



Engaging the Impasse on Immigration

Instructions and script for workshop facilitator

Preparation

- Read through these instructions to get an idea of the flow of the workshop. These instructions assume you have about an hour for the workshop.
- Print copies of the biographies of the 20 characters/roles. A link to the pdf file with these instructions and the biographies is here: <http://www.networklobby.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/05/EngagingImpasseBios.pdf>
This document is designed to be printed/copied in landscape mode, 2-sided, so that each page can be cut in half and will have a biography on one side and “The Five Whys” on the other side.
- There are 20 different biographies. If your group is larger than 20, make enough copies for the size of your group.
- Gather a supply of pens/pencils for the participants, and stick-on nametags for the participants to use to identify their role.
- Decide how to distribute the biographies to the participants to make sure that there is a mix of characters in each small discussion group. For example, if people will be sitting in rows, you may want to place a stack of biographies under the chair at the end of each row.

Beginning the workshop

Introduction (points to make)

- There are many different perspectives on immigration in our country.
- People can get into heated arguments. Our effort as people of faith is to reach out beyond the anger and find a way forward.
- In the first part of this workshop we are going to have a chance to experience some points of view that may or may not reflect our own perspectives. We are going to engage in some conversations that are likely not to actually occur, but can help us open our hearts and minds to others we don't usually think about.

Make sure everyone has a pen/ pencil and a nametag. Distribute the biographies. Example:

At the end of each row under the chair [or in the middle of each table] is a set of papers. Please pick them up, take one and pass the rest to the person next to you. On one side is a real person's story (though the name has been changed) and on the other side is a set of questions. Look at the side with the person's story.

Script for setting up the small group conversations:

For the next 20 minutes, you are going to be the person whose story you have.

Step 1. You now have **three minutes** to read the story and to sink into that person's skin. After you read the story, try to imagine what that person looks like, where do you live? What do you care about? Write the person's name on a nametag and wear it. *[Pause for 3 minutes]*

Step 2. Now turn your paper over. At the top write your new identity. You'll be answering the questions from the point of view of that identity. The goal of the exercise is to get at the underlying *feelings* that you have as this new persona, and get at the deeper source of those feelings. There are no right or wrong answers, just use your imagination. Be sure to try to stay in your role as you think about the questions. You will have **six minutes** for this section so just do the best you can to write brief answers to the questions. *[Pause for 6 minutes]*

Step 3. Now we are going to engage in dialogue with the people around you. We ask you to be in groups of 3 (in your row or at your table). There are 20 different personas in the room and we want to make sure that you get to talk with two people who are different. Just do the best you can to stay in your role (you only know as much as your role allows). In the next **10 minutes**, first introduce yourself to the other two members of the group and say what you think about immigration in the United States. Be sure to give each other time to do this. Once you finish these introductions, stay in your role and continue to discuss the similarities and differences in your viewpoints. *[Pause for 10 minutes]*

Step 4. Now we are going to take **two minutes** of silence for you to come out of your role and return to being yourself. Reflect on what you heard and what you said during the discussion and any insights that you might have developed from being in this different role. How does this role differ from what you think, who you are, what you care about? *[Pause four 2 minutes]*

Step 5. Now you have a few minutes to reflect in your same group of 3 about what you might have learned or discovered so far in this brief process. *[Pause for 5 minutes]*

Step 6. *Introduce all the roles in the large group. Ask if anyone would like to share their reflections or insights with the whole group. [Allow about 10 minutes for this]*

Closing comments

This is just a brief beginning of reflection on the experience of immigration from different perspectives. We encourage you to continue to talk to others about their experience and who they were in this exercise. It might also be interesting for you to talk with someone who had the same persona as you did and see if you saw it the same way or if you learned different things. To that end, we invite you to continue to wear the name tag with the name attached to your story so that you can identify each other.

In our own lives, we need to talk to all of these people and many more. It is sometimes difficult to communicate without being argumentative, and in a way that can move us to greater understanding. We encourage you to stay engaged with other people and with organizations that can help you reach all across the spectrum of interests and communicate with words that can engage, and eventually overcome, the impasse on immigration.