

Activity: Ordering the World – Exploring Worldview¹

Objective:

This activity helps students **experience and reflect on the concept of worldview**—the underlying assumptions and values that shape how we perceive and organize reality.

Materials Needed:

- One **ziplock bag per group**, each containing an assortment of **random objects** (e.g., pipe cleaners, playing cards, wooden buttons, coins, marbles, glow bracelets, etc.).
- Student **journals** for reflection.

Instructions:

1. Form Small Groups & Distribute Materials (2 min)

- Divide students into **small groups** and give each group a **ziplock bag** with their set of objects.
- **No additional instructions are provided** beyond:
"Put these objects in order."

2. Ordering the Objects (5 min)

- Groups will naturally ask **clarifying questions** about what "order" means.
- **No further instructions or guidance will be given**—they must determine their own approach.
- As they work, they will be **forced to confront their assumptions** about what makes something ordered—sequence, logic, aesthetics, function, hierarchy, etc.

3. Gallery Walk & Discussion (10 min)

- Once time is up, groups will **walk around the room** to view how other groups have arranged their objects.
- As they observe, they should consider:
 - **What patterns or similarities do you notice?**
 - **How does each arrangement reflect different values or assumptions?**
 - **Does any ordering feel "right" or "wrong"? Why?**

¹ Adapted from Maaia, Justin, "Starting Points for Teaching World Religions: Content, Skills, and Habits of Mind for Understanding, Relationship, and Self-Awareness," Center for Spiritual & Ethical Education (CSEE), Washington, DC, 2025, pp.299.

4. Class Discussion (10 min)

- Facilitate a discussion using guiding questions:
 - Is there a single “best” way to order these objects?
 - If so, how do we determine that? Who decides the standard?
 - What does this process reveal about the way we construct meaning?
 - How do different worldviews shape the way we interpret reality?

5. Journal Reflection (10 min)

- Students will reflect individually on the experience by responding to:
 - What assumptions did you bring to the activity?
 - What values surfaced in your group’s discussion about order?
 - How does this relate to the way people approach bigger questions about the world?

6. Introduction to Cosmos & Nomos (5 min)

- Conclude by introducing the **concepts of cosmos (an ordered universe) and nomos (human-imposed order)** as tools for understanding worldviews.
- Connect these ideas to the **theories of “The Really Big Picture”** from the reading.

Key Takeaways:

- Worldviews shape how we define order, meaning, and truth.
- Different perspectives can lead to vastly different understandings of reality.
- Our assumptions about the world influence how we interact with it.

Further Reading:

- [The Sacred Canopy \(Ch. 1\), Peter Berger](#)