



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **INSPIRED ENGAGED INFORMED**

**YMCA TEXAS YOUTH & GOVERNMENT**



## **DELEGATION MANUAL**

# YG DELEGATION MANUAL

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# INTRODUCTION

YMCA Texas Youth & Government programs develop personal growth and encourage life-long, responsible citizenship by providing experiential learning for young people and by providing public forums to recognize the abilities and capabilities of youth. Through local delegation meetings and the YMCA Texas Youth & Government program develop and promote:

- ◆ An understanding of local, state, national and international concerns;
- ◆ Research, study and debate on public issues;
- ◆ Exploration of careers in public service;
- ◆ Interaction with adult and youth leaders involved in decision-making processes;
- ◆ An understanding of political systems and the forum they provide for effective and peaceful resolution of issues and concerns;
- ◆ Appreciation for the diversity of viewpoints on public issues and a concurrent respect for ideas, beliefs and the positions of others; and
- ◆ Demonstration of citizenship responsibilities and leadership roles essential to the health of a participatory democracy.

The information in this section is intended to aid District Directors, advisors/coaches and youth officers in developing and conducting a program to meet these objectives and prepare their delegation for participation in Youth and Government. It includes potential schedules, outlines, agendas, ideas, activities and supporting materials. These materials should be adapted to fit the needs of the local delegation.

YMCA delegations meet individually, or occasionally in larger cluster groups. Whichever is the case, a meeting should be planned at least every other week from September to December. This helps delegates keep in touch with the program; provides opportunities for training, fundraising, and socializing; and sustains delegation momentum. Local Delegation meetings should have an intentional focus each meeting on both logistics/program content and personal development. It is vital that delegates have experiences in and develop skills around the following areas during the program:

- ◆ Team building, particularly around learning from others and making mistakes.
- ◆ Leadership;
- ◆ Character development;
- ◆ Critical thinking;
- ◆ Conflict management;
- ◆ Self expression and public speaking.

This section provides activities and ideas around those topics and more! Each program has specific information that will be used to address the needs of the student to prepare for their particular program areas. A tentative schedule is included on the next page, followed by suggested agendas for each meeting.

Do not forget that you also have resources immediately available to you by contacting other advisors from nearby delegations, calling the District director or State Director. It is suggested that advisors attend other delegations' meetings to see how they are run, attend work nights where available, and network as much as possible.

Good luck!!

## **LOCAL CLUB/DELEGATION MEETINGS**

Local club/delegation meetings are one of the most important experiences of Youth & Government programs. Almost all training and lessons of Y&G delegates takes place at the local level, so building relationships between advisors and delegates and among the delegates themselves is vital. We encourage programs to set up their program in a club format for student leadership opportunities. There are some schools though that incorporate YG into their class curriculum, therefore the setup of the sessions/lessons/meetings will vary. Listed below is some information that may be helpful for adult and student leaders as they plan group meetings.

## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE DELEGATION MEET?**

All delegations should meet at least every other week. Toward the beginning of the program cycle, it may be necessary to meet every week -- at the end, it may be appropriate to meet every three weeks. The important point is that delegates and advisors get together on a regular basis to plan participation in the District & State Conference.

## **WHO SHOULD LEAD THE MEETINGS?**

The initial meetings should be run by the Club Advisor (Delegation Leader) if the club does not have established club officers. Then a club leadership team should be established. If the club has elected club officers, then the club meetings should be lead the meetings with the Club Advisor being there to make sure it is on task. An adult needs to be present.

## **WHAT CLUB OFFICERS SHOULD WE HAVE?**

Each delegation determines the club officers needed based on need and size of club. A club should have at minimum of the following: Club President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. See Addendum on page 73 for a sample of officers one club has.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT THESE MEETINGS, ANYWAY?**

Each delegation determines its own agenda, but there are some universal items for all groups. They include (but certainly are not limited to):

- ◆ Icebreaker and Team-Building activities (especially important at early meetings and worthwhile at all subsequent meetings, if the group is willing).
- ◆ Discussing program area choices, along with the responsibilities of participation in each program area.
- ◆ Going over the Code of Conduct and other expectations (do this at every meeting).
- ◆ Determining delegation fundraising programs and funding goals.
- ◆ Conducting specific Program Area Training Sessions (lobbyist, legislatures, courts, etc.).
- ◆ Preparing bills, court briefs, news articles, lobbyist position papers and proposals.
- ◆ Holding practice sessions so delegates can practice their program area presentations in a "safe" environment. Encourage debate and constructive criticism during these practice sessions.
- ◆ Holding research sessions so that each delegate has background material for presentations at the District & State Conference.

## **MUST ADVISORS COME TO THESE MEETINGS?**

YES! Club/delegation meetings are the perfect opportunities for advisors to get to know each other and to "bond" with delegates. Advisors should be held to the same standards of attendance as participants and can help by taking responsibility for specific parts of the meetings or delegate training sessions.

## **HOW MUCH SHOULD THE YOUTH LEADERS DO AT MEETINGS?**

As much as possible! For newer delegations, the adult leadership will probably take most of the responsibility for passing information on to delegates at the beginning -- as students advance in their program participation; they can begin to take a more active role in leading meetings and training their peers. For more established delegations, the students may choose to elect delegation officers for a program year. The officers and the advisors should work together on setting meeting agendas.

## **WHAT IF THE DELEGATION NEEDS HELP IN TRAINING DELEGATES?**

Local officials should be brought in to the delegation meetings as participants prepare their bills, court briefs, news articles, cabinet status reports and lobbyist position papers. Members of the Texas's actual House and Senate can conduct bill-writing seminars or sessions to determine bill topics; local lawyers are extremely helpful in preparing case briefs; media personalities from local newspapers, radio stations or TV stations should present trainings for media delegates. Don't be afraid to ask prominent local officials to work with the delegation – they are usually quite happy to oblige and generally enjoy meeting young people (who are, after all, future voters and have parents who vote!)

A further note on local training sessions: everyone can get involved in every training session. Youth who are legislators and lawyers can learn a good deal about the government process by taking part in training sessions outside their primary program area; members of the cabinet, media and lobbyist programs need exposure to all aspects of government in order to properly do their jobs at the District & State Conference. Leaders should also be exposed to as much information as possible!

