Lifeboat Rescue (Kind Version)

1. Student ability: Intermediate ~ Advanced
2. Approximate length of lesson: 45+
3. Number of students necessary: 8+
4. Preferred age/maturity: HS, College, Adult
5. Type of lesson: Small Group Activity

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Language Target: Discussing, evaluating, collaborating, deciding, negotiating compromises – a totally active communicative lesson; a highly interactive conversation exercise in which students role-play different characters in a dramatic situation.

Setting Up: Cut the main worksheet (Part I) into individual cards. With large classes, prepare one set of cards for each group of eight students. Prepare one copy per student of the second worksheet – Lifeboat Survival Decisions.

Getting Started: Explain that this activity is a role play situation in which some players will live and others will not. Read *The Lifeboat Situation* (below). Divide the class into groups of 8 and give one role play card to each student in the group.

LIFEBOAT SURVIVAL SITUATION

You were cruising a remote part of the South Pacific Ocean. The cruise ship you were on board suddenly sank in a storm terrible. You are the only eight survivors and you have all made it to this lifeboat.

On the lifeboat there are only two bottles of water, just enough for two days if everyone stays alive. The weather is deadly hot. (There are sharks in the water!) The good news is that there is an uninhabited island not far away with lots of fresh water and fruit.

You have to make a decision: at least two (or three) people must row the lifeboat to get help (Go) and rescue the others waiting (Stay) on the small island.

Within each group, students introduce their characters. The first student (The Doctor) reads his/her character card to the others. **Students must introduce themselves in first person!** Continue, one at a time, until all students have introduced their characters.

Group Meetings: In groups, students decide which characters they think would be best to Go for help and which should Stay behind on the island. (If unreliable characters go for help, they may decide not to return!)

First Meeting: Characters 1, 2, 3 & 4 form a group and characters 5, 6, 7 & 8 form a group. After a brief discussion (no more than five minutes) students must unanimously decide which characters will Go and which will Stay. The results should written in the first box.

Second Meeting: The groups break apart and new groups are formed: #3,4,7,8 and
#1,2,5,6. Again, they must decide who should Stay and who should Go. The group consensus is marked in the second box.

**Third Meeting:** Finally, the groups break apart once more and have the students form new groups (#2,3,5,8 and 1,4,6,7). Once again, after discussion, groups need to arrive at a unanimous decision.

**Final Decision:** With the whole group of eight together, students individually mark their decisions in the box at the bottom of Worksheet B. With a show of hands, students vote as to who should Stay and who should Go (to face the shark infested waters). Majority rules.

**Variation 1:** When introducing the lifeboat situation, include a radio. After the students have written their final decisions on the last grid, and before making the final vote, offer this additional information as if it just came on the radio:

1) The Doctor has been secretly drinking water when everyone was sleeping.
2) One of the Sailor's girlfriends says she got AIDS from him.
3) The Actor owes 8 million dollars to a Las Vegas casino.
4) The Millionaire is in financial trouble. Most of the companies are bankrupt.
5) The Businessman, a convicted murderer, is wanted by the FBI.
6) The Young Man isn’t really engaged.
7) Mr. Video has lied. His blind daughter died in a car accident two years ago.
8) The Princess is getting worse. She probably won't live another 24 hours.

**Variation 2:** Encourage students to make a list of their character’s merits. These could be used when arguing for one’s opinion.

**Variation 3:** There is another worksheet with additional characters. The teacher can substitute any of these for the main set of characters to spice up a class. The only important thing to remember is that there should only be eight people in the lifeboat.

**Note:** The purpose of this lesson is to stimulate active discussion. If students prefer a more gruesome scenario, one where they need to come to a consensus about throwing people overboard to a certain death, a much less kind version is available with the Lifeboat Survival version.

**Similar Lessons:**
- **Lifeboat Survival** (unkind version)  
  (Lesson Collection Set #5 - Lesson 09a)

Contributed by Michael Reagan & Kurt Scheibner

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