



Vocation: “So, What Do You Do?”

Overview:

This activity provides participants with a delightful story of how one man wrestled with an appropriate answer to the question, “So, what do you do?” The societal habit of defining who we are by what we do is challenged. As a result, through this exercise participants will begin to see the difference between “making a living and making a life” and to understand that a true vocational calling is an extension of who one is.

Category:

Personal Development, Spiritual Growth

Level:

This is an appropriate activity to do with students before they declare their major as well as with students who are preparing to enter into the work force.

Recommended Bonner Sequence:

This exercise is especially appropriate for use in the spring of the freshman year or the fall of the sophomore year as students are wrestling with decisions about majors. In this context, it is a good follow-up to “The Two Choices.” This exercise also works nicely as a component of a junior or senior retreat when there is intentional discussion about life after college. In this context, the “Tuesdays with Morrie” activity is a nice continuation of the conversation about life choices.

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VALUES: spiritual reflection

Type:

This is a structured activity suitable for a workshop within a retreat or training session, or for use during regular meetings.

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- Heighten participant’s awareness of the difference between making a living and making a life.
- Encourage participants to develop an identity beyond their major or their occupation.
- Foster vocational exploration through the process of connecting “what they do” with “who they are”.

Materials:

- Copies of the Robert Fulghum story on pages 63-70 in “It was on Fire When I Lay Down on It.”
- 3 x 5 Index cards (preferably unlined)
- 4 x 6 or 5 x 7 Index cards (preferably unlined)
- Markers
- Pens and/or pencils
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue

How to Prepare:

In preparation for this activity, facilitators should read through the article to become familiar with the purpose of the story and its place in the larger activity. In addition, facilitators should review the outline for activity implementation.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

This activity has five basic components incorporating various learning styles. Facilitators should use the suggested times as a guide, feeling free to allow more or less time based on the size and needs of the group.

The outline has the following parts:

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|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Introduction | suggested time 1 minute or less |
| 2) Make Business Cards | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 3) Story Time | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 4) Make “I am” Cards | suggested time 20 minutes |
| 5) Sharing and Discussion | suggested time 20 minutes |

Part 1) Introduction

Suggested time: 1 minute or less

Say:

It has oft been said that “making a living” and “making a life” are not synonymous concepts. Through this activity, we will have an opportunity to explore what those differences might mean in our respective lives.

Part 2) Business Cards

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Distribute 3 x 5 Index cards to each participant and make sure that there are markers on each table, at least one per person.

Say:

As you go through college and life after college, you will discover that two of the most frequently asked questions are, “So, what’s your major?” and “So, what do you do?” Often, when asked what people do for a living, a business card is extended as a means of confirmation of individual purpose. In the next 10 minutes you will be tasked to design your business card; a card that will provide an answer to the “So, what do you do?” question.

Say:

Please take the next 2 minutes to finish your card. We will share your work later in the activity.

Part 3) Story Time

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Say,

Many years ago, Robert Fulghum wrote a story about a man taking a trip. While he was on an airplane, a fellow passenger asked him, “So, what do you do?” Let’s listen to his story to see how he chose to respond to that BIG question.

Read story

Part 4) “I Am” Card Construction

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Distribute the 4 x 6 or 5 x 7 cards.

Say:

In the first portion of this activity, you crafted a business card that answered the “So, what do you do?” question. As articulated by Robert Fulghum, there is more to our lives than what we do. Our majors and careers should not define who we are. However, we are not often given an opportunity to present others with an “I Am” card; a card that answers the question, “So, who are you?”

Please take the next 20 minutes to craft your “I Am” card. Feel free to use the resources around the room (magazines, scissors, glue, markers) as you are designing your card.

Say:

Please take the next 2 minutes to finish your card.

Part 5) Sharing and Discussion

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Say:

Now that everyone has finished your “Business” card and “I Am” card, let’s take a few minutes to share your work. Would anyone like to volunteer to share either or both of your cards with the group?

If time permits and you have willing participants, encourage each person to share information from at least one of their cards.

Ask the following processing questions:

Was it easier to make your Business card or your I Am card? Why do you think one was easier or more difficult than the other?

What was the difference between your cards? Why might that be?

You can see that the Business card is smaller in size than the I Am card. Why do you think that is an important part of this exercise?

What did you learn about yourself as a result of this activity?

Handouts:

There are no handouts for this activity.