hand out questionnaires to each class member asking them to rate how it felt to be placed without any say into a country and required to follow certain guidelines for getting food and water. They should rate from 1-5, with 5 being the best feeling and 1 being the worst feeling,
7. Get someone from Second and Third World groups to explain how it felt to get their food and water after watching the First World group have a variety of food and endless cold water without effort. Also have the students in the First World group share what it was like to be in that group and watch their peers have such a different experience.
8. Explain that this game was conducted in an effort to help students understand their experience and how it may compare to the experience of those in other parts of the world. While there are many impoverished people in the United States, poverty in developed and developing nations can be very different.

9. Explain that the child we are sponsoring as a school has to walk to get water which is usually cloudy from parasites, and turn around and walk back home. Many children from developing countries do not have a choice of what to eat and are lucky to get a few crackers a day. The exercise we conducted was done to give students an idea of how limited the situations of children in second and third world countries can be. We can do our part to help by raising money to sponsor one child until the age of 18.

10. After playing the game, let the students who were members of the Second and Third World countries get more crackers and their choice of toppings, as well as something cold to drink. Explain that they are fortunate to live in a country where they have enough to eat. But then note that not all children in the United States always do have enough to eat. Share the following:

Hunger in Alabama

- More than 15% of Alabama residents live in hunger.
- Poverty affects around 30% of individuals in certain counties of Alabama.
- One out of every 5 children in Alabama lives in hunger.
- Approximately 12% of individuals in Alabama receive use the Food Stamp program.

