



Adolescents gather stories by interviewing adults in their communities.



3/5



1/5



4/5



45 min



Activity Overview

Purpose

Interview community members and learn about their personal stories.

Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Empathize with others.
- ▶ Communicate and listen effectively.

Competency domains

Identity and self-esteem; Communication and expression; Empathy and respect.

Works well for

Circles where adolescents can sit together and work on activities as a large group, whether they are just getting to know each other, or already know each other well.

Phase

Connecting.

Before

Adolescents should have identified an adult in the community and asked them to think of a story to share. Facilitators and adolescents can begin this as part of the Take-Away step at the end of a session.

After

Keep adolescents' notes, drawings or other records of the stories they gathered, and use them for future arts or innovation projects.

Preparation

Adolescents may wish to use the **Practicing interview skills** activity to prepare.



Gathering stories

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Explain:

Participants sit in pairs, with enough space around them to be comfortable. They should have a piece of paper and something to write with.

2

Facilitator says:

"Please close your eyes for a minute and think of a time that an older person told you a story. Maybe it was a true story about something that happened to them, like something that they remembered from own childhood. Or maybe it was a traditional story from their culture."

3

Give the adolescents a few moments of silence to think and reflect. If children like to write or draw, they can write down the story in their journal (if they have one).

4

Ask for volunteers to stand and share their stories, and encourage the other participants to be active and supportive listeners. Allow as many adolescents as possible to share their stories, leaving 10 minutes at the end of your time for discussion.

Sharing and Take away

Each group of adolescents should perform their role play.

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Discuss:

- ▶ Why do adults like to tell stories to children and young people?
- ▶ Why do you think you remembered these stories?
- ▶ What do we gain by listening to stories?
- ▶ What makes stories helpful or interesting?

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Explain:

- ▶ Adults often tell stories to young people to teach them important lessons.
- ▶ Adults may want to make sure that young people remember important things about their tradition or history.
- ▶ Sharing stories can be a fun way for adults and young people to connect and enjoy time together.

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Divide adolescents into groups of two and ask them to write interview questions.

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Facilitator says:

"You are going to gather a story from an adult (or another person) in your community. It can be a true story and/or a traditional story. Think of an adult in your community whom you respect or like. It can be someone you know well, or someone you don't know well. Your task is to conduct an interview with them and ask them to tell you a story. Your challenge now is to develop questions you can ask to help that person to tell you a good story."

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Bring the adolescents back into a circle. Ask the adolescents to share the interview questions they wrote.

Possible discussion points:

- ▶ An interview with someone who tells you a story may be different from other kinds of interviews. You may not need to ask many questions – just give them space and time to talk.
- ▶ You may find it helpful to ask follow-up questions during or after an interview. This may help people to share more details and information so that their story is easier to understand.
- ▶ Be sure to listen actively during the story. Show the storyteller that you are interested so that they feel encouraged.



Gathering stories

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Working in the same pairs, ask the adolescents to write a plan for how they will interview an adult in the community. This should include how they will invite the adult for an interview, and what questions they will ask.

Discuss tips for writing their plans:

- ▶ Invite the adult to tell their story. Explain why you are asking them to tell a story, and show your interest and respect. Make sure the adult knows how you will use their story and that they give their permission for you to do so.
- ▶ Choose a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for you and the adult. Make sure you have plenty of time.
- ▶ Help the adult to think of a story in advance. Give a suggestion if you have a story in mind, and/or brainstorm together about ideas for a story.

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- ▶ Don't push the adult to remember or tell stories about difficult experiences if they don't want to. If you think the adult wants to tell a difficult story, make sure you are comfortable hearing it.

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Give adolescents the time they need to complete their interview questions and plans. Check in with all the pairs to make sure they have a plan, and be ready to give additional support if they need it to carry out their interviews.

Motivate participants by telling them that they will hold successful interviews and gather good stories!

Do & Don't

- ✓ Review adolescents' interview questions and plans together, to make sure they are prepared and that their plans are realistic.
- ✓ Offer to join and watch adolescents' interviews if they want you to.
- ✓ Check whether adults and adolescents are exploring personal, sensitive or difficult memories together. Make sure that they don't feel pushed to talk or hear about difficult topics. Step in and offer alternative topics if necessary.
- ✓ Make sure that the adolescents have time to arrange and conduct interviews.

- ✓ Talk with the adults who have agreed to share their stories. Make sure that they understand the purpose of the activity, and that they give their permission for adolescents to use and share their stories afterwards.
- ✗ Recommend that adolescents ask adults to share a difficult memory or any story that is very personal or private - If adults and adolescents have lived through crises, adolescents should not ask them to talk about that experience.



Adaptation

Low literacy: Instead of writing their questions, adolescents can memorize them or use drawings as reminders. They can also use drawings to make notes during the interview itself.

Simplify: For younger adolescents, planning and carrying out interviews outside of the session may be too complex. Work with the adolescents to identify adults who may be good storytellers. Invite those adults to a circle session, and ask them to tell their stories to the entire group.

Environment

Indoor or Outdoor space.

Supplies

- ▶ At least one large piece of chart paper for every group of adolescents (or something else for them to write or draw on).
- ▶ At least one pen, pencil or marker for each adolescent. If adolescents are preparing to interview adolescents or adults outside their circle, help them to prepare by practicing their active listening skills.

Improvise

Adolescents can focus their story gathering exercises on specific kinds of stories, such as:

- ▶ Traditional stories, lessons, or fables from their local cultures.
- ▶ Memories from childhood (if not too personal, difficult or sensitive).

Adolescents can gather and share their own stories, based on their recent experiences or memories. For example, they can focus on stories that they would like to tell to even younger children.

Adolescents can also gather and share stories from younger children, based on their experiences, memories and imaginations.

Continue

After adolescents have gathered stories they can use them to:

- ▶ Create cartoon strips or picture books.
- ▶ Create and perform oral stories or poems.
- ▶ Create plays or dramas.
- ▶ Create a fable, by changing the main characters into animals or imaginary people, or changing the setting.