

The Geography Biography

Activities to Build Trust

ICEBREAKERS AND TEAM BUILDERS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

- To learn more about each other's backgrounds
- To learn about cultural difference and similarities

MATERIALS

- None

SETUP

- This activity is best done in a gym or outdoors. If that's not possible, push chairs and desks against the wall to make a large space in the center of the room where you can make a large open circle that represents a map or globe.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask the group to **stand up and randomly walk** around the space. Make sure they are using the **whole space**.
2. Ask them to **visualize the room as a map of their city**. **Point out landmarks** or certain areas so they know which direction the "map" is facing.
3. Ask the group to **figure out where their neighborhood is located** in this map and to then **stand** in it. They should **work together to determine** where their neighborhoods are in relation to other people.
4. Ask each group member to **say aloud** where his or her neighborhood is located.
5. As each person does so, **allow others to make adjustments** if they are not in the right geographic area.
6. Ask them to look around and **notice the people who live in or near their community** and the people who live in **different communities**.
7. Ask them to **walk around again**. This time, ask them to **pretend the floor is a map of the world**. Again, the facilitators should **point out**

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The Geography Biography continued

continents, countries, etc., to give the group a sense of direction.

8. Ask the group to **stand in the area where their families or ancestors are from**. For people with mixed backgrounds, ask them to think about **where they consider their roots to be**. Where do they feel like they came from? Explain that they will be able to **share more than one area** if they choose during the share-out (*e.g., they may share that their mom is Italian, while their dad is Caribbean*) but they should pick one place to stand.
9. Again, allow the group to **work together to determine** specific locations and their relative distance to one another.
10. **Start** by choosing one person and asking them where they are from. Each person should also **share one fact, tradition, or memory** that is tied to that location. *For example, if one student is standing in Thailand, do they know any words in Thai? Or what is their favorite Thai dish?*

DEBRIEF

- What did we learn about each other in this activity?
- What is one thing that makes you proud to be where you're from?
- What is something more you'd like to know about where you're from?
- Based on what you've heard, is there any place that someone in the group is from that you'd like to visit? Why?