

Chapter 4. People as Nomadic Foragers: The Communal Wave

Chapter 4. B. Activities

You probably have noticed that there are numerous suggestions for activities in the study questions. In addition, I have listed a number of activities below that I believe will help explain the materials in more depth and engage students in more “hands on” learning.

1. Radio Interview Activity

- a. Two people, one the interviewer and one the interviewee.
- b. Have the interviewer compile a list of eight to 10 questions that s/he thinks will be of interest to his/her radio audience (questions that will elicit more than a one word answer).
- c. The interviewing student may share the list of questions before the interview with the person being interviewed.
- d. The interviewer asks the questions.
- e. Reverse roles so that both students are the interviewer and interviewee.
- f. A small audience may watch the interview.

2. Group Consensus Activity: A Disruptive Group Member

- a. Organize about 5 to 6 students to form a group to role play a group of elders. One student may play the leader or headperson.
- b. Instructions: Imagine that about 5 to 6 of you are the group’s elders. You are having a discussion about a disruptive group member that is causing a great deal of tension and conflict in the group. S/he is taking more than his/her share of the food, picks fights and arguments with others, and is a freeloader when it comes time to hunt or gather.
- c. What can you, the group of elders, do to change his/her behavior? Discuss the options that you can use. What is your consensus decision on what to do?
- d. Options to discuss: Let the member continue to be a freeloader. Use of ostracism, ridicule, banishment, etc.
- e. When a consensus decision has been reached have one student play the disruptive member.
- f. Have the group (this is where the leader can play an important role) talk with the recalcitrant group member about what the elder’s group has decided. What behaviors need to be changed? What are the consequences if behaviors are not changed?

3. Group Consensus Activity: Time to Move

- a. Select about 5 or 6 students to form a group to role play a group elders.
- b. Scenario: It is time to move your group to another location. The elders’ group must come to a decision about the move. What factors would your group consider in deciding when to move? (no writing all verbal)
- c. Possible scenarios to consider: have resources been depleted at the existing location. What would be the conditions in the next location? Is it a good time for all the group members to move? Is anyone having a baby? Is someone ill?

4. Picture Deconstruction

- a. Form a group of 3 to 4 students.
- b. Individually collect a number of pictures on the internet or other sources portraying diverse foraging or hunting/gathering people. Examine the pictures closely.
- c. Describe their way of life as best as possible by decoding or deconstructing these pictures.
- d. What do the pictures tell you about how the photographer or magazine s/he represents sees the foraging people and their way of life (idyllic, noble, primitive, backward, etc.)?

5. Edible Plants in Area

- What are the edible plants in your area? Conduct research about edible wild plants, berries, and roots that could be eaten (although don't eat them).
- Invite a local expert to come share knowledge about food gathering and what is edible and what is not.
- How is foraging for food different than the way we eat today? Which is healthier?

6. Stereotypes

- Form a small group to deconstruct stereotypes of hunting and gathering people.
- What does our view/stereotypes about hunting and gathering people say about our values and worldview?

6. Campfire Story

- Imagine you are a member of a hunting and gathering group.
- Write a story about your experiences that you can share while sitting around a "campfire." One suggestion is to tell a story about the origins of your group. (You can be creative here!)

7. Role Playing: Foragers

- Assign different roles to students as members of a hunting gathering group. Have them research their particular role and share with others.
- Students can create a play with these characters. For example, what does each character do in the hunt? What does each character do during a festival?
- Suggested roles: (they can come up with these perhaps)

skilled hunter or gatherer

unskilled hunter or gatherer

older hunter or gather but has great knowledge

young boy or girl just beginning to hunt or gather

boy or girl about 6

infant

boy or girl of marriageable age

boy or girl undergoing coming of age rituals

elder man or woman

group troublemaker

shaman

headman/woman

8. Trade

- Use the trading/exchanging method described in the book.
- Practice an exchange with someone using this method.
- What were the problems associated with the trade?
- What are the benefits?

9. Contemporary Foraging Societies

- Conduct additional research about remaining foraging or hunting and gathering people in our world today.
- Where are they located?
- Why are they located in these areas?
- What is happening to them today?

10. The !Kung

- Imagine you are visiting a foraging band such as the !Kung, list 10 questions that you would like to ask them.
- Imagine you are taking a group of !Kung people to your house for a tour, how would you explain your house to them? Your way of life?

11. Foragers and Modern Society

- a. Why would it be difficult today for us to live as foragers?
- b. Why would it be difficult for foragers to live in modern society?
- c. What do you think they would find appealing about our lives? Unappealing?

12. Imagine you are a foraging person and you are arranging the marriage of your son or daughter, even though they may be just infants. What qualities would you look for in a prospective marriage partner? (wife or husband)