

Values and Crime

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Grades 7, 8, 9

**ACTIVITY:** What role do values play in a juvenile's involvement in crime?

**MATERIALS:** Student Activity Sheet #1, "Identifying Values"

**OBJECTIVES:** Students should be able to:

- define values;
- distinguish between those values, the resulting behavior of a person who commits a crime, and those values they hold themselves;
- determine the similarities and differences between those two sets of values and actions

**PROCEDURE:**

1. As a beginning exercise or drill, have the students define values by responding to the following questions:

- What are values?
- What are some of your values?
- How do you show others what your values are?
- How can you tell what another person's values are?

(Suggested definitions for values include: a judgment of relative importance or worth; values are concepts, and like all concepts they do not exist in experience, but in the minds of people; values represent the quality of worth or merit which people place on various aspects of experience. Jack R. Frankel, Helping Students Think and Value, p. 231.)

2. To compare the values between the law-abiding citizen and those of a criminal, give students a case study in which the values held by each make a determination of their actions. A variety of situations can be used. For instance, pose the question, "What values would the person who steals your 10-speed bike hold?"

3. Use the questions on Student Activity Sheet #1 to organize student responses to questions posed in case study.

4. Conclude the activity by reinforcing the idea that values help determine our actions and that what we think is important shapes our attitudes and our behavior.

5. As a home assignment have students make up their own case study and identify and analyze the values found in each situation.

## Student Activity Sheet #1

### IDENTIFYING VALUES

**Instructions:** For each case study answer the questions using the details of the case.

1. What did they do? (Describe the behavior)
2. What do you think were their reasons for doing or saying what they did? (What conclusions can you make?)
3. If you... (Similar situations directly related to you), what would you do? Tell the behavior you would exhibit according to your values. Explain why you would follow that type of behavior.
4. What does this show about what you think is important?
5. What differences and similarities do you see in what each person (the individual in the case study and yourself) thinks is important?