

DEVELOPING CONCEPTS

LESSON 5: CAREERS AND THE COMMON GOOD

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 💡 Develop a civic identity and values relating to future work.
- 💡 Learn about the connection between careers and the common good.

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson provides the opportunity for participants to explore the connection between their civic commitments and future careers. Participants will reflect on their identity and values and how these connect with career choices.

SUGGESTED PLAN [🕒 75 minutes]

LESSON PREPARATION

1. Choose a space with a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart to record responses from this lesson's "Careers and the Common Good" ranking activity.

2. Make copies of the "Careers and the Common Good—Ranking Priorities" handout (provided at the end of this lesson), or prepare to share it electronically with all participants.

INTRODUCTION [⌚ 5 minutes]

Distribute the "Careers and the Common Good" handout to the class. Explain to participants that in this session, they will have the opportunity to reflect on their own values, how those values may shape their career choices, and their understanding of the connection between professional and civic life.

Read the directions on the handout to the group, emphasizing especially that there are no right or wrong answers in the activity. Be sure to note that 1 is their top choice (what they value most), while 10 is the lowest in the ranking (least important).

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES [⌚ 10 minutes]

Give time for participants to fill out the ranking list individually.

SMALL GROUPS [⌚ 25 minutes]

Break the class into small groups of 3 to 5 participants. Invite each person to share their responses with other members of their small groups. The groups should discuss individual and collective responses.

Suggest that participants begin by focusing especially on the top three (1-3) and bottom three (8-10) responses on their lists. The groups can explore areas where their responses overlap and differ as an interesting way to begin conversations. Small groups can then explore other aspects of their selections and how those selections reflect their civic and career values.

LARGE-GROUP HARVESTING [⌚ 20 minutes]

Bring the group back together. Read through the list and poll the group to tally the number of top-3 responses for each item on the list. Note to the group that this is for exploratory purposes only, to get a sense of the group's collective responses—not to find a "correct" answer.

After noting the most commonly chosen top answers, invite the small groups to reflect on their conversations, finding areas of synergy and divergence. Potential topics/questions for group discussion include:

- Was this activity difficult to complete? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about your own civic identity and values from this activity?
- What do you see as areas of common ground among your small group/the larger class?
- Which priorities drew the most diverse responses? Why do you think these items led to divergent responses?
- What things can you do now to prepare for the future work you most aspire to achieve?

Capture some of the values underlying the responses and write them on the board. Ask the group to reflect on the responses and how they might relate to their understanding of civic professionalism.

ONE-SENTENCE JOB DESCRIPTION [⌚ 15 minutes]

As a concluding activity, have participants individually craft a one-sentence description for their ideal job. They can then form pairs to share their descriptions. Return to the large group and invite volunteers to share their dream job description with the class.

CAREERS AND THE COMMON GOOD—RANKING PRIORITIES

What factors are most important to you with regard to the choices you hope to make in your career, and with how your planned career relates to the common good? Rank the following priorities, with 1 as the most important and 10 as the least important to you. There are no right or wrong answers, and it is understood that your choices will change over time (perhaps as soon as when we discuss this activity).

- _____ Earning a comfortable salary and receiving good benefits.
- _____ Doing meaningful work for an organization I believe in that contributes to social change.
- _____ Having a flexible work schedule that gives me free time for other activities.
- _____ Being a part of a brand-new initiative or a start-up that reflects my values.
- _____ Finding work that can best support the health and lifestyle of my family.
- _____ Working in a job that allows me to gain new skills, has opportunities for advancement, and offers avenues for professional development.
- _____ Being able to travel and immerse myself in diverse cultures as part of my job.
- _____ Working with a community of colleagues who are friends and mentors whom I trust and respect.
- _____ Finding a job in my desired location, with a manageable commute and near my family/friends/partner.
- _____ Doing work that is interesting and dynamic that forces me to stretch myself and grow in new ways.

