

## Overview:

This lesson plan uses Legos to enable participants to reflect on their personal advantages and disadvantages, as well as view the concept of privilege through a lens that may have not been presented to them before.

*Note:* This activity is often introduced with a focus on privilege, e.g., "nationality privilege, race privilege, gender privilege," etc. This version is designed to lead participants to an understanding of privilege as unearned advantage without initial use of the term. Delaying the use of the term may allow participants whose instinct is to shut down, to experience immediate deep feelings of guilt, and/or to focus on their family's use of "privilege" as something earned to engage more fully with the experience of collecting Legos. In discussion, other feelings like gratitude or a desire to discuss how to make daily life easier for everyone may emerge. When "privilege" is introduced in a question, there is space to discuss why the term may elicit strong feelings in seemingly opposite ways for different participants—even if avoiding the term initially is skirting the real issue and accommodating too much the feelings of people who already have much privilege. There are many good reasons for introducing the activity as one focusing on privilege, and the facilitator will want to think through audience and goals in deciding when the term is introduced.

## Background:

The materials for this activity were created by Aletha Stahl, CILMAR, and Renee Thomas, Black Cultural Center, Purdue University. The original source for this activity is unknown. However, the authors have seen this activity reproduced in several places, using Legos or beads, and they have found several attributions to Gerakina Arlene Sgoutas and colleagues, Metropolitan State College, Denver, CO.

## Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Give examples of where they face advantages and disadvantages in daily life.
2. Explain privilege as unearned advantages.

## Time:

30 minutes

## Group Size:

Entire group

## Materials:

Sheets with questions on them (in [Downloads](#)) and enough Lego bricks in 7 different colors for participants to take 7 Legos of each color per person.

*Note:* The Legos in this activity can be replaced with beads or other small objects, and the participants could leave with what they collect. The advantage of Legos is that they are unlikely to roll, and participants can build with them while waiting for others to finish the collection process.

## **Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:**

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

## **AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:**

### Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

### Empathy

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.

## **Other Skills:**

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## **Activity Instructions for Facilitators:**

1. Distribute 7 piles of Lego bricks around the room. Each pile should be just one color, e.g., all yellow bricks on one table, all red ones on another, etc. Be aware of access to the piles for people with mobility challenges and according to the number of participants.
2. Place a different question list, e.g., "Nationality" or "Sexuality," by each pile. If you have more than 10 participants, it's helpful to have multiple copies of the same list. You may want to offer the lists in digital form for any blind participants.
3. Read and/or project the instructions below.
4. The questions for debriefing are limited. Depending on what participants bring up, the facilitator needs to be prepared to discuss how to move beyond guilt or defensiveness for privilege, why not introducing the activity as one focusing on privilege could be considered problematic, and much more.

## **Activity Instructions for Participants:**

### How this Activity Works

1. There are 7 different colored piles of Legos around the room. Circulate until you have visited each color. You can start anywhere.
2. Beside each color are several copies of a list of statements. For each statement that applies to you, take a Lego. This means that you might get 7 Legos of one color and none of another, or any number in between.
3. The size and shape of the Lego pieces don't matter. The focus is on collecting the Legos, not on the Legos themselves or what you can do with them.

4. When you've visited all 7 piles, return to your seat. You are welcome to build with your Legos if you'd like.
5. This activity is done in silence, both the collecting of Legos and any building.

### Debrief Questions

1. How did you feel doing this activity?
2. What surprised you?
3. What did you learn about yourself?
4. How did it feel to focus on what makes daily life easy rather than hard?
5. What other categories could be added to this activity?
6. How would it have felt if the activity were called "Privilege" and each page titled "nationality privilege," "gender privilege," etc.? Why?
7. How can you apply what you learned through this activity to your daily life?
8. (Optional) How does this activity relate or not relate to empathy?

### **Related Tools:**

#### *Similar tools:*

- [Identity Beads](#)
- [Line Exercise, The](#)
- [Privilege for Sale](#)
- [Privilege Walk](#)
- [Up-Down-Up](#)