

Dividing into Groups

In this activity, we are going to explore what happens to a community when we choose sides. I will give you a series of choices, and you will have to choose between one side or the other. Even if your choice is different, you must choose one of the two options. For example, if you must choose between chocolate and vanilla ice cream but your favorite is strawberry or you cannot even eat ice cream, you still must decide between vanilla and chocolate for the game only. Pay attention to who is with you on your side and how that changes. Be aware of how it feels to choose a side. We'll talk about the game afterward.

Designate two locations for groups to stand within the classroom, such as the north wall and the south wall.

1. Announce a series of light, opposite choices by which the students can classify themselves. For example, *"Everyone who prefers chocolate ice cream, go stand by the North wall; everyone who prefers vanilla, go stand by the South wall."* (Children should be encouraged to make a "forced choice" of one or the other, except when a choice is too upsetting, and then you can allow them to remain seated.)
2. Sample sides provided below, but these categories may be created by the teacher, according to the population of the class.
Only child - Have brothers and/or sisters
Like cats best - Like dogs best
Tall - Short
Favorite food is pizza - Favorite food is something else
Like country music - Do not like country music
Wear glasses - Do not wear glasses
3. Discuss this activity. "Today we divided up into many groups of people according to what we like or look like. How did you feel when you had to divide into sides? How did you feel about the people who were with you? How about the people who were not with you? Did you feel like you wanted to argue? If whether someone likes cats or dogs is not important, why does forming groups make it seem more important than it is?"

