



STEREOTYPING

PREPARATION

Before meeting, wrap four packages—2 desirably and two undesirably. Fill one of each bag with something desirable (candy, or a toy...) and the other two with something plain or undesirable (rocks, or trash...)

Prepare a picture of a robin, a penguin, and the word “BIRD”

AT MEETING

1. Ask what people’s expectations are for the items that are wrapped.
What will we find inside each package?
Is it what you expected?
How are our expectations incorrect sometimes?
2. Show the word “Bird”
What image do you see in your head?
Show the photo of the robin.
Did you see this?
Show the photo of the penguin.
Did you imagine a bird like this?

EXPLANATION

It is a natural function of our brains to organize incoming sensory information into categories to make sense of our world. In doing so, we tend to think in terms of the typical rather than the atypical.

(Show a child’s block toy and try to fit the square into the circle hole) We create molds for information to fit. For example, when we hear the word "bird," we are more likely to think of a robin than a penguin.

It is understandable that we expected the attractive package to contain a desirable item and the unattractive package to contain an undesirable item. It is part of how humans are successful. It is helpful to organize bits of information in our mind when thinking of "things." However, when we are thinking in terms of people, stereotypes are harmful.

TAKE HOME

Please take a moment to admit a stereotype you may have. Maybe even admit it to your table or a friend. We are all in this together. No one is a savior and no one is to blame. We are all part, and we may all take part in the solution.

<http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit100/lesson1.html#lesson>