

Activities that can prepare your group

Some teachers and group leaders prefer to guide learning in the exhibit by providing activities and assignments. Others prefer their group's experience be more spontaneous. You know your group best, so design an experience that works for you.

We offer three suggestions for a guided experience:

- 1) Writing assignments based on photos of people the group will “meet” in the exhibit.
- 2) Simulation exercises based on *If the World Were a Village* by David Smith. (Group members take on an identity that helps them empathize with the people they will learn about in the exhibit.)
- 3) Questions for thought and journaling to guide groups in each of the vignettes.

1) Writing assignment based on photos

Type of activity: A writing assignment to get your group thinking about the kinds of people and situations they will encounter in the Real Life Exhibit.

Benefit: Your group will begin to think about the lives of their peers in different situations around the world. Even though at this point they will merely imagine what real life is like for these children, they can anticipate what their situations might be. When they arrive at the exhibit, they will recognize the photos and learn the real story behind them. Empathy will grow.

Have each member of your group write about a photo shown below—look at the expression on the faces, the perceived living situation, etc.

Share thoughts: After the group members have written their responses, ask them to gather in groups to share their thoughts. If you have distributed several of the photos, have people who wrote about the same photo form a group.



Imagine life for refugee children in Uganda



Imagine life for children in Cambodia



Imagine life for children in Guatemala



Imagine life for children fleeing Syria



Imagine life for children in Haiti



Imagine life for children here without access to dental care

2) If the world were a classroom . . .

Type of activity: A simulation exercise that allows groups to “take on” the identity of a person very different from themselves. This exercise—which can be done *before* or *after* visiting the exhibit—helps groups understand some of the factors that affect children around the world.

Sources: This exercise is based on the book *If the World Were a Village*, by David Smith, who based his statistics on “State of the Village Report” by Donella Meadows, first published in 1990. An updated edition of the book was published in 2011. Some of the statistics vary slightly from Smith’s book.

Premise: The premise in the book is that if we reduced the world’s population to 100 people—the size of a small village—we could understand in a microcosm who the world’s people are. We would feel closer to them because they are part of our village.

Examine the statistics listed below, from the *If the World Were a Village*. The goal of this exercise is to reduce the statistics to your classroom or group: *If the world were your classroom or group...*

Real Life for people in our world

1. Access to food
16 people are severely undernourished.
50 people are hungry some or all of the time.
34 people always have enough to eat.
2. Access to safe water
18 have to spend much of their days getting water.
82 have access to safe water.
3. Access to sanitation
36 have no access to sanitation.
64 have access to sanitation.
4. Access to money
20 people have more than \$7000/year.
60 people have between \$730 and \$7000 a year.
42 live on less than \$2/day.

Based on the number of people in your classroom or group, **calculate the statistics.**

For each item, create slips of paper with the “identities” on them. For example, if you have 30 people, the “food access identity” statistics would be this:

- 5 people are severely undernourished.
- 15 people are sometimes or always hungry.
- 10 people always have enough to eat.

Pass out five slips of paper that say “Access to food: I am severely undernourished”; 15 that say, “Access to food: I am sometimes or always hungry”; 10 that say, “Access to food: I always have enough to eat.”

Repeat the exercise for the other access statistics. In the end, each person will have four slips of paper, each with an access statistic that forms his or her “identity” in each area. (Note that because the slips are handed out at random, people may end up with statements that contradict each other. For example, one person might have a food access identity that says, “I am severely undernourished” and a money-access identity that says, “I have more than \$7000 a year.”)

Related journal-writing questions:

1. What were your identities?
2. How did this activity make you feel?
3. What would it be like if any of these identities were real life for you?
4. What can you do on behalf of people for whom these identities are real life?

3) Questions for thought and/or journaling

Type of activity: Questions to be used as (1) thought prompts for groups as they tour the exhibit or (2) journaling questions that groups can write about while they are in the exhibit.

As you move from room to room in the exhibit, answer the following questions. You can answer all the questions in one room, or answer one or two for each room.

1. What country is depicted here?
2. What happened here?
3. Who was affected?
4. What is the need, and what is the real hope that Medical Teams International offers?
5. What is the most memorable thing about this area?
6. What would it be like if you lived in this situation?
7. If you could do one thing to make a difference in this place, what would it be?
8. Draw a sketch of the most interesting thing you see and write a caption that explains it.
9. What is your responsibility toward the people whose stories are shared in the exhibit?
10. An African proverb says "*If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*" How can your group (class, school, friends) go farther together?