

# VALUE TRADING GAME

Print up play money

might have 100 stars, 100 light bulbs, 100 keys, etc.

The total number of bills you print should be about 15 times the number of kids participating.

To begin the game distribute the money to your group any way you want. One way is to divide it up, put it into envelopes, and pass out the envelopes. Another good way is to just throw the whole works out and let the kids catch it or pick it up off the floor. It is not important that it be distributed evenly.

The first thing the kids must do is to decide which bills are of value and which are not. This is left completely up to them (for the time being). They

must attach value to the symbols on a scale of "minus 100" to "plus 100" points. In other words, some of the symbols are "good" (1 to 100) and some are "bad" (-1 to -100). The best bill (in their opinion) might be worth 100 while the worst would be -100. Anyway, the kids are given one minute to decide (individually) what each bill is worth.

The second step is to try to accumulate as much value as possible within the time limit. The kids can trade or give away bills to do so. They are encouraged to try to convince each other why a trade would be beneficial. They need a strategy to obtain as many valuable bills as possible and get rid of bad bills that would be minus points. The kids are free to circulate around the room gaining value any way they can, except by mugging and stealing. (Also, no one can throw away bad bills.)

They may also trade with the bank, which is you, the leader. You will give them one of anything for five of anything else. In other words, if a kid is trying to collect stars, he might first get five of some other symbol and trade them to you for a star.

At the end of the time limit (usually around 10 minutes), all the action stops. All the trading ends and you then announce the correct value for each bill and tell the kids to add up their score, depending on what money they have in their possession.

For example:

Star = 25 points

Flag = Minus 50 points

Flower = Zero

Key = 50 points

Cup = 100 points

Heart = 75 points

The values which you announce are final, regardless of what each person thought the values would or should be. (The values you announce are left up to you, incidentally.) The kids add up their scores and the highest score wins a prize.

You will notice that you, the leader, are in complete control of the game. You arbitrarily choose when the game is over and the value of each of the symbols on the play money. However, because the kids don't really know what you are going to do, they are in a sense playing your game by their rules. They have to.

The discussion:

- Ask several kids for their interpretations of the symbols and why they placed values on them as they did.

- Do you think the final standard was fair?

- What kind of strategy did you use to come out ahead?

- Did you play by the values you really believed to be right, or by the values you thought should be or probably would be right?

The wrap-up:

The wrap-up is the most important part of this simulation, as you attempt to tie together the loose ends. Although the form of the presentation is left somewhat up to you, the following points are offered as a guide:

- As in the game, people in real life place values on many different things. Things that are truly valuable are often considered unimportant and vice versa. Archbishop William Temple has said that prevailing values of modern society can be likened to a jewelry store that has been broken into by vandals. Instead of stealing anything, the vandals simply switched around the price tags so that things that were of value were regarded as cheap and things that were really worthless were put on premium. (Give some examples of this.)
- In the game you just played, you played by your own rules. You had no choice. But there was a standard. You either won or lost depending on whether or not you were in agreement with that standard. In life, people usually play by their own rules, too. And like in the game, there is a standard. God has given us a guidebook for living in his Word, the Bible. The game was a dictatorship, and you had no control over the outcome, but God has given us complete control over our own lives. It is in this sense that God created us in his image. He has shown us the "standard," but given us a choice. We can play by God's rules or by our own.
- A common tendency among Christians is not being able to determine when a standard is God's and when it is ours. In other words, we often (through tradition, etc.) make our standards God's standards. (Such as the issue of whether or not a Christian should go to a dance.) Have your group make a list of commonly accepted Christian "standards" and other traditional Christian beliefs and have them categorize these as a "God standard" (detailed instruction provided in the Bible) or a "man standard" (no direct reference to it in the Bible). The question is not whether or not the standard is "right" or "wrong," but "what is its origin?"
- God not only gave us a guide for living in his Word, but he also sent an example in his son, Jesus Christ. We can invite Christ into our lives and then begin to live with his direction. Christ can begin to control your life if you let him and then his values begin to be your values. Discuss the life of Christ; where he placed value, what his priorities were, etc.



