

The Trans-Siberian Railway

Length		30 minutes
Difficulty		Medium
Group size		Small to medium
Aim	To help the participants to become aware of their own prejudices, and reflect over whether it is possible to live without prejudices	
Description	A discussion game that helps people	
Materials	Handouts: A copy of the list of compartments below for each participant	
Source	Education for peace	

Tips for facilitators

This exercise works best in groups with a good degree of trust, where participants feel able to acknowledge their prejudices.

Outline and instructions

The participants should work in pairs or small groups. Give out the following instructions and give them 10 minutes to make their choices before asking them to present their conclusions, and follow up with a discussion based on the questions below.

Instructions for pair/group work

You'll be travelling on the trans-Siberian railway. You've bought a ticket in a sleeping compartment for 4. You've managed to get a peek at the list of travelers who have already bought tickets, and you want to choose your compartment according to who is already booked in it. In your pair/group discuss:

- What would be your first choice of compartment and why?
- What would be your last choice of compartment and why?

(Your answer should be independent of your gender. In this exercise you may change gender if necessary!)

Compartment 1: Two burka-covered ladies from Afghanistan

Compartment 2: An Imam from a London mosque with his son

Compartment 3: An Orthodox Russian bishop travelling with two young priests

Compartment 4: A conservative Jewish Rabbi (with top hat and long sideburns) and his wife

Compartment 5: Three militant Danish feminists

Compartment 6: A party of tourists from the Humanist Association

Compartment 7: A British Christian missionary and his wife with a small child

Compartment 8: Three members of the Hare Krishna in orange robes

Compartment 9: A Hindu couple from India with a teenage daughter

Group discussion questions

Use some or all of the following questions to stimulate group discussion.

Obviously, we choose our companions according to our own prejudices.

- In this case, how true do you think our prejudices are likely to be?
- Do we have good reasons for our prejudices? What do we usually base them on?
- Is there any particular group of people that you would avoid if you could?
- Is there any particular group of people that you always feel positive and open to?
- Do all cultures have prejudices?
- Are some cultures more prejudiced than others?
- Is it possible to live our lives without prejudices?
- Must prejudice always lead to discrimination?
- Is prejudice necessarily bad, if it doesn't lead to discrimination?
- Have you ever felt yourself discriminated because of people's prejudices?

Note: The fellow travelers can be changed according to the topic of the workshop. In a workshop on freedom of religion or belief or interreligious dialogue, for example, the travelers will all be of different religions and beliefs.