

Town Conflict

The following role-play scenario has four different sides or viewpoints. Students are assigned to one of these viewpoints and act it out in context with the other three in a small group setting.

Some of the roles embody leadership qualities, other roles thwart the leader. Following the role play, the large group will discuss the various ways in which participants were/were not leaders.

First, have participants number off 1 to 4. Give them each a copy of the role-play instructions on the following pages for their number ONLY (they should not read the instructions for the other numbers.) Then have all 1's move to one area of the room, 2's to another area and so on. Facilitator goes to each group to explain to them about their specific character. The groups of same numbers spend the next 5–10 minutes practicing their character with each other. After 5–10 minutes, the class moves back into their original 1–2–3–4 group to enact the role play for the large group.

Note: Each number group is unaware of the instructions given to the other groups. In other words, 1's do not know what the 2's are representing, 2's do not know what the 3's are representing and so on.

Number off participants

- 1's—the mayor of the town
- 2's—the town citizen
- 3's—the land developer
- 4's—the city attorney

Role-play scenario: A small town is faced with a difficult decision: to allow a high-rise apartment to be built which will close a strip mall and take land away from a park. The land developer and construction company employ several townspeople and are depending on this contract to keep everyone working. If the high-rise is built, the small strip mall will be demolished and the small businesses will have to close. The park is an ideal location for kids to enjoy themselves and there is a group of citizens who wish to build a skate park for the children. What will be the outcome of this situation?

Copy and distribute the next section so that each person receives a paper with only one of the number role's instructions according to the role they are playing. **DO NOT ALLOW EACH PLAYER TO SEE THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE OTHER PLAYERS.** They can all know the identity of the four characters, but the instructions are secret!

1: You are the mayor. You are seeking re-election and don't want anything to risk losing the election. You avoid controversy in any way possible; you do not want to do anything to

anger any group. You do not show leadership qualities. You are indecisive and try to pass everything over to the city attorney.

2: You are a citizen of the town. There is a park next to your neighborhood that is slated for a high-rise development for senior citizens, a convenience store, and a coffee shop. You do not want anything built there because you want the park to be a city park developed with a skate park for the children of the community. You are leading a group of citizens against this development. You are to show at least three characteristics of being a leader such as confidence, decisiveness, good attitude, respect for others, etc.

3: You are a land developer. You have deadlines to meet and 20 people on your payroll. You do not have time for delays. As far as you're concerned, the mayor gave you the okay and supports you, and now he is backing down. You are to show at least three characteristics of being a leader such as confidence, decisiveness, good attitude, respect for others, etc.

4: You are the city attorney. There is a legal problem because the mayor did not clear the land through all the proper channels, and as far as you're concerned, the land deal is not approved. Your job is to make certain the law is followed. Do not display leadership qualities. Keep repeating that the mayor has to resolve this, it's his problem, not yours.