

## ■ Activities for Inclusive Group Conversation

### ■ Talking Stick

You may want to suggest the use of a “talking stick.” In American Indian tradition one may speak in a gathering when one has possession of the talking stick. You can use just about anything as a talking stick. It can be a “talking stone” found on a beach or a “talking coin” from the country where you are visiting. Or you may want to take along an object from home that could function as a talking stick. Pass the talking stick among the group as an invitation to share. Tell participants that they may talk when they have the stick or they may choose to remain silent and pass the stick to another person. The talking stick insures that everyone has an opportunity to speak and that only one person speaks at a time.

### ■ A Penny for Your Thoughts

Another way to even out the conversation, especially if there are one or two overly talkative participants, is to distribute pennies or pebbles or something similar to each participant. Each person gets, for example, ten pennies. Each time a person speaks, she or he puts a penny in the center of the circle. When they run out of pennies, they run out of talking time. This invites others to use their pennies without feeling they are competing with the confident conversationalists. This allows everyone to put her or his “two cents in” and more, without monopolizing conversation. However, it is never necessary for anyone to speak who chooses not to enter the conversation. “Pass” is always an option.

### ■ Equal Opportunity

If you do not use a “talking stick” or the penny method, you may want to appoint a member of the group to help you notice who has spoken and who has not. Gently invite into the conversation those who have not spoken.

### ■ Mutual Invitation

Use the mutual invitation technique discussed in Resources for Orientation and Preparation, page 75.