## **HOW DO I MAKE THESE MEETINGS INTERESTING?**

Food, door prizes and special events can liven up club/delegation and provide important social elements for the delegation. As long as students and adults set appropriate boundaries for the fun, the quality of preparation for program activities shouldn't be threatened.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE STATE CONFERENCE?**

Don't forget to hold a final meeting after the program session is over -- to celebrate each student's accomplishments, to thank the adult advisors and other supporters for their assistance, to evaluate the state program and the local delegation's efforts, to plan for the future and to reflect on the whole experience. After months of preparation on the local level and an emotion-packed State Conference, wrap-up among members of the delegation who have worked together for a long time can make a great experience even better. It is also a great time to talk about other programs available. Help the JuniorYG program!

## **STANDARD PRACTICES FOR LOCAL CLUB/DELEGATION MEETINGS**

- ◆ Set schedule ahead of time for local club/delegation meetings (including parent meetings).
- ◆ At a minimum, club/delegation meetings should take place every two weeks.
- ◆ All meetings must have a definite curriculum and be pre-planned.
- ◆ Meetings should have elements of adult leadership and student leadership.
- ◆ Develop mentorship between students – experienced students matched with new students, older students matched with younger students, adults matched with other adults.
- ◆ Build relationships between students and adults so they know each other when taking part at program events.

# ANNUAL PROGRAM CYCLE

<b>JANUARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>State Conference</b></li> <li>✓ Program Committee Review of Standards</li> </ul> <b>PARENT MEETING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Important information, background, safety, Advisor roles at State</li> <li>✓ Review Pre-Conference Handbook.</li> <li>✓ Have a show and tell or fashion show to showcase the dress code that all participants must abide by at the State conference.</li> </ul>	<b>FEBRUARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>JUNIORYG STATE Conference</b></li> <li>✓ Recruitment for new schools and advisors</li> <li>✓ Recognition event of club</li> <li>✓ Recruitment of incoming freshman</li> <li>✓ State Board meeting</li> <li>✓ CONA applications due</li> <li>✓ <b>YG EXCHANGE</b></li> </ul>	<b>MARCH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ CONA delegates selected</li> <li>✓ Recruitment</li> <li>✓ Service Learning Project planning if clubs choose to do one</li> <li>✓ Officer's meeting</li> <li>✓ <b>YG EXCHANGE</b></li> <li>✓ Debrief Conference, group building,</li> <li>✓ End of year celebration – parents welcome, share scrapbook, delegation recognitions</li> <li>✓ Elect/announce new Club officers</li> <li>✓ Recruit</li> </ul>	<b>APRIL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ CONA Conference call Preparation</li> <li>✓ Recruitment</li> <li>✓ Service Project</li> <li>✓ Clubs need to elect officers for their clubs</li> <li>✓ <b>TX YG Board Meeting</b></li> </ul>
<b>MAY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Recruit schools</li> <li>✓ Officers &amp; Appointed Officials work day</li> <li>✓ Y&amp;G materials redevelopment &amp; preparation</li> <li>✓ <b>State Directors Conference</b> (every 2 years)</li> </ul>	<b>JUNE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State Officers preparation</li> <li>✓ State materials redevelopment &amp; preparation</li> <li>✓ <b>Youth Governors Conference</b></li> </ul>	<b>JULY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>CONA-Conference On National Affairs</b></li> <li>✓ Complete all manuals, forms, marketing materials for upcoming new program year</li> </ul>	<b>AUGUST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State Officers meeting</li> <li>✓ Training for Y&amp;G</li> <li>✓ District Director meeting</li> <li>✓ Recruit</li> </ul>
<b>SEPTEMBER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Recruitment</li> <li>✓ Adult Advisor Training</li> <li>✓ Selection of section</li> <li>✓ Collect registration forms and deposits</li> <li>✓ Meet with student leaders to determine orientation, calendar, cost</li> <li>✓ Final recruitment, Optional Parent Information Meeting</li> <li>✓ Elect club officers if you do not have any</li> </ul>	<b>OCTOBER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Preparation of Delegation</li> <li>✓ State Officers Conference call</li> <li>✓ Board meeting</li> <li>✓ Candidate Filing</li> <li>✓ <b>TX YG Board Meeting</b></li> </ul>	<b>NOVEMBER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Training &amp; Election</li> <li>✓ Preparation for District</li> <li>✓ Registration for State</li> <li>Practice! Practice!</li> </ul>	<b>DECEMBER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ District Conferences across the State</li> <li>✓ Final Registration for State</li> <li>✓ Prepare for State</li> </ul>

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN/MEETING AGENDAS

You may not meet this many times however each meeting below gives you a guideline and you can pick and choose what you need or your meetings. Adjust the timeline and topics to meet the needs of your program.

### **Lesson/Meeting #1**

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#### Tentative Agenda and Materials

- ◆ Group Building Activity/Get to Know You Activity
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ What is Youth and Government?
  - ◇ Refer to the "General Information" section of the manual
- ◆ Communicate events and mandatory dates
- ◆ Review YMCA's policy on financial assistance and fundraising opportunities
- ◆ Review delegation calendar
  - ◇ Be sure to build your delegation calendar to ensure that materials are delivered to the District Director and State Office on time!
- ◆ Relay any pertinent information
  - ◇ Announce delegation officer elections to take place in 2 weeks (if applicable...great for new delegations.
  - ◇ Review officer positions duties and qualifications (listed in the Candidate Application)
  - ◇ Communicate when officer meetings will take place
- ◆ Introduce legislative program
  - ◇ Refer to Legislative Manual
  - ◇ Bring in a guest speaker (legislator, former legislator, etc.)
- ◆ Next meeting dates and times
- ◆ Hold orientation session after meeting for new delegates

### **Lesson/Meeting #2**

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#### Tentative Agenda and Materials

- ◆ Group building
- ◆ Allow candidates for delegation officer positions to speak during the meeting
- ◆ Set plan of action for fundraising – let them know fees are due the week of September 27!
- ◆ Next meeting



### **Lesson/Meeting #3**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Hold delegation officer elections
  - ◇ Hold first officer meeting directly after meeting to organize
- ◆ Introduce lobbyist program
  - ◇ Bring in a guest speaker (lobbyist, former lobbyist, etc.)
- ◆ Continue implementing fundraising plan
  
