



Overview

THEME	TIME	MATERIALS	SETUP
SELF	45 MINUTES	HANDOUT	CIRCLE OF CHAIRS

Topic: Like fish in water, culture is the water surrounding and sustaining us.

Audience: Adolescents or adults seeking to better understand themselves and their own cultural experiences. This is also a good community-building activity for those who will continue working closely together.

Conceptual Objective: All people have culture. Participants will understand that culture goes beyond race, ethnicity or social identity. There may be aspects of our cultures that have been invisible to us for certain periods of our lives, or even still, because we have been swimming in them all our lives. The cultural spaces we are raised in affects our adult lives.

Experiential Objective: Participants will increase their self-awareness of their own culture, norms and origins. They will consider how family culture and upbringing has shaped them. Participants will get to know fellow participants more deeply and gain a greater appreciation for the nuanced cultural origins of others.

Facilitator Prep: Perform the activity yourself about your own life, before facilitating. Consider what you are comfortable sharing and what you are not.

Related Content: This activity could precede the Public Narrative – Story of Self workshop, as it prepares individuals to understand their own culture, values, and roots. It could also pair well with the Values Identification exercise.

Procedure

INTRODUCTIONS (3 MIN)

- Presenters introduce themselves to the full group, participants introduce themselves to a neighbor.

AGREEMENTS (5 MIN)

- Invite group to suggest agreements to create a safe discussion environment. They may include:
 1. Stay engaged (Remove distractions.)
 2. Speak your truth (Talk about your own self, life, and story, rather than those of others.)
 3. Experience discomfort (Stay in the conversation, even when you are uncomfortable.)
 4. Expect/accept non-closure (Some things will remain unclear.)
 5. Ouch! (We may feel hurt by what we hear – please speak up when this happens.)

OPENING (2 MIN)

All people have culture. Culture goes beyond race, ethnicity or social identity. There may be aspects of our cultures that have been invisible to us, however, because we have been swimming in them all our lives. Even if we now see our cultures more clearly — and see ways in which our exposure was limited — the cultural spaces we are raised in shapes us as adults.

Often we do not have opportunities to think, talk, or share about the complexity of our cultures and backgrounds. Today we will.

FISH BOWL (35 MIN)

- ❑ Provide attached handout with the fish bowl image.
- ❑ Direct participants to respond to the following prompts by writing on the inside of the bowl. Note that they will not have to share everything they write and can decide what they choose to keep private.
 1. Describe your culture (in whatever way you define that) as it shaped your life and world view in your early years. What values guided your life?
 2. Who were “your people” when you were growing up? How did being part of your family/group/community shape and form you?

Note: it can be helpful to share some brief examples from your own life, e.g., various groups of people you list inside the bowl.

- ❑ Direct participants to write on the outside of the bowl:
 1. Who were the people outside of your group? How did you become aware of them; how did you feel toward them; and what experiences influenced your feelings?
- ❑ Provide five to ten minutes for participants to write and reflect individually.
- ❑ Gather participants in groups of three to four people:
 - a. Each person takes 3-4 minutes to describe their bowl.
 - b. Each small group discusses how their stories were different and the same, what surprised them, and what they learned from the exchange.

CLOSING (5 MIN)

Ask each participant to share their reflections on the activity in just a few words.

If you are doing this workshop as part of an ongoing group or initiative, you may also want to discuss implications for your work together.

“What’s In Your Fishbowl?” is adapted by Minnesota Campus Compact staff based on a number of freely accessible sources, including one developed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s “One Body, Many Members” Racial Justice resource. The Agreement s in this workshop have been adapted from Glen Singleton’s Courageous Conversations. We welcome your suggestions for improving this guide further for future trainings. We also welcome you to use it and adapt it for your own trainings, subject to the terms below.

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Like fish in water, culture is the water surrounding and sustaining us.

Write on the inside of the bowl:

