

# TRADING PLACES

**Aim:** to experience cultural differences and to think about how these affect Christians working overseas.

**Audience:** teenagers and adults. Any number of people, minimum 15.

**Duration:** 30 minutes.

**Description:** a market place simulation where people from two different cultures trade with each other.

**Equipment:** scissors, card, marker pen, photocopied sheets (master included).



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## Leader's Instructions:

1. Before the meeting prepare a quantity of currency, merchandise and Culture Cards for the participants to use. The Preparation Notes provided give some ideas on how to do this.
2. Divide the audience into two groups so that one group consists of two thirds of the participants. Then ask the larger group to leave the room.
3. The group remaining will become the market sellers. Give each participant some merchandise, some currency and a Sellers Culture Card. Practise the cultural rules together and encourage the participants to throw themselves into their roles when the buyers return. The sellers then choose an area of the floor and lay out their merchandise.
4. The larger group meanwhile should be given their Buyers Culture Cards in another room along with some currency to spend. It is helpful to have another leader to talk through these cultural rules with the buyers.
5. Once the sellers have set up their stalls, ask the buyers to come back into the room and open the market for trading.
6. After about 10 minutes of buying and selling, use the Talk Back section below to debrief the simulation.

## Talk Back:

1. Focus on what *happened* during the simulation:
  - Did anyone manage to buy or sell anything?
  - Can the sellers name the buyers' rules and vice-versa?
2. Focus on how the participants *felt*:
  - What sorts of feelings did the simulation bring out?
  - Which cultural rules made the participants feel most uncomfortable and why?
3. Focus on what can be *learned* from this simulation:
  - What aspects of British culture might a foreigner find strange?
  - How does the fact that there are cultural differences affect a Christian who goes overseas to work?

## Comments to use in discussion:

If everyone had kept rigidly to their cultural rules, no one would have bought or sold anything. The extent to which trading took place is an indication of the amount that the participants were prepared to adjust cross-culturally.

The cultural rules used in this simulation are genuine ones although they may not all appear amongst one people group.

The feelings that are brought out in this simulation are close to those that anyone would experience in an unfamiliar culture. Communicating cross-culturally is disorientating, stressful and deeply rewarding when you manage to get it right!

## NOTES:

In Britain we use handkerchiefs, queue at bus stops and talk about the weather. These are just some things which might seem strange to people from other cultures.

Cultures are different but no one culture is 'right' or 'wrong'.

Christians planning to work overseas need training to learn how to adapt cross-culturally. They also need specific orientation to the culture of the people group they will be living with so that they can behave and communicate in a culturally appropriate way.

Jesus identified with the Jews of first century Palestine, demonstrating God's love to them in market places, in fishing boats and in their homes. In following him, Christians today need to be prepared to adopt the culture of those around them.

## Preparation Notes:

### 1. Culture Cards

Photocopy and cut out a card for each participant. One third of the participants will need Seller Cards and the other two thirds will need Buyer Cards. Alternatively, use one card only and talk through it with the relevant group.

### 2. Currency

Cut out currency from scrap paper and mark it in units of 1, 5, 10, 50. Make enough so that each participant has some money to spend or give as change.

### 3. Merchandise

Each market seller will need about 10 items to sell. The easiest way to do this is to cut sheets of paper or card into squares and label them with a marker pen.



Some suggestions for six different market stalls are listed below:

<b>FRUIT</b> apples oranges bananas pears grapes peaches strawberries grapefruit kiwi fruit mangoes	<b>FISH</b> cod haddock lobster plaice crab shrimps tuna salmon kippers prawns	<b>CLOTHES</b> jeans dress skirt socks T shirt pyjamas jacket blouse trousers tie
<b>VEGETABLES</b> potatoes carrots onions parsnips peas cabbage cauliflower tomatoes lettuce cucumber	<b>MEAT</b> bacon sausages chicken ham pork chops minced beef lamb turkey steak liver	<b>HARDWARE</b> screwdriver screws paint scissors nails hammer rope glue string broom

## SELLERS CULTURE CARD

1. You always shake hands before beginning a conversation and are not embarrassed about physical contact.
2. You always stand very close to the person you're talking to and look them straight in the eye.
3. You chat with your customers about their family and welfare before getting down to business.
4. You sell by bargaining with your customers.
5. You serve people whatever order you want to and don't expect people to queue.
6. You never serve anyone wearing red.
7. You never serve a member of the opposite sex.

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### NOTES:

- Do not let the Buyers see this card.
- Keep to these rules as closely as you can.

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## BUYERS CULTURE CARD

1. You don't look anyone in the eye.
2. You like to get down to business rather than casual conversation.
3. You prefer no personal contact except to shake hands when you have bought something
4. You expect to pay fixed prices and don't bargain.
5. You always queue up to be served.
6. You spit when you get bored!

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### NOTES:

- Do not let the Sellers see this card.
- Keep to these rules as closely as you can.

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