

Spotlight

Summary

This activity can last as long as you want, or it can be repeated at the start of multiple group gatherings. It creates a student-guided opportunity to learn new things about their peers, while practicing their question-asking skills and channeling their curiosity. One student is in the “spotlight” at a time, during which other students can ask them questions, at random. The student in the “spotlight” answers each question, but can always “veto” – or decline to answer – without explaining why.

Outcomes

- Participants will practice their question-asking skills
- Participants will practice being curious about others
- Participants will have the chance to share about themselves

Details

For Who?	Any age, any experience level with constructive dialogue
How Long?	2-3 minutes per spotlight. Educators might choose to do one spotlight per day until everyone in the group has experienced the spotlight, or group several in one day depending on the size of the group.
Supplies Needed	Timer

Activity Purpose

Trust-building activities are an important foundation for any type of group work. This activity can be used when a group is brand new, as a way to eventually build a sense of trust as they prepare for more difficult conversations to come.

Detailed Agenda

1

Instructions – Suggested Language

- To play “Spotlight,” one person at a time is in the spotlight, while everyone else takes turns asking that person questions. No need to raise hands – just ask your questions at random.
- The questions can be “what if”s, hypotheticals, silly and random, or more deep or personal if the group chooses.
- Remember – the person in the spotlight can always “veto” a question (or, choose not to respond and move onto the next question).

2

Instructions – Instructor Guide

- Start by asking for a volunteer to take the spotlight first.
- Instruct students to take 1 minute to think of questions they might want to ask others.
- Instruct the student in the spotlight to answer questions as quickly as they can so the group has the chance to ask as many questions as they can – and therefore learn as much as they can. The timebound nature of this activity should create some good urgency.
- One person can keep time, and might choose to give a 10-second warning when time is almost up.

3

Instructor Considerations

- It is important to remember that the person in the spotlight always has ultimate veto power. If they veto, they do not need to explain why they are choosing to not answer the question.
- Spotlights should last the exact same amount of time per person. Instructors of more hesitant or avoidant groups should choose 1-minute spotlights to start, and encourage participants to choose light-hearted questions (Level 1 examples below). Once everyone has been in the spotlight, instructors might consider introducing a more personal spotlight round (Level 2 examples below), and longer spotlights (2-3 minutes each).
- You can choose to have the person in the spotlight come to the front of the class, stand or sit down, or stay in their seat, depending on comfort level.

Spotlight Question Examples

Level 1

- What is your favorite weekend activity?
- What's a concert you'd love to go to?
- Favorite book/movie/TV show?
- What makes you laugh the most?
- What is your dream vacation?
- Favorite musician/song/album right now?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you want to be and why?
- If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be and why?

Spotlight Question Examples

Level 2

- If you were famous, what would you want to be famous for?
- What do you think is your best quality?
- What's something you want to be known for?
- What do you think people might get wrong about you?
- What is something you're proud of?
- Who is someone in your life that you look up to?
- What is something that really frustrates you?
- What's something you'd like to get better at?

Wrap-Up

Debrief Questions

- What lingering questions do you have? Feel free to ask that person after our session is over. Channeling curiosity is a big part of dialogue.
- What questions can you think of for other people in your lives? Have you asked them? Why or why not?