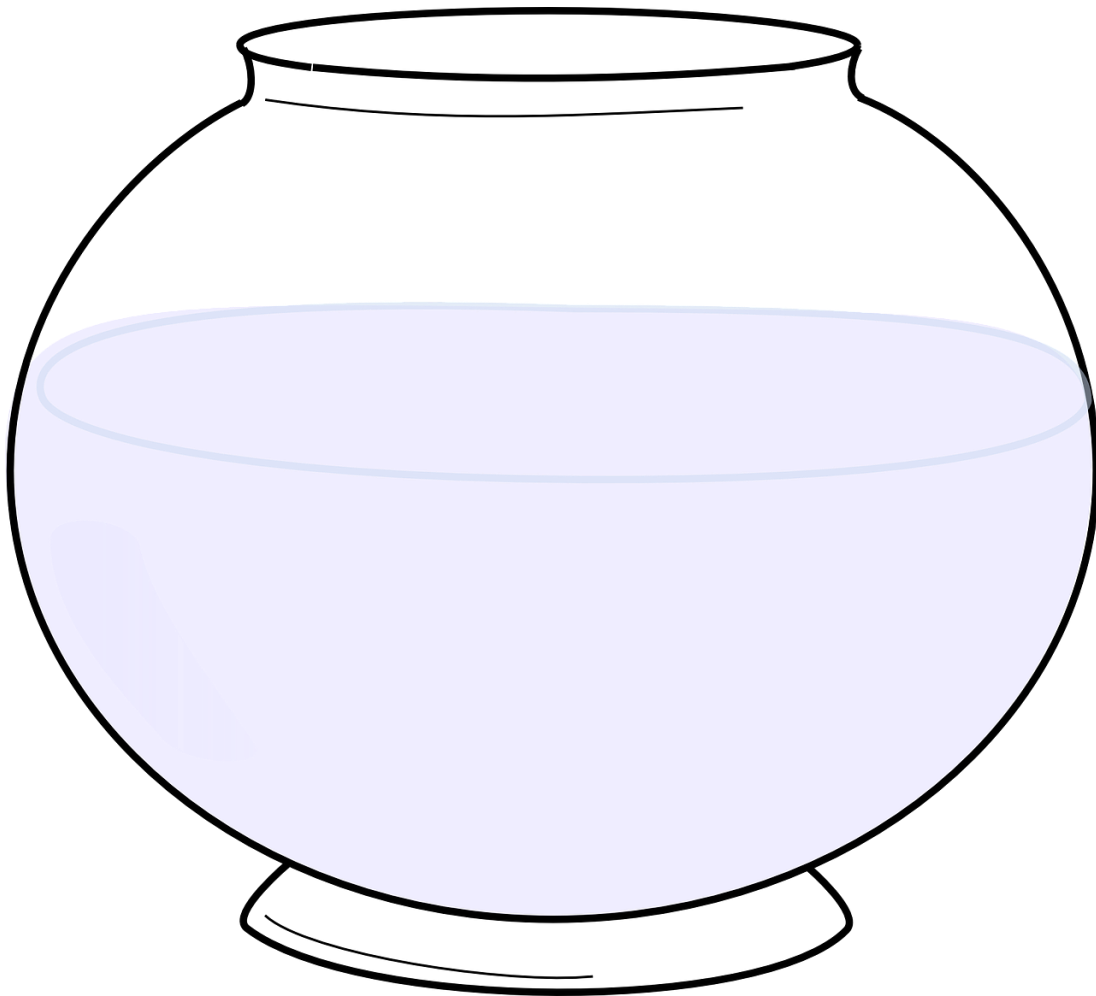
- **Describe your culture** (in whatever way you define that) as it shaped your life and world view in your early years. What values guided your life?
- **Who were “your people” when you were growing up?** How did being part of your family/group/community shape and form you?

Write on the outside of the bowl:

- **Who were the people outside of your group?** How did you become aware of them; how did you feel toward them; and what experiences influenced your feelings?

Gather in groups of two or three people:

- Each person takes 3-4 minutes to describe their bowl.
- Repeat the process until everyone has a chance to share.
- Think about how your stories were different and the same.





Survey for "What's in Your Fish Bowl?" Workshop

Thank you for taking time to attend this Civic Agency workshop. We are very interested in receiving your feedback. (Alternatively, you may also complete this survey online at <http://tinyurl.com/ja28zek>). If you have participants complete evaluations on paper, please scan them and send them to info@mncampuscompact.org.

Your information

Primary Role: Student, Faculty, Staff, Administrator, Community Organization Staff, AmeriCorps/VISTA

Institution (College, University, Organization):

Date:

Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following about your experience with the Civic Agency workshop you participated in.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
I increased my confidence in my own ability to lead					
I gained useful leadership skills, strategies, or insights					
I learned about new leadership tools or resources					
I developed new or deeper connections with others					
I both learned from and contributed to the learning of others					
Other participants in the workshop helped me see things from a different perspective					

Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with each of the following statements about yourself before the workshop

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Before the Workshop										
I understood my own identities and cultures										
I understood how identities and culture matter in social/community change work										
I understood how I connect with social issues on a personal level										
I was aware of strategies for fostering collaboration in diverse groups										
I was aware of strategies for effectively leading others										
I was aware of strategies for developing an action plan for social/community change										
I believed I had power to address social/community issues										



Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with each of the following statements about yourself now:

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
After the Workshop										
I understand my own identities and cultures										
I understand how identities and culture matter in social/community change work										
I understand how I connect with social issues on a personal level										
I am aware of strategies for fostering collaboration in diverse groups										
I am aware of strategies for effectively leading others										
I am aware of strategies for developing an action plan for social/community change										
I believe I have power to address social/community issues										

Is there anything you would like to tell us about your experience with the workshop?