

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: PRO AND CON

Before your meeting clip and make **copies of accounts of heinous crimes or trials** reported in local or national newspapers. Begin by asking:

- What is capital punishment? (*penalty of death for a crime*)

Then distribute the copies of news articles and ask group members to read them silently. When they have finished reading, invite members to choose a side in the issue:

- In general, without doing any additional discussing, which side of this issue do you tend to support? Are you, in general, for or against capital punishment?

Ask those who support capital punishment to gather on one side of the room and those who oppose capital punishment to gather on the opposite side of the room. Stage a debate, allowing representatives from each side to give 30-second statements in support of their positions. Alternate statements from side to side. After about 10 minutes, ask groups to physically switch sides of the room. Explain:

- You now are on the *other* side of the debate, representing the side you just opposed. No matter what you actually believe, it's your job to support the opposite opinion.

After another 10 minutes, stop and discuss:

- What new ideas about capital punishment have you heard in this debate?
- How have your beliefs about capital punishment changed through this activity?

Violence