- ◆ Goal setting for recruiting and Premier Delegation requirements
- ◆ Next meeting
- ◆ Hold orientation session after meeting for new delegates

### **Lesson/Meeting #4**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Discuss community issues
- ◆ Introduce judicial program
  - ◇ Refer to "Judicial Program" section in this manual
- ◆ Continue with fundraising
- ◆ Next meeting
- ◆ Hold orientation session after meeting for new delegates

### **Lesson/Meeting #5**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Collect registration forms and non-refundable deposit from delegates
  - ◇ Refer to the program calendar for what paperwork is due
- ◆ Continue with fundraising
- ◆ Introduce Media program
  - ◇ Refer to "Media Manual"
  - ◇ Invite a guest speaker (print media reporter, etc.)
- ◆ Continue with fundraising
- ◆ Review roles in the Y&G program
  - ◇ Refer to the sections that your group will do
  - ◇ Communicate the responsibility and grade requirement for each role
  - ◇ Announce that delegate role selection will take place tonight!
- ◆ Next meeting
- ◆ Hold orientation session after meeting for new delegates
  - ◇ Reminder! Any delegates who attend this session need to make a decision about registration TONIGHT!

### **Lesson/Meeting #6**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of this manual
- ◆ Introduce parliamentary procedure
- ◆ Refer to section forms
- ◆ Introduce bill writing
  - ◇ Link community issues brainstormed at previous meetings to how they can make statewide change
  - ◇ Important that *all* students understand the bill writing process!
- ◆ Brainstorm bill topic ideas
  
- ◆ Legislators select bill topic ideas – this would be ideal!
- ◆ Continue with fundraising
- ◆ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #7**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of the manual
- ◆ Work on delegation’s t-shirt design contest submission if your group are going to have one
- ◆ Continue with bill writing
- ◆ Discuss how lobbyists influence the policy-making process
  - ◇ This is a GREAT opportunity for a guest speaker!
- ◆ Continue with fundraising
- ◆ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #8**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of this manual
- ◆ Collect first draft of legislative bills for Bill Review
  - ◇ Remember that you have to review each of the bills before sending them to the State Office!
- ◆ Collect legislative bill fact sheets
- ◆ Finalize your t-shirt design contest
- ◆ Share pertinent information
- ◆ Continue with parliamentary procedure
- ◆ Discuss the influence of media on the policy-making process
- ◆ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #9**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of the manual
- ◆ Return legislative bills for revisions/review of comments from Bill Review committee
- ◆ Return legislative bill fact sheets
- ◆ Discuss the influence of the judiciary on the policy-making process
- ◆ Collect the remainder of delegate fees
- ◆ Wrap up fundraising for the year!

- ◊ Be sure to celebrate the end of your delegation fundraising – give yourselves a pat on the back for a job well done!
- ◊ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #10**

#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◊ Group building
  - ◊ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of the manual
- ◊ Continue with bill revising
- ◊ Review progress of print media members
- ◊ Review progress of lobbyist position papers
- ◊ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting # 11**

#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◊ Group building
  - ◊ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of the manual
- ◊ Collect final draft of all legislative bills, State Affairs Forum Proposals, briefs, media submissions. Refer to your District’s calendar for all items that need to be submitted and the deadlines.
  - ◊ Remember that you need to review them BEFORE sending copies to District Director.
  - ◊ You should turn in a hard copy AND an electronic copy – please make it easy for the conference handbook to be assembled!
  - ◊ Keep a copy of all materials just in case!
  - ◊ Review the statewide officer positions available for election/appointment at the
  - ◊ Encourage students to consider leadership positions
  - ◊ Ask students who may be interested in different leadership positions – be sure they fit the qualifications and can fulfill the duties of the office!
  - ◊ Each delegate must complete the Officer Nomination Form that corresponds to the office he/she is seeking and turn it into the advisor for submission to the State Office
  - ◊ Practice parliamentary procedure
  - ◊ Have students interested in legislative officer positions take turns leading debate – it will give them practice
  - ◊ Practice Judicial
- ◊ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #12**

#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◊ Group building
  - ◊ Refer to the “Meetings and Activities” section of the manual
- ◊ Court case hearing
  - ◊ This should take the bulk of the meeting!
  - ◊ Be sure to debrief before the meeting ends
- ◊ Parent meeting to review logistics for Conference
  - ◊ Review Code of Conduct
  - ◊ Review transportation arrangements
- ◊ Share pertinent information from State Director with delegates
- ◊ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #13**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Work on section
- ◆ Review the CONA opportunity and National Judicial Competition (highschool only)
  - ◇ Have delegates who have been to the YMCA Conference on National Affairs and/or NJC give testimony on their experience.
  - ◇ If your delegation was not represented at the conference, call the State Office for suggestions on inviting a delegate to come and speak. Trust us, they want to talk about it and encourage others to apply!
  - ◇ Encourage qualified delegates to apply for this opportunity!
- ◆ Practice parliamentary procedure through group debate (large or small groups)
  - ◇ Practice bill author/sponsor speeches
  - ◇ Judicial Practice
- ◆ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #14**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Practice parliamentary procedure through group debate (large or small groups)
  - ◇ Practice bill author/sponsor speeches
  - ◇ Practice lobbyist testimony
- ◆ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #18**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Parent meeting to review logistics for Conference
  - ◇ Share conference schedule
  - ◇ Emergency contact information
  - ◇ Transportation arrangements
  - ◇ Show video/scrapbooks/slides
  - ◇ Have students give testimonials or have a bill hearing
- ◆ Elect officers. Distribute conference materials and shirts (if not available last week)
- ◆ Next meeting

### **Lesson/Meeting #19**

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#### **Tentative Agenda and Materials**

- ◆ Group building
  - ◇ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ Conference wrap up
  - ◇ Review what was learned; congratulate who was elected into officer positions, etc.
- ◆ Next meeting

## **Lesson/Meeting #20**

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### Tentative Agenda and Materials

- ◆ Group building
  - ◆ Refer to the "Meetings and Activities" section of the manual
- ◆ End of year celebration
  - ◆ Invite parents to come and celebrate success with their teen!
  - ◆ Be sure to have food!
  - ◆ Show video/scrapbook/slides/etc.
  - ◆ Delegate recognition (recognize any delegates who received awards, delegates who were elected as a major officer for next year, and any other individual recognition you'd like to give)
- ◆ Next meeting – organizing meeting in July of next year!

