

Chapter 3. Our Collective Human Story: Human Commonalities

Chapter 3. 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. 10 Dimension Human Commonalities Model

- a. Have students construct their own 10 Dimension Human Commonalities Model. (they may have more or less than 10 dimensions)
- b. Suggest to your students to conduct their own research to find other sources to document their entries.

2. Human Commonalities and the Five Currents Chart

- a. Have students construct their own Human Commonalities and the Five Currents chart.
- b. Suggest to the students to conduct their own research to find other sources to document their entries.

3. Diverse World Geography Model

- a. Instruct students to devise different configurations to describe the diverse geography of the world (see hot/cold, wet/dry, high/low model).
- b. Suggestions: altitude, temperature, rainfall, population centers, soil type, areas manipulated by human action, and others.
- c. Once the model has been constructed, place various regions of the world into the model.

4. “Destructive and creative energies are neutral to nature, with no troublesome duality; humans may prescribe a moral judgment, such as good or evil, to these natural actions and events.” (p. 87)

- a. This quote says that humans place a moral judgment on nature’s acts: either good or bad. Conduct a survey in which this judgment takes place.
- b. For example, watch a newscast about a weather event and assess whether a moral judgment takes place. For example, a deadly storm.

5. A Family Tree

- a. Have students devise a chart or tree (as large and intricate as possible) of their kinship relations.
- b. Suggest to your students to interview members of their kinship group to find out as much as possible.
- c. If a student is not a member of a family, have s/he work with a friend or the family s/he is living with at the time.

6. Major Institutions Chart

- a. Have students devise a chart of the major institutions in their life.
- b. Have them answer questions such as: Why did they form? What social function do they provide? (for example schools, courts, media, banks, charitable organizations, etc.)

7. The Family

- a. Instruct students to research the state of the modern family in their particular country or region.
- b. Why have families been such a long-lasting institution in our human history?
- c. What functions does the family provide?
- d. Has the family been relegated to the dust-bin of history? Explain.
- e. This might be a good project to share with students in diverse areas of the world.

8. Mating Preference

- a. Research the mating preferences among males and females.
- b. What qualities are important in the mate selection process? Why?
- c. What are the mating preferences in our society today?
- d. Why are these important?
- e. For example, women with wide hips and ample body fat have traditionally been traits attractive to men. Has this changed in our society today? Why?
- f. This would be a fun project to have groups of the same sex discuss their research then interact with a group of the opposite sex.
- g. If appropriate for your school and community, it would be interesting to include the perspectives of the LGBT population.

9. Marriage Patterns

- a. Research the different marriage patterns through human history.
- b. Find out why your particular nation or society has chosen the marriage rules that guide your society.
- c. Are these marriage rules being challenged today?
- d. Debate or dialogue about the marriage rules of society and if they should be changed.
- e. Is marriage as an institution being de-emphasized today? Why?
- f. Do you think this is good or bad for society in general?
- g. This topic should prompt an interesting discussion.

10. A Definition of Culture

- a. Compile different definitions of the term culture.
- b. Discuss the different definitions and decide which one is appropriate in different situations.
- c. What human traits do we inherit from our biological roots?
- d. What human traits are a result of culture?
- e. Is culture a product of biology? Explain.

11. Peaceful and Warlike Behaviors

An examination of peaceful and warlike behaviors in a society is an interesting topic that should provoke a lively dialogue.

- a. In what ways does your society promote peaceful behavior?
- b. In what ways does your society promote warlike behavior?
- c. What behaviors are most promoted? Why?
- d. Research and observe different ways in which your society promotes aggressive/warlike behaviors. (war on poverty (US), signs, symbols, advertisement, etc)
- e. How can these warlike behaviors be changed to promote peaceful behaviors? Be sure to look at language, symbols, etc.
- f. What are the reasons for war? Research other reasons for the outbreak of war.
- g. How can your society promote peace more than war? (this could be a whole project unto itself)

12. Aesthetic Expression

- a. Discuss with students what their favorite form of aesthetic expression is.
- b. Suggest that students create a collage of their favorite form of esthetic expression. Exhibit their artistic expressions where appropriate.

13. A Mural Project

- a. Have students create a large mural that depicts our human commonalities.
- b. This project could be as big or small as you feel appropriate.

