

That's the Spirit!



Aim

to explore what contributes to spiritual health

Age

10 years and older

Time

40 minutes

Materials

Blindfolds, ball of wool, A4 sheets, blu-tack or masking tape

Note to Leader

In part 1, it may be helpful to agree a definition of spiritual health with the group. For example, spiritual health 'is a person's capacity and means to deal with and explain life's issues which have no obvious explanation. It is also the means by which a person conducts life and defines life goals.'

Maurice Feldman – in: National Youth Council of Ireland (2004). *Spiced Up: A Resource Book for Working with Young Women*.

Action

Design a survey to find out which of these activities people in your local community do.

What to do

Part 1 (15 minutes)

Ask for a volunteer. The other participants are blindfolded. Explain that each person will be given a piece of wool and has to hold it with both hands, not letting go. Pass out the ball of wool at random, over heads, through legs and crossing itself until everyone has hold of it. The volunteer has to direct the group to unravel the wool and then join the two ends. S/he is not allowed touch the participants or the wool.

When they have completed the task, remove the blindfolds and bring the group together. Ask how they feel having completed the task. What helped or hindered completing the task? In real life, in what ways do we depend on or support others?

Ask if the group has heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was adopted in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1990. Explain that at the start of the convention it states that children should be brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. These are values which contribute to a person's spiritual health.

Part 2 (25 minutes)

Write the statements on separate A4 sheets and stick on the wall all around the room. Bring everyone together in the centre of the room and explain that you are going to look at activities in daily life that promote spiritual health. Ask the participants to move to the activity that they feel most contributes to promoting spiritual health. Only three people are allowed at any poster, so if necessary choose the next most important activity.

When the participants have chosen, ask a selection of people why they have chosen a particular activity. If there were any posters that nobody moved to, ask why. Now ask the newly formed groups to imagine young people from other parts of the world or different cultures. Do you think they would choose similar or different activities?



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STATEMENTS

- Giving to charity
- Participating in a global justice campaign
- Visiting an elderly relative or neighbour
- Reading a book or listening to inspiring music
- Going for a walk in the countryside
- Praying at night
- Practicing yoga or meditation
- Participating in a religious service
- Being active in youth work
- Having a weekend or summer job
- Voting in an election
- Spending time with friends or family
- Being part of a team
- Watching television
- Eating fresh food
- Enjoying your own company

WARM UP **Banyoka**

This game was played by the Bemba tribe who lived in what is now both Zambia and the southern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Banyoka means "the snakes". Choose a play area that is a bit of an obstacle course. If playing indoors, you can create an obstacle course using toys, pillows, boxes, and cartons. The players divide into

two groups, each group having at least six players. Each group becomes a "Snake" by the players sitting one behind the other on the ground, legs spread and hands placed on the shoulders of the player in front, or arms wrapped around the waist. Each snake moves forward by the players swaying their bodies back and forth. The snake can sing a

song. The object of the snake is to reach a designated finish line first. But the real fun of the game is to manoeuvre around and over the obstacles while remaining connected to each other. Alternatively, the game can be played with one snake. The competitive aspect is gone, replaced by a follow-the-leader quality.