# **SAMPLE MEETING AGENDAS**

Agendas should be determined before each delegation meeting by the club officers and Delegation Director. It is highly recommended that you use the same agenda format for every meeting – consistency is key!

## **SAMPLE AGENDA – Delegations with Delegation Officers**

Call to Order

### **Focus on Y Values / Opening Thought / Devotional**

- ◆ This is meant to be a 3-5 minute group discussion on one of the core values of the YMCA (caring, honesty, respect and responsibility), a reading, a thought, or a brief character discussion.

### **Attendance**

- ◆ This can be done by the delegation Secretary. Be sure to keep a written record of who has been attending meetings.

### **Group Activity**

- ◆ Any group activity should relate to the topics covered at that day's meeting. In addition, all group activities should end with a "debriefing" session where individuals can reflect on what they learned through that activity.
- ◆ Allow 10-15 minutes for a group activity and consider asking a student or advisor to lead it. A list of activities is included in this section.
- ◆ Community Building is important because it brings the delegation together in ways that many other activities could not. Fundraising is an excellent example of a long-term team building activity.

### **Officer Reports**

- ◆ Each of the officers should report individually (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Steering Committee Representative). Some officers, such as the Treasurer, will need to report each meeting and other officers, such as the SAC Representative, will only need to present information once or twice per month.

### **Old Business**

- ◆ This is reserved for any topics that have been carried over from the last meeting. Examples may be fundraising, bill research, court hearings, etc.

### **New Business**

- ◆ This is reserved for any topics that are new to this meeting.

### **Other Business**

This can be used for any business that does not fit into the Old or New Business sections. You can ask delegates to hold questions to this portion of the meeting, etc.

### **Next Meeting**

- ◆ Review any delegate responsibilities for the next meeting. This can include fundraisers, deadlines, other events, etc.

Adjourn

# **SAMPLE AGENDA – Delegations without Club Officers**

## **1. District Conference**

- a. Saturday, \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Meet at school at 7 am
- c. We will arrive in \_\_\_\_\_ by 9am
- d. We will leave \_\_\_\_\_ at about 4pm.
- e. We will return to \_\_\_\_\_ before 6pm.
  - i. Please be sure to arrange a ride as we will not be able to get back in to the building.

## **2. Fundraising**

- a. We will be selling Krispy Kreme Doughnuts
- b. More info to follow!

## **3. Appointed Positions**

- a. Applications need to be handed in to me by \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. You may also need to attend a meeting on \_\_\_\_\_

## **4. Elected Positions**

- a. There are still positions you can run for!

## **5. Materials**

- a. All bills, articles and lobbyist position papers are due by \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. All cabinet reports are due \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Final Payment will be due \_\_\_\_\_.

## **6. Parent Meeting**

- a. When is a good time??

## **7. YAG Meetings**

- a. Weekly?? Every other week??

## **8. Elections**

- a. We need to elect a delegation representative.
- b. Tamika has been our acting representative.
- c. Other Nominations?

# GOOD & EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

## BEFORE THE MEETING...

### Plan Delegation Meetings in Advance

- ◆ Hold a weekly meeting with delegation Officers to finalize plans for the next week's meeting and activities.

### Write Your Agenda

- ◆ Write an outline of what is to be accomplished during the delegation meeting. This will display confidence and earn respect from the members.
- ◆ BE PREPARED! Prepare a WRITTEN agenda and use it! Refer to the minutes of past meetings and to your delegation program calendar. The agenda should also include the basic ceremonial items such as Focus on Y Values, opening thought, devotion, etc. There is a sample agenda and a detailed calendar in this handbook.

### Mix It Up

- ◆ Plan some fun meetings where the program may be a delegation outing or party.
- ◆ Plan speakers, videos, etc. that meet the deeper needs and interests of delegation members.
- ◆ Explore the resources of the school and community.

### Involve Members

- ◆ INVOLVEMENT equals RESPONSIBILITY. The more involved one becomes in a project or organization, the greater responsibility one feels for its success.
- ◆ Involve delegation Officers in the group's operation (See Tab 3).
- ◆ Involve members in delegation meetings instead of just allowing them to be "spectators."
- ◆ Ask members to help with projects instead of waiting for them to volunteer.



## **DURING THE MEETING...**

Start on time!

- ◆ This is critical! Everyone's time is very valuable and it shouldn't be wasted because the officers are unprepared.

Keep the agenda on track at all times!

- ◆ Prepare a WRITTEN agenda and use it!
  - ◇ An agenda should be prepared before the meeting – this is usually done at the officer meetings. Refer to the minutes of past meetings and to your delegation program calendar. The agenda should also include the basic ceremonial items such as Focus on Y Values, pledge of allegiance, etc. There is a sample agenda and a detailed calendar in this handbook.
- ◆ Keep the agenda on track at all times!
  - ◇ Most long, argumentative, chaotic, and drawn-out business sessions are due to poorly prepared agendas. Officers should not ask the membership to choose from among many recommendations. The purpose of officer meetings is to research options and make one or two recommendations to the larger group for action. Options should be based in fact with supporting information and documentation, rather than just "gut feeling" or "opinions."
  - ◇ Continuously remind the members of the purpose and objectives of the delegation, and of your duty as their elected executive to see that business and program fulfill those goals. You must shorten, reject, and postpone business that interferes with either scheduled program or stated purpose.
  - ◇ When members bring up business not on the agenda, on which people are obviously not prepared to take action, you may do one of the following:
    - Appoint a committee to deal with it and bring in recommendations at a later date.
    - Handle it at the next officer meeting.
  - ◇ When it is apparent that members want to discuss at length their ideas concerning a matter that is on the floor, instead of having formal debate call a 2-5 minute recess so that the members may discuss the matter informally among themselves. When the meeting is reconvened, generally some unification of thought has taken place and many varied opinions have been reduced to two or three worthwhile viewpoints.

If delegation members complain that other members are unruly, don't pay attention, or talk during business meetings, it may be that the following is happening:

- ◆ The Presiding Officer does not have a written agenda.

