

Topic: Money Management – Youth Orientation

Activity: U.S. Money

Objective

- ✓ Participants will gain a basic understanding of U.S. currency
- ✓ Participants will increase comfort with using U.S. currency
- ✓ Participants will practice basic adding skills

Lesson Time

25 minutes

Materials

- ☐ U.S. Currency packets, one per group (see samples included in black-and-white and color; each group receives 3-4 copies of each bill and coin for use in this activity)
- ☐ Flipchart paper, Markers, and Tape

Introduction

Put participants into pairs. Distribute U.S. money packets to each group. Discuss the amounts (dollars and cents), the alternate names of the coins (penny = 1¢, nickel = 5¢, dime = 10¢, quarter = 25¢) and that 100¢ = \$1. Ask participants how this currency differs from other nations' currencies.

Practice

1. Write a value on a piece of flipchart paper in front of the room and read the amount, both in English and the native language of participants, out loud. Ask participants to repeat the amount back to the facilitator. (Some suggestions to use: \$3.78, \$26.35, \$162.03, \$196.46, \$312.97.) Partners assemble the correct amount with their money as quickly as possible. When finished, discuss different ways to assemble the amounts. (For instance, using two \$10 bills will give you \$20.) Do this a few times so participants become more familiar with U.S. currency.
2. When working with a younger group of participants, instead of having participants do math to get their answers, require them to pull out appropriate pieces of money (e.g., \$5 or 25¢).
3. Lead a large group discussion addressing any of the Reflection Questions (below) that did not come up in the course of the discussion previously.

Reflection Questions

- What are the alternative names of the U.S. coins?
- Why do you think U.S. bills are often referred to internationally as “Greenbacks”?
- How is U.S. currency different from the currencies in which you are accustomed?
- What has been the most challenging thing in adjusting to using U.S. currency so far? What has been least challenging?

Variations

- Have some actual samples of U.S. currency.
- Have partners take out a specific bill (\$5, \$10, etc.). Write an amount on the board which is less than that of the bill they have taken out (e.g. \$4.67). This amount is what the groups are spending. Have partners make the correct change.
- Have participants practice buying items (food, school supplies, basic household items, clothing, etc.).
- When working with a smaller group of participants, encourage participants to assemble money individually and discuss throughout the process.
- Discuss sales taxes, that they are paid on most things purchased in the U.S., and that they are unavoidable. Note that the percent depends on the item and the state, and when purchasing things this percentage is almost always added in at the end and makes the price of the item higher. Discuss where negotiating is appropriate when making purchases in the U.S.

U.S. Currency

The penny (1¢), the nickel (new and old; 5¢), the dime (10¢), and the quarter (25¢).







