



Divergent

by Veronica Roth

Supplies

- Nametags
- Markers
- Whiteboard, butcher paper, or large sheets of newsprint paper
- Choose an item from the following list below in the following colors:
 - Embroidery threads
 - Bandanas
 - Duct tape
 - Strips of clothIn these colors:
 - Grey
 - Black & White
 - Red & Yellow
 - Blue & Black
- Flags for “Capture the Flag” game (*optional closing activity*)

Optional Entering Activities

As participants enter, provide one or more of the following activities to complete while waiting for the entire group to arrive:

- **Nickname nametags:** On a nametag, instruct participants to write their name and a nickname, similar to “Tris” or “Four.” Use the nametags as a way to introduce themselves.
- **Faction Fashion:** Set up a table with bandanas, duct tape, or strips of cloth in the following colors: grey, black and white, red and yellow, blue, and black. Encourage participants to create a bracelet or headband with the fabric options available, using the colors of the faction they would choose if they were in the choosing ceremony.
- **Faction Beliefs:** On a white board or pieces of butcher paper, write the following open-ended statements for participants to complete in their own words:
 - o Abnegation believes in . . .
 - o Abnegation does not believe in . . .
 - o Amity believes in . . .
 - o Amity does not believe in . . .
 - o Candor believes in . . .
 - o Candor does not believe in . . .
 - o Dauntless believes in . . .
 - o Dauntless does not believe in . . .
 - o Erudite believes in . . .
 - o Erudite does not believe in . . .

Agree or Disagree

5 minutes

Designate one side of the room as “agree” and the other side as “disagree.” Direct participants to stand on the side that applies to them when you read the following statements.

- The Dauntless define cowardice as “the failure to act in the midst of fear.” Do you agree or disagree with that definition?
- The Candor say, “politeness is deception in pretty packaging.” Do you agree or disagree?
- Candor hate Amity because “those who seek peace above all else, they say, will always deceive to keep the water calm.” Do you agree or disagree?
- “A brave man acknowledges the strength of others.” Do you agree or disagree?
- “Human reason can excuse any evil; that is why it’s so important that we don’t rely on it.” Do you agree or disagree?
- “We believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another.” Do you agree or disagree?

What’s Your Faction?

15 – 30 minutes

Ask participants to choose a faction that they identify with and find other participants in the same faction. Have participants introduce themselves to their faction and explain why they chose one group over the other. OPTION: Have youth take the “faction quiz” in the back of the book or try the following website: <http://tinyurl.com/oy45qo4>

Discussion Questions

30 - 45 minutes

- With the entire group, ask participants to describe the appearance and character traits of each faction. Go around the room and say which faction character traits they personally believe are the most admirable for society. Where are factions visible in our society today?
- Tobias says to Tris, “‘I think we’ve made a mistake,’ he says softly. ‘We’ve all started to put down the virtues of the other factions in the process of bolstering our own. I don’t want to do that. I want to be brave, and selfless, *and* smart, *and* kind, *and* honest.’ He clears his throat. ‘I continually struggle with kindness.’” How important is it to have diversity and differing factions and character traits? Are all faction traits important to the well-being of society? With which do you “continually struggle”? Which do you find easiest?