- ◆ The decision the delegation is asked to make is really one which the Officers or President should make.
- ◆ There is insufficient information collected in advance so the delegation members cannot make a sound decision.
- ◆ The Delegation President or Officers have made a decision in which the members should have shared.
- ◆ There are too many items on the agenda.
- ◆ When a new item of business requiring heavy debate is presented from the floor, the Presiding Officer permits immediate discussion on it rather than referring it to a committee for consideration at the next meeting.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

The tentative agendas listed in the previous pages have many ideas for your delegation meetings. Here are some additional ideas to help students learn about leadership, character, and their community:

- ◆ Attend a local city council meeting.
- ◆ Attend a local school board meeting.
- ◆ Invite a legislator to speak.
- ◆ Invite a member of the media to speak.
- ◆ Invite a lobbyist to speak.
- ◆ Invite Youth and Government alumni to speak (contact the State Office for suggestions if needed).
- ◆ Invite other government officials to speak (both elected and appointed).
- ◆ Hold a bill hearing – invite community leaders to observe or participate.
- ◆ Visit your local legislator at the Capitol.
- ◆ Research bills at the library.
- ◆ Contact the Department of Library, Archives, and Public Records for help with bill writing.
- ◆ Plan and execute a service project in your local area.
- ◆ Invite local business owners to come to a meeting – ask for their advice on bills ideas.
- ◆ Write your local legislator or congressman on an issue that is traveling through the state or federal process.
- ◆ Invite local attorneys to help with bill drafting or court case preparation.
- ◆ Visit historical government points of interest.
- ◆ Hold a meeting with another local delegation.
- ◆ Hold a meeting with 2 or 3 other local delegations.
- ◆ Invite a member of the local political party to speak.
- ◆ Attend the county supervisor’s meeting.
- ◆ Invite YMCA board members to your meeting to observe/speak.
- ◆ Help educate the community about Youth and Government.
- ◆ Invite someone from Toastmasters (a public speaking organization) to do a workshop on public speaking. If possible, have each student prepare something to present and get critiqued. You may want to ask Toastmasters if they would do a series of meetings so everyone has a chance to practice.
- ◆ Contact your community paper to come and do a story on your delegation.
- ◆ Reach out to a neighboring school or community where no Youth and Government delegation exists and help establish a group. Ask to speak to the history and social studies classes, and/or hold an open meeting.
- ◆ Invite local civic organizations to come and speak on various topics (Women’s Political Caucus, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.).

## IDEAS FOR MOTIVATING STUDENTS

- Make everyone a locker sign with YG logo-District or Bust the week of the conference.
- The next school day after the conference, announce all winners over the PA system during announcements.
- Make cookies or buy goldfish or dessert mints and have them at the meet.
- Make goodie bags for your teachers and/or youth
- As youth advance to State, provide additional locker signs that reflect that. Laminate the locker signs so that they last.
- Write an article for the local newspaper for every conference. Make sure that everyone's name is in it and what and how they did. Also, make sure students get good coverage in the yearbook. Burn pictures on a CD give it to the yearbook staff.
- Make a memory book that has copies of all the articles, pictures from every meet, funny captions, pictures of winners, etc.
- Send hand written thank-you to all participants. Thank them for their time, and congratulate them on their victories.
- Award jackets. It doesn't cost the school much because in a small school most already qualify in athletics. But a few non-athletes each year get a jacket.
- Make spring banquets an All-Awards Banquet. Give UIL awards along with the athletic awards. Award two MVP awards for UIL academics, usually high point individual at district and/or state qualifier.
- Hangs permanent banners from the cafeteria ceiling for each year a district academic championship is won.
- Have businesses and organizations that sponsor local scholarships of \$500 each for each area - business, science, math, speech etc. Put banners in the hallway with the academic event won and the name of the student and year.
- Establish a YG Wall of Honor where the name of each student who competes at State and their State award or ranking is posted. Anyone who walks your building is instantly aware of your YG tradition of excellence.

## COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

Guest speakers can enhance any meeting. They provide insight into the “real” world, giving students exposure to potential careers in public service. A few things to remember about guest speakers:

- ◆ These people should be treated like a VIP—they are professionals in the community in addition to being a guest of your delegation!
- ◆ Please be respectful of their time by inviting them to speak 2-3 weeks in advance of your meeting.
- ◆ Communicate with them regarding program background information and specific items you would like them to discuss.
- ◆ Assign an advisor or officer to confirm the speaker 1 week prior to the meeting with the letter below listing some dos and don'ts and getting introduction information.
- ◆ Assign a student to accompany the guest for their visit. This delegate can meet them at the door, bring them to the meeting room, help introduce them, escort them out of the building after the meeting, etc.

The following letter should be used when confirming a guest speaker for your delegation. It gives them a brief introduction to the YMCA core values and gives some guidelines on their presentation.

## SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER FOR SPEAKER

Here is a sample letter to use when confirming a guest speaker:

Today's Date

Dear Youth and Government guest speaker, (NAME):

Thank you for taking time to share your expertise with the leaders of tomorrow! The (DELEGATION NAME) Delegation is honored to have you as our guest speaker at the (MEETING LOCATION) at (MEETING ADDRESS) on (MEETING DATE AND TIME).

Youth and Government is a YMCA Teen Leadership program that teaches high school students the Texas State legislative, judicial and executive process. Please refer to our earlier request letter for information regarding the program history, purpose and goals.

The following is a list of guidelines we ask you to keep in mind while preparing and delivering your presentation to any segment of the Youth and Government program. Thank you in advance for your participation and support of our education of Texas government!

### Guest Speaker Tips

Come ready to talk about today's issues with tomorrow's leaders!

Refrain from using profanity.

Keep in mind the core values of the YMCA during your presentation: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

Refrain from injecting personal bias.

Bring material that would help Youth in Government students better understand today's issues.

Engage the students in your presentation.

## **END OF YEAR CELEBRATION!**

One of the best ways to plan for a successful year is to include a Year-End Celebration where delegates are rewarded for a job well done.

### **WHAT IS A YEAR-END CELEBRATION?**

Any special meeting at which your entire delegation takes part in and invites parents and other guests.

