Stand Up, Sit Down

Time: 10–20 min

Purpose: To identify through a visual representation the similarities and differences within the group.

Skills: Appreciating similarities and differences, Cooperation, Communication, Listening, Patience

You will need...

- 5 or more participants
- Early elementary age participants or older

Before You Begin

- Prepare the list of statements you will use during the activity. Statements can be centered around academic content, controversial issues, or getting to know the members of the group. Write statements that will be relevant to your group.
- Prepare the reflection questions you will ask participants in the debrief.

Directions

Introduce the activity Stand Up, Sit Down. Use this time to reinforce any established expectations that are important for participants to remember during the activity.

Explain to participants that the objective of the activity is to get to know more about the members of their community.

Tell participants that you will read a statement and if participants agree with that statement, they will stand up. If participants disagree with the statement, they will remain seated. Participants may also remain seated if they don’t want to answer the question.

Explain that after you read each statement and participants have had a chance to express their opinion, you will ask them to sit back down again for the next statement.

Ask participants if they have any questions about the activity.

Read each of the statements you have prepared. We have included some suggestions below. After participants have expressed themselves for each statement, remind standing participants to sit back down.

Stand up if your favorite color is blue.

Stand up if you have an older brother or sister.

Stand up if you were born somewhere outside [name the state you are in].

Stand up if you speak more than one language.

Tip: This activity offers the potential to explore complex and controversial topics and to have a powerful impact, especially with regard to privilege or oppression. If you intend to use the activity to demonstrate these or similar themes, start with low-risk statements and increase risk as the activity progresses.
DIRECTIONS CONTINUED

The activity ends when you have read all of your prepared statements or time runs out. Explain to participants that now they will reflect how they experienced the activity.

Debrief

Debrief the activity with participants. Remember, an activity is only as effective as your debrief. This is your opportunity to help participants connect the activity to personal experiences, actions, and beliefs. You will want to reinforce any skills or beliefs you are hoping participants will carry beyond the activity.

For more on facilitating debriefs, refer to the Debriefing Tip Sheet on our Digital Activity Center.

We’ve included some suggested questions below to get you started.

Ask:

What happened during the activity?

Did you have something in common with someone that you didn’t expect? How did that feel?

What did this activity show you about members of your community?

What peacemaking skills did you use during this activity? How can you use these skills outside of the activity?

Thank participants for taking part in the activity.