



GREED BOWL

Explanation: To provide an applicable example of greed while exploring the effects of communication and trust within a group

Materials: large bowl, monopoly (or real) money, blindfolds

Activities/Procedures:

- Discuss poverty and wealth in the world and within the United States. How fair is it that some have a lot while others have nothing? Is greed good or bad for society?
 - To drive the point home I use a variety of pictures of both poverty and wealth via a PowerPoint presentation.
- Choose 5 students at random or as volunteers and place them around a table/desk with a large bowl in the middle.
- Blindfold each student that is participating and allow them to find where the bowl is placed.
- Explain you will be placing five \$1 bills in the bowl (either Monopoly money or real money may be used – if using Monopoly money, make sure that the students understand that this money can later be exchanged for an incentive of your/their choice). Continue to explain that after a set amount of time the money in the bowl will be doubled. They do not know when this will be and they do not know when the activity will end. If there is money remaining at the end of the activity it will be retained by the teacher (do not make any suggestions or recommendations – just let the activity play out as it will).
- Round 1 – blindfolded with no communication
 - In this round the students will most likely take as much money as possible very quickly.
- Round 2 – blindfolded with communication
 - In this round someone will usually take the money even after a set deal has been made.
- Round 3 – no blindfold and communication permitted
 - In this round deals will usually be made and followed until the end

Processing: Discuss what went through the minds of the participants during each of the rounds. Why was money taken so quickly when there was no communication or even when deals had been made? The class will naturally lead into a discussion on trust and communication in order to get the best group return. Stress the fact that without greed/self-interest, most important behaviors would not take place in a society (here I talk through the path of a steak from the grocery store back to the farmer). Every link is self-interested and by this behavior taking place the society as a whole is helped when there is trust and communication present in the scenario.

Source: Adapted from *Stossel in the Classroom*