### **WHAT IF PARENTS AND OTHER GUESTS ARE NOT INCLUDED? IS IT STILL CONSIDERED A YEAR-END CELEBRATION?**

Yes, but your delegation would miss out on an excellent public relations possibility.

### **SHOULD THE YEAR-END CELEBRATION BE HELD AT NIGHT AND WHAT ABOUT FOOD/MEAL?**

Yes, the best suggested time is in the evening/night and most certainly you should make it an eatin' meetin'. People just naturally like to meet and eat.

### **WHAT IF OUR DELEGATION CHOOSES TO HAVE A PICNIC OR SOMETHING SIMILAR...WILL THAT STILL COUNT?**

Yes!

### **WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?**

First, refer to the sample Year-End Celebration program on the next page. Include the following:

- ◆ Recognize outstanding work done by the entire delegation. Display your awards and be sure it is explained to everyone present.
- ◆ Recognize outstanding members (local officers, conference officers, authors who had a bill passed, perfect attendance, etc.) Be creative!

### **IS IT A GOOD TIME TO HAVE THE NEW OFFICERS FOR THE NEXT YEAR INSTALLED?**

Definitely yes!

### **SHOULD OUTGOING OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BE RECOGNIZED?**

Another definitely yes!

### **WHO SHOULD CHAIRMAN OF THIS EVENT?**

You may have your delegation President preside or appoint a special Chairman.

### **SHOULD THE DELEGATION DO SOMETHING "SPECIAL" FOR THE ADVISORS?**

You know the answer is YES! Contact the State Office for suggestions.

### **SHOULD ANYONE ELSE BE INVITED?**

You may want to invite your sponsoring organization's director (Executive Director, Principal, etc.) and the YAG Staff.

### **WHEN SHOULD WE START PLANNING OUR YEAR-END CELEBRATION?**

At least one month prior to the end of program. It is the one event that should get long-term attention.

### **SAMPLE YEAR-END CELEBRATION PROGRAM**

(Name of delegation) Year-End Celebration  
(Name of Place)  
(Date/Time)

Call to Order	Delegation President
Invocation	Designated Member
Meal	
Recognition of Guests	Designated Member
Comments from Advisors	
Recognition of Outstanding Members	Member/President/Delegation Director
Installation of Officers	
Speaker (optional)	
Additional Remarks	Delegation Director/Principal
Closing Remarks	Delegation President

# GROUP DEVELOPMENT

All groups go through stages of development and it is good to have a sense of where your group is at for planning activities.

## FORMING

### LOOKS LIKE.....

- ◆ Everyone is polite
- ◆ Non-threatening
- ◆ "Instant" community
- ◆ Everyone likes everyone
- ◆ People get away with blanket statements
- ◆ Temporary alliances and cliques

### REALITY IS.....

- ◆ Conflict is being avoided
- ◆ Threatening People ignore or minimize differences
- ◆ Minimal work gets done
- ◆ Not real or authentic
- ◆ Nervous atmosphere

## STORMING

### LOOKS LIKE.....

- ◆ Won't listen & noisy or won't talk & pouty
- ◆ People acknowledge differences—sometimes loudly
- ◆ Members attack/challenge each other and leader
- ◆ People take sides ("ins" and "outs")
- ◆ Tension
- ◆ Uncreative and unconstructive
- ◆ May scapegoat leaders

### REALITY IS.....

- ◆ Motive is to make everyone in group "normal" and define whose "norms" to use
- ◆ Attempts to convert group members
- ◆ People are wondering if they are needed and respected

## NORMING

### LOOKS LIKE.....

- ◆ Can be emotional
- ◆ Time of sacrifice with people letting go
- ◆ Group norms accepted and things begin to flow
- ◆ New alignment and acceptance of roles

### REALITY IS.....

- ◆ Emptying of barriers: expectations, prejudices, defenses, weaknesses, assumptions, motives
- ◆ Effective listening
- ◆ Comfortable silence
- ◆ Formal leadership may fade

## PERFORMING

### LOOKS LIKE.....

### REALITY IS.....



- ◆ Conflict is evident—put on the table and healthy conflict resolution is used
- ◆ Not workaholism, but large amounts of work get done
- ◆ People are excited and passionate about coming together – you can “feel” the energy

- ◆ Members realize they can’t do the job individually
- ◆ Members in touch with own needs and know worth of everyone else
- ◆ Genuine commitment & personal growth

## **ADJOURNING**

### **LOOKS LIKE.....**

- ◆ People recognize it’s time to end
- ◆ May be solemn and/or celebratory
- ◆ May be acting out

### **REALITY IS.....**

- ◆ Facilitator needs to structure activity to allow for feelings

# FACILITATION

## WHAT IS MY ROLE AS THE FACILITATOR?

An effective facilitator must be flexible and observant. He/She must have a plan but be able to adjust it as feedback is received. The facilitator must know when to intervene and when to stay quiet; when to help and when to keep hands off; when to be firm and when to be flexible; and when to play a leader's role and when to be a follower.

## SUGGESTED ROLES FOR A FACILITATOR:

- ◆ Convener
- ◆ Conductor of "get to know you" activities
- ◆ Observer for individual and group pitfalls
- ◆ Supporter and maintainer of a safe environment
- ◆ Enforcer of agreed upon norms and procedures
- ◆ "Processor" of group's experience
- ◆ Focuser upon group goals and tasks
- ◆ Modeler of appropriate behavior
- ◆ Observer, listener, evaluator

## THE FACILITATOR MODELS THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ◆ Accepts   | ◆ Encourages                               |
| ◆ Owns interactions   | ◆ Examines own behavior in the group       |
| ◆ Confronts   | ◆ Expresses feelings                       |
| ◆ Cooperates  | ◆ Emphasizes the "here and now"            |
| ◆ Self-discloses (be very careful to maintain appropriate adult-teen relationships) | ◆ Gets involved with others (participates) |

## SUGGESTED STEPS IN FACILITATING A GROUP:

- ◆ Convene the group and begin the community building process.
- ◆ Introduce yourself and explain how you view your role as facilitator and the purpose of the group.
- ◆ Initiate a "get to know each other" session through a structured activity (there are plenty of those in this chapter!).
- ◆ Structure a session to allow participants to express some of their background, needs, expectations, and goals for the program.
- ◆ Elaborate on the main purpose for forming the group being careful to define all important words used.
- ◆ Develop and define the goals by requesting feedback and input from the group.
- ◆ Propose and enforce selected limits (time constraints, ground rules, activity locations, etc.). Include the group in this process by soliciting feedback.
- ◆ Conduct a resources survey of the human and physical surroundings.
- ◆ Brainstorm approaches to solving the group problems or tasks.
- ◆ Decide on how decisions will be made (consensus, majority vote, etc.).
  
