

Three Worlds Game

Note to Leader: The impact of this game depends on participants discovering their leadership potential. Be careful not to give any clues about the game's purpose or themes as you gather people together. For example, don't call it a leadership exercise.

Explain to the group that they are going to do an exercise, or game, called the Game of Three Worlds. Tell them that before playing, we need to make sure everyone has the same understanding of the terms we will be using.

Say, "People have used the terms *first world country*, *second world country*, and *third world country* to categorize countries by political and economic divisions. The terms are not widely used anymore, but for this game, we will use the terms to describe economic independence and political structure.

Ask, "Does anyone know what a *third world country* is?" Listen to participant responses and confirm the definition and examples by writing them on a chart or by repeating them. Most people would define this as a developing country with limited means to meet their needs. These countries often depend on aid from other countries. Examples include Afghanistan, Belize, Columbia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uzbekistan.

Say, "If this is a third world country, what would a first world country be?" Listen to participant responses and confirm the definition and examples by writing them on a chart or by repeating them. Most people would define this as an industrialized country with many resources and advanced technology. Examples include Australia, Kuwait, Germany, United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Say, "Who can define a second world country?" Listen to participant responses and confirm the definition and examples by writing them on a chart or by repeating them. Most people would define this as an economically emerging country. The original definition came out of World War II and referred to communist block countries, such as the Soviet Union and its allies. Today the emerging economies are Brazil, Russia, China and India.

Say, "Now that everyone has a common understanding of these 'three worlds,' I'd like everyone to stand up and stand in this area together." Meet in a space where there is room for everyone to be together and move around between each other.

Say, "Before we begin, before I explain the rules and get started, I have to ask everyone to look at me and promise to follow the rules of the game exactly, because if you don't you might accidentally ruin the game for everyone else." Wait for the participants to agree to follow the rules.

Say, "Now I need everyone to squat down like this (demonstrate) and close your eyes. Remember, you promised to follow the rules exactly so everyone close their eyes."

Say, "You are now a third world country. The rules are that you must stay squatted down, you can't open your eyes, you can't move around, and you can't speak unless spoken to first. If you are tapped on the shoulder one time, you can stand up and then you will be a second world country. As a second world you still have to keep your eyes closed, still can't move around, and still cannot speak unless spoken to first. If you are tapped on the shoulder a second time, you will be a first world country and you can open your eyes and do anything you want."

Say, "I will repeat these rules until everyone understands." Repeat the rules one or two times. Then tap the shoulder once of about a third of the people. (If you notice someone who has trouble squatting because of



physical limitations, you may want to tap that person's shoulder first.) Take your time so people have a chance to get uncomfortable.

Continue to repeat the rules while you tap the shoulders of about half of the standing people (in the second world). Take your time so the people in the third world are growing more uncomfortable. Try to choose the person you think is NOT likely to move quickly to solve the game. Once you put people in the first world, you also try to avoid eye contact with them as they may look to you for clues on what they should do.

At this point, you may ask people in the first world to tell everyone the rules. You may pick several people and also interject the rules yourself.

Remember, the whole time, everyone needs to remain in their "world" (squatting, standing or free to do whatever they want).

You will see people in the third world begin to feel uncomfortable. Remind them that, even if they feel uncomfortable squatting and want to kneel instead, they can't. Everyone promised to follow the rules. If someone tries to rebel, remind them of what "world" they belong in—first, second, or third—and remind them of the rules, then say, "You promised to follow the rules."

The solution to the game is for someone in the first world to realize they can do anything, therefore they have the power to tap shoulders.

When someone finally recognizes their power and starts tapping shoulders, the game will quickly come to an end. When everyone is a first world country, ask everyone to take a seat so you can debrief with the following questions:

1. Who was in the third world for most of the game? In this game, what is the third world like? How did you feel?
2. Who was in the second world for most of the game? What was it like for you? How did you feel?
3. Who was in the first world for most of the game? How was that? When did you realize you had the power to tap shoulders? How did you feel when you figured it out? Why do you think it took a while to realize you had the power?
4. What does this game tell you about your power to do things in the real world?
5. OK, one more question – if your school was its very own "world" and everyone within your "world" had to be a member of one of the three worlds, which world would you choose to be a part of? (Go around and let each person give an answer with a brief explanation.)

Say, "One lesson we can take away in the global sense is that all of us are first world, really. We can do about anything we want. We can go to the library and get books. We can write books. We can decide what we want to be when we grow up. We can start our own companies. We have unprecedented freedom, but sometimes we don't completely realize it. The limits we have as leaders are partly those we impose on ourselves."

Say, "The next time you walk by a person who is homeless or think about climate change or consider kids with special needs, think of this game. It doesn't make a difference if you feel bad about the situation and hope that the people in charge are taking care of it. You have the power to tap shoulders in the world around (KEY



LESSON FROM THE WHOLE ACTIVITY). With that realization of power comes choices: Whose job is it to change the world? Do we wait for only government to do it? Who needs to get it done if we really want change?"

Say, "We are all in the first world. We can speak up. We can propose ideas. We can grow, network, and make happen what we set our minds to. What do you think it takes to get other people interested in taking action to make the world a better place?"

Reflection:

How can we make sure that everyone in our community feels like they are part of a first world country? How can we help those who may not feel like they are a part of the first world country? What does this game change your view about what you can do to help people in other countries?

In closing, say, "Keep the activities you participated in today in mind tomorrow, when you decide on service projects you would like to do over the next year. Share your experiences with others and open their eyes to the different experiences others have."

