

EDUCATION

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The “Hidden Rules” of the Economic Classes

Rationale

Each family, group, and culture has hidden rules. (Here, “hidden rules” refers to the unspoken cues, habits, and values of a family, group of people, or an entire culture.) As new members of a group learn the hidden rules of that group, they can increase understanding, reduce judgmental attitudes, and foster relationships between them and the group’s long-term members.

In the United States, most schools, businesses, and government agencies operate within the hidden rules of the middle economic class. Unless members of either the upper or lower economic classes master the middle economic class’s hidden rules, they are at a significant disadvantage in, for example, most school and work settings.

Objectives

1. Familiarize yourself with some of the hidden rules of two economic classes in the United States—the lower and middle economic classes.
2. Assist Deseret Industries associates in familiarizing themselves with some of the hidden rules of these two economic classes—lower and middle.

Potential Discussion Items

- Discuss a few hidden rules of the lower and middle economic classes being kept or being broken by others (refer to the Hidden Rules of Two American Economic Classes handout). (In order to find examples, perhaps you and the Deseret Industries associate can view a movie or read a book from the Feature Films and Books handout.)
- Together, make a list of all the hidden rules you would need to learn before you could join the Deseret Industries associate’s family.

Suggested Resources

- Bridges out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities by Ruby K. Payne, Philip E. DeVol, and Terie Dreussi Smith (2006).
- Facilitator Notes for Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’-By World: Building Your Resources for a Better Life by Philip E. DeVol (2013).
- A Framework for Understanding Poverty: A Cognitive Approach by Ruby K. Payne (2013).
- Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’-By World: Building Your Resources for a Better Life by Philip E. DeVol (2013).

Handouts

Feature Films and Books

Hidden Rules of Two American Economic Classes

