



ACTIVITY: 'UTOPIA'

TIME: 30+ minutes

SIZE: Groups of five to eight

SPACE: For small groups to work

RESOURCES: Decisions to be Made Sheet (p.90 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is to work together and make decisions that benefit the group.

The result should be an understanding that belonging to a group comes with obligations and responsibilities.

1. Break the class into groups of five to eight.
2. Set the scene: a terrible virus has swept across the globe, killing most of the population. In the mayhem, all of your old society's technology was destroyed. Your team has rounded up a group of fellow survivors – around 100 – and has set up a makeshift village near fertile farmland equipped with basic, unpowered equipment (e.g. hoes, spades, buckets) that will allow you to survive. Each of you at the table has been elected to the survivors' leadership team in charge of establishing a new society.
3. Distribute to each group a copy of the Decisions to be Made Sheet. Completing this sheet is the group's objective. It asks the group to decide what roles they will play as leaders, what fundamental laws they will lay down to govern the survivors, what their short-, medium- and long-term goals are, and what lessons (good and bad) they have learned from living in the old (our present) society.
4. Allow a generous amount of time for this activity and then call the class together for discussion.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What decisions did groups arrive at? Which discussions were common to every group, and which were unusual? Why?
- How did each group arrive at decisions? What methods were used?
- How did each group make the most of the skills and strengths its individual members brought to the table?
- How important are rules to a functioning group, whether it's a society, a family or a circle of friends?
- How constructive is it to have different personalities (with different outlooks and skill sets) in a decision-making group?
- What new things did individuals learn through the activity, either about themselves or about their group mates?
- What skills from this activity can be applied in everyday life? Why?

Taking it further: Read and discuss Isobelle Carmody's science fiction series, the Obernewtyn Series.