- ◆ Determine if the group wants or needs your direction or structure to proceed at various points.
- ◆ Throughout the problem solving process decide whether or not to intervene by directing questions to the group.
- ◆ Summarize and plan closure activities (consider application of goals achieved/lessons learned).

## **PUTTING THOUGHTS INTO ACTIONS**

These can be applied to how you as a Delegation Director interact with your delegation. This may help you develop activities as the program year progresses.

- ◆ Individuals versus the group: Many of the activities and reasons for doing things in YMCA Youth in Government are group-oriented. This is as it should be, since the YMCA is a social setting—however a word of caution is needed: don't lose sight of individual participants! A student's needs and interests must also be met. The advisor should not lose sight of the student's right to individuality. Well-adjusted individuals make for better group structure.
- ◆ A formula for problem solving: to help solve individual and/or group problems, the advisor must be willing to:
  - ◇ Admit he or she may be wrong.
  - ◇ Avoid deliberately embarrassing a student.
  - ◇ Remember that all people have emotions.
  - ◇ Realize that our physical and mental conditions are linked (when tired, hungry, or hurried it is not the right time to solve a problem).
  - ◇ Watch out for spur-of-the-moment reactions (think first, act second).
  - ◇ Know that people are won by being asked, not told.
  - ◇ Know some simple formula for problem solving:
    1. Just what is the problem?
    2. Why does it exist?
    3. How can it be solved? Look at ALL possible solutions!
    4. Select the solution that will work best.
    5. Evaluate: did it work? Why or why not?
- ◆ Thumbnail sketch: You can write a very brief description of each student that provides a definite impression. Consider more than the delegate's physical characteristics – attempt to get an impression of the student's personality, of the ability to be him/herself, and of other relationships with other students in your delegation.
- ◆ Goal Setting: Each advisor should set some personal goals to be accomplished during the course of the program year. As goals are listed be sure to include a method used to measure how successful you have been in achieving your goals. Be sure to make a list for both personal growth and delegation goals.

# TEAM BUILDING

## WHY TEAM BUILDING?

The purpose of group building is to:

- ◆ Help create a feeling of belonging;
- ◆ Help the group learn to work together;
- ◆ Learn the value of group decision making;
- ◆ Help identify leaders within the group.

Every YMCA Youth and Government meeting builds a team of young people who can support, challenge and help each other. While each group will develop its own identity based on the individuals in it, it's the job of the Delegation Director and advisors to set the stage and provide the tools to create a healthy group. Remember that the YMCA is built on relationships – it's our job to help facilitate those connections that make experiences meaningful for delegates and advisors. The exercises in this section are designed to assist in that task.

## WHEN DO YOU DO TEAM BUILDING?

It is the most important activity the group does as soon as it is formed. Group building begins the first day of YMCA Youth and Government! It can and should be at Youth in Government meetings, conferences, and other activities. It is ongoing during the time the group is together and takes some preparation and planning.

### Some examples of when to do group building:

- ◆ To introduce the group to each other (VERY important during recruiting)
- ◆ As an opening thought
- ◆ During a break in activities or at the end of a group activity
- ◆ At any time when the group has a problem to deal with
- ◆ To plan group activities
- ◆ To acknowledge a success in the group (or multiple successes!)

## CHOOSING AND CREATING YOUR OWN ACTIVITIES:

Reprinted from the California Y&G Advisor Manual

- ◆ Be sure that the activities or games you choose support points you plan to make later in the meeting. If you can refer to something your students did in a game that makes the point you're trying to teach much more understandable and memorable.
- ◆ Make sure that you can do the game in the time and space allotted. The game will lose its impact if you have to continue it another day.
- ◆ Know how to play, lead and facilitate the activity. This will keep the game moving and prepare you to explain the directions.
- ◆ Practice the game. You can get the students' perspective this way. Don't have your students do an activity that you can't do or wouldn't want to do. Practicing also helps explain what to do.

- ◆ Design the games to fit with your outcomes. In other words, don't have your students play a game just to fill time. This separates having fun from learning and you can do both at the same time.
- ◆ Modify games to fit the group. The way you set up a game for your youth basketball league should be different from how you arrange it for YAG. This also involved making sure all activities are age-appropriate. Just because a game has certain rules doesn't mean you can't change them.
- ◆ Project possible pitfalls. Think about how your students might react to the game. What if they hate the idea? What if they take longer than anticipated on a certain part? What if they don't understand part of it? How would you handle these situations? Be prepared.
- ◆ Be flexible. If you think that students might not be enthusiastic about part of the game, maybe there's another way to achieve the same effect. Think about what activities you can modify or eliminate due to lack of interest or time. Maybe setting up games that give students choices suits your finicky group.

#### WHAT?....SO WHAT?....NOW WHAT: A GROUP PROCESSING METHOD FOR REFLECTION

This model is a tangible (and easy to remember) way to process experiences in a group of people to pull out personal and group learnings. By tailoring the reflection questions to the activity, this model can be used for all the activities in the Team Building Section.

- ◆ **WHAT?** Purpose: Observation – help people recall what they experienced.  
 Sample "What" Questions:
  - ◆ What was the task you were given?
  - ◆ What did we just do?
  - ◆ Any observations about the experience?
  - ◆ What was that like for people?
  - ◆ Was it easy or difficult?
  - ◆ Any frustrations?
  - ◆ What did you notice about the experience?
- ◆ **SO WHAT?** Purpose: Analysis – encourage people to talk about the significance of the experience.  
 Sample "So What" Questions:
  - ◆ Why did we just do that?
  - ◆ How did you feel about it?
  - ◆ Was it what you expected?
  - ◆ What was the high point or low point for you?
  - ◆ What did you notice about the people or the process?
  - ◆ Were there any A-HA's (break through learning experiences)?
  - ◆ What did you learn...about yourself, the task, the process, the issue, the group?
  - ◆ Were there any outcomes for you from this experience?
  - ◆ Did this experience have any impact on you?

