

# MULTIPLE CHOICES

**Aim:** to highlight the choices faced by Christians working in different cultures

**Audience:** teenagers and adults.

**Duration:** 25 min.

**Description:** a series of multiple choice discussion starters.

**Equipment:** pencils, discussion sheets (photocopy masters provided)



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THE WYCLIFFE IDEA BANK

## Leader's Instructions:

1. Divide participants into groups of four or five.
2. Distribute pencils and copies of the discussion sheet, one per person.
3. Read out participants instructions.
4. Allow 10 - 15 min for discussion
5. Use the talk back section to conclude the activity

## Participant's Instructions:

You are a team of Christian workers living in a small, remote village amongst the Kasena people of northern Ghana. You haven't been there very long, and much of your time is taken up learning the Kasem language and building relationships with your Kasena neighbours. Kasem culture is very different from your own and you find yourself faced with new and difficult choices every day.

Your discussion sheets outlines five scenarios.

1. Have one person from each group read out the first scenario.
2. Everyone in the group should mark a tick by their choice.
3. Now discuss the choices you have made and try to come to a group decision.
4. Do the same with the other four scenarios.

## Talk Back:

Briefly invite each group to summarise their answer to one of the scenarios and explain why they made their decision. Then discuss the following:

- What is culture?
- How do you learn to act appropriately when living amongst people of another culture?
- What factors did you take into account when you made your decisions?
- Was there any disagreement in your group? Imagine what this is like for Christians working together overseas. How would you handle such disagreements when you're face to face with a choice that needs to be made?

## Comments to use in discussion:

It was an unfair quiz! You didn't know the facts. But neither does an outsider going to a Kasem village for the first time. The only way you can learn how to act appropriately is by sticking your neck out and being prepared to make mistakes. So it helps to be able to laugh at yourself!

Another important thing is to make a point of asking the advice of national people. This approach sometimes requires a great deal of humility.

Culture has to do with behaviour, values and traditions. People of different cultures act and react differently. To communicate with people of a different culture you have to adapt and make adjustments. This may involve forfeiting some of your own behaviour patterns and values.

The five scenarios you have discussed are not made up. They are drawn from the experience of Philip and Judy Hewer who worked amongst the Kasena people as Bible translators for 16 years. Philip and Judy would be the first to admit that there are no right or wrong answers to situations like these, but just for the record, here's what they learnt from each of the circumstances you have been discussing ...

### 1. Dirty Water

Ghanaians are very hospitable. In the North of the country visitors are always offered a drink of water. If you reject the drink you would be rejecting hospitality and would be considered very rude. On the other hand, dirty water is a serious health risk. So it's best to accept the drink but just take a sip, or even just pretend to drink. We did usually pray that the Lord would protect our health!

### 2. Borrowed Bicycle

None of the suggestions here are really appropriate. If you ask your neighbour why he took the bicycle he would probably tell you he needed it: you were not using it and you are his friend! In a poorer society there are fewer personal possessions so it makes sense for them to be shared. If one person is not using their spade or bucket or bicycle then someone else might as well make use of it. Borrowing without asking showed we were being accepted into the local community.

### 3. Plate of Biscuits

Western manners are not always logical. To a Kasona, what you offer is what you intend them to take. So if you intend your visitor to have one biscuit, just give him one. This situation only happened once. One of the chief's elders was actually teasing us by taking the whole plate, so we asked for it back with a joke too.

## NOTES:

### 4. Two Brothers

Since you do not know the whole situation it would be best to do nothing except to ask someone else what is going on. In Ghana authority goes with age, so an older brother has authority over a younger brother and that authority may often be enforced physically. Many situations seemed wrong to us and we were often critical but when we asked for an explanation of what was happening we often learnt an important aspect of Kasem culture.

### 5. Washing Line

As with the borrowed bicycle, our washing line was empty and so available for others to use. When this first happened to us, the large cloth hanging just outside our door cut off the light so we could not continue our language study. After consulting with our Kasena language assistant, we moved the clothes around to restore our light and, in future, made sure we hung our washing out early if we wanted to use the line.

The Kasena people number about 180,000 and live in northern Ghana and Burkina Faso. Since the Kasem New Testament was dedicated in 1989, the Holy Spirit has been at work! Some churches have grown slowly and steadily, but in one area of Kasem-land the young churches have almost doubled in number with each group reaching out to new hamlets and villages. New Kasem churches have also grown up in almost every region of Ghana where Kasenas have moved to find work or farming land. One of the reasons for this growth has undoubtedly been that Kasena people now have the opportunity to respond to the good news of Jesus in their own language.

### Ideas for Use:

1. This discussion can work well when led from the front without dividing into groups at all.
2. The material lends itself very well to drama adaptation. Have each scenario acted out with a volunteer from the audience improvising their reactions. The audience watches, then discusses whether the volunteer responded appropriately.

# Discussion Sheet

NOTES:

*You are a team of Christian workers living in a small, remote village amongst the Kasena people of northern Ghana. You haven't been there very long, and much of your time is taken up learning the Kasem language and building relationships with your Kasena neighbours. Kasem culture is very different from your own and you find yourself faced with new and difficult choices every day.*

## 1. Dirty Water

You visit a village house after a long walk through the bush. Your host sees that you are thirsty and offers you a drink. The water is warm, very dirty and has insects floating in it. You remember that disease is caused through drinking bad water. Do you:

- Drink it eagerly and ask for more?
- Refuse to touch a drop?
- Drink a little and pray?
- Take out your own flask of purified water?
- Drop a water purifying tablet into the drink you've been offered?

## 2. Borrowed Bicycles

Your neighbour borrows your bicycle without permission. Do you:

- Call the police?
- Tell the village chief?
- Wait until he returns then get angry with him?
- Lock it in future?

## 3. Plate of Biscuits

You offer round a plate of biscuits to some visitors who drop by to see you. The first visitor politely takes all of them. Do you:

- Ask for them back?
- Get out a new packet?
- Give visitors only water in future?
- Drop a few hints about how expensive biscuits are?
- Give them out one by one in future?

## 4. Two Brothers

You see children fighting. A boy is beating up his brother with a stick. The little boy runs away bleeding and crying. Do you:

- Rebuke the big brother?
- Chase them both away?
- Comfort the little boy?
- Do nothing?

## 5. Washing Line

Your neighbour hangs washing on your line. Do you:

- Take the washing down?
- Take the clothes line down?
- Pin up a notice saying "50p to hang washing here"?
- Buy your neighbour a clothes line?
- Make no complaint. In future get your washing out first?