- “In our factions, we find meaning, we find purpose, we find life.” Tris came alive in the Dauntless headquarters. What does she believe her purpose is? What makes her happy? Where do you find meaning? Where do you feel belonging? When do you feel like you are living out your purpose? What do you think the goal of life is? Happiness? What is the goal of your life? OPTION: Have youth take a spiritual gift inventory. Try the following website: <http://tinyurl.com/y89dq52>
- “Just do what you’re supposed to.” Caleb says this to Beatrice in reference to acting in the manner in which her faction acts. When does Beatrice not act like the Abnegation? What characteristics does Beatrice have that are not part of the Abnegation? Do you ever feel as if you are supposed to act a certain way because of how you were raised? Do you ever feel that you don’t fit? Explain.
- At age 16, the teens in *Divergent* are forced to choose a faction/career. Today, you all feel some of those pressures with choosing classes, scheduling your extracurricular activities, and making decisions about careers and/or college. What types of choices do you have to make today? What is it like to choose differently than your parents want? If you choose a different path from your family, does “Faction before blood” apply? How would you then be cut off from what you have known?
- Why is being Divergent a threat to society? (“It means we can’t be controlled.”) Do you ever feel like you are more than how society defines you and your age group?
- What did you think about Four dating Tris? What about when he reveals his true identity as Tobias from Abnegation? What mature and healthy decisions do Tris and Tobias make in their relationship? Would you deem any part of their relationship as immature or unhealthy?
- How does the fear landscape determine who is the strongest Dauntless? What fears would appear in your fear landscape? How do we deal with fears? The initiates conquer fears alone in the fear landscape, however, community is important in the book. Compare and contrast Tris facing her fear landscape alone to when she helps Tobias face his fear landscape. Does facing Tobias’ fears together change how he approaches each fear? If you faced your fears with a friend, instead of alone, would your approach and outcome be different?
- Living factionless is explained as “to live factionless is not just to live in poverty and discomfort; it is to live divorced from society, separated from the most important thing in life: community.” Name some of the communities with which you belong. How does this idea and concept of community relate to baptismal vows?

- “I breathe in. The water will wash my wounds clean. I breathe out. My mother submerged me in water when I was a baby, to give me to God. It has been a long time since I thought about God, but I think about him now. It is only natural.” Tris is about to die. Her real life fear landscape comes true, and she recalls the waters of baptism. Water in birth and death are reminding her of God. Where in your life do you recall God in the ordinary or extraordinary? Where is it “only natural” to think about God?
- Tris struggles with her identity as part of the self-less Abnegation, and as the brave Dauntless. How does she reconcile these two identities in the midst of finding her family in the war?
- Tris describes the Abnegation initiation ceremony as “a quiet affair. The initiates, who spend thirty days performing community service . . . sit side by side on a bench. One of the older members reads the Abnegation manifesto . . . Then all the older members wash the initiates’ feet. Then they all share a meal, each person serving food to the person on his left.” What characteristics of Abnegation are displayed in the foot washing ceremony? (A teacher washing the feet of a student is an act of love, humility and service.) What are they teaching their pledges through their actions? Read John 13:1-17. What is Jesus trying to teach the disciples?
- Beatrice’s mother says, “‘You’re my daughter. I don’t care about the factions.’ She shakes her head. ‘Look where they got us. Human beings as a whole cannot be good for long before the bad creeps back in and poison us again.’” How do you see this in our world and society today? The church claims that we are all broken and sinful people, but the good news is that God claims us anyway. God calls us to reconciliation. God forgives the broken. As broken people and in broken times, how can we remember to rely on the truths of God rather than the truths of this world?

Closing Prayer

1 minute

God, we give thanks for the diversity you have allowed in this community, in your church, and in our world. Help us to accept others for who they are and for all they can be. Push us to be more than we think we are, so we can use all our gifts to create peace and joy in this world. Amen.

Optional Closing Activities

- **Capture the Flag:** Play capture the flag as they did in the book. Here are basic instructions for this game: Split the players (minimum 8 people) into two teams. Each team is given a “flag” (this could be a t-shirt, bandanna, hat, glow stick, or balloon). Assign each team a “territory.” An option is to also have a neutral territory between the two sides where all

are safe. The teams must hide their “flag” on their own side. Once the game begins, players try to capture the other team’s “flag” while trying to protect their own “flag” from being captured. Players can tag players on the opposing team that are on their territory, and if tagged, players must go to a designated jail on that territory. Players may free their teammates by going to the jail and tagging jailed players free (those freed from jail get a free walk back to their territory, while the freer does not). Each team may decide who will play defense for their flag and jail, and who will play offense. The first team to capture the flag, wins!

- **Movie:** Go see the movie! It comes out on March 20, 2014. Set your book club around the release date. Consider meeting at the church or a nearby restaurant or coffee shop to discuss the book prior to seeing the film.

References

Boese, Neal, and Patricia Haller. “Finding Your Spiritual Gifts.” *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts*. Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, n.d. Web. 16 Sept. 2013.

“DIVERGENT Fansite.” *Faction Quiz* -. Ingrained Media, 2013. Web. 16 Sept. 2013.

Written by: Shannon Guse and Brittany Porch Edited by: Gina Yeager-Buckley