- ◆ **NOW WHAT?** Purpose: New Applications – help transfer the experience to their everyday lives.

Sample “Now What?” Questions:

- What did this have to do with YAG?
- What did you learn or experience today that impacts your life?
- What does this have to do with teamwork, service, and leadership skills?
- How will you work differently as a group after this experience?
- Do you see the group using this in any way later during the year?
- Will you do anything different as a result of this?

**EXERCISES IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION ARE DIVIDED INTO PARTS BASED ON THE PURPOSE:**

- ◆ Initial Exercises – purpose: get to know each other through interactions and the sharing of personal information.
- ◆ Group Exercises – purpose: provide opportunities for group members to work together as a team and learn to value all members; may require a higher level of familiarity and trust.
- ◆ Closure Exercises – purpose: prepare for and reflect on the termination of an activity or group.

Select your activities carefully, based on what you know about your group. Something that might be a great “get-to-know-you” activity during the first few weeks may flop if used at the end of the year. Likewise, a well-established team may benefit from a higher risk activity, while a new team may have a negative experience with the very same activity.

Use the categories as a guide, but don’t feel limited by the recommendations. Many activities can be adapted and changed to meet the needs and stages of a group. Questions can be made more or less personal or the discussion can be facilitated differently. Shorter, less intense Initial Exercises can be used as quick icebreakers at the beginning of any group meeting. Finally, remember--not all team building has to be serious and focused. Having fun and laughing together builds connections, too!

## **TEAM BUILDING: INITIAL EXERCISES**

Purpose: Get to know each other through interactions and sharing of personal information.

### **LET'S GET GROUNDED – ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES**

- ◆ This may seem elementary, but even established groups need to have structure and defined expectations. Creating these together helps empower the group and also gives you something tangible (that the youth developed and agreed to) if problems arise in the future.
- ◆ Begin a discussion about the importance of everyone being on the same page about the group and what will be acceptable behavior throughout the year.
- ◆ The leader can either establish the rules, post them and ask the group to come to agreement on them, adding any that are missing; or
- ◆ The leader can start with nothing and ask the group what rules they will need to have a successful year.

Sample rules may be:

#### **Accept Others**

- ◆ Each person has a right to say what they think; accept what they say as what they feel or think.
- ◆ Listen to each other and show respect for each person. You do not have to agree with someone to accept them and show respect for them.

#### **Speak for Yourself**

- ◆ Say what you think or feel but do not try to speak for me...
- ◆ Avoid phrases like "we...", "people always...", "I'm sure you agree that..."

#### **Avoid Put-Downs**

- ◆ Verbal put-downs hurt people – even when they laugh and appear not to be bothered. Put-downs are often contagious and get thrown back. The "game" continues to build up until feelings are truly hurt.
- ◆ If people think they might be put-down they hesitate to share personal feelings and ideas, especially if they vary from the group norms or expectations. This can mean a lot of value discussion will be held back if you don't avoid put-downs.
- ◆ Non-verbal put-downs also hurt. These can include facial expressions, gestures, side conversations, etc.

## **You Have the Option to Pass**

- ◇ In value discussions everyone participates. However, everyone does not have to share their thoughts or feelings on every question. Sometimes a question has very different meanings for different people.
- ◇ If people feel they are free to pass, they often feel freer to choose to participate at their own level rather than in ways they think others expect them to.

## **Responsible for Own Learning**

- ◇ Each participant in the group will learn something different from each session. Each person will learn as much or as little as he or she chooses to learn. The leader's job is to provide an environment in which the participant can learn.

## **Expect Unfinished Business**

- ◇ Often members of the group are stimulated to continue discussion after sessions. It is okay to end a session with questions still hanging.

## **LOLLIPOP SELF-PORTRAIT**

1. Provide bubble gum, lollipops, colored paper, and miscellaneous art supplies.
2. Have participants chew the gum and put it on a piece of paper. Walk around and stick a lollipop on the gum, attaching it to the paper.
3. Tell participants "That is your head. The stick is your skeleton. Using supplies create your facial features, your hair, and your clothes – a self-portrait."
4. Have participants share their creation with a partner and have that partner introduce the participant to the group.

## **TAKE A GUESS...**

1. Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to write the numbers 1 – 20 down the side. Participants should fill in as many things about themselves as they can next to the numbers. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS!**
2. Collect the sheets mix them up and pass them out.
3. Have participants read the first half of each one out loud. Ask the group to guess the person's identity. Continue reading the second

## **SCRABBLE**

1. Create Scrabble tiles on 8 1/2 X 11 papers – one letter per piece. Make sure to include vowels!
2. Give each person one or two letters, depending on size of group. The goal is to create as many words as possible in 5 minutes by combining letters with other people.
3. When a word is created with a group, write the word on the back of each letter and move on.
4. After 5 minutes, have individuals count words and report to group. What were the longest and shortest words? Who had the most? What was the most unique word?
5. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◇ Was it easy or difficult for you to approach other people?
  - ◇ What might be some reasons why \_\_\_\_ got the most words? The longest or shortest? The most unique?
  - ◇ What was it like to have an odd letter – Q, Z, X? Was it more challenging?
  - ◇ How did you deal with that?
  - ◇ How does this relate to our session with YAG?
  - ◇ Any lessons we can take with us?



## **LINE UP**

1. Have participants line up according to birthday, house number, alphabetically by first name, middle name or last name, or height.
2. Gradually make it more challenging by blindfolding the entire group or particular individuals, silencing the group or individuals, or doing both before you give the next "line up" category!
3. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ How well did you work as a group?
  - ◆ What made it easy/difficult?
  - ◆ How does this relate to our experience as a group?
  - ◆ Any lessons we can carry with us?

## **INTERVIEW**

1. Copy the "Interview Sheet" for each participant.
2. Have individuals partner up with someone they don't know very well and interview each other using the following sheet.
3. Partners should introduce each other to the group, choosing the three most interesting things that were learned.

## **INTERVIEW SHEET**

Tell me your full name and what it means, or a story about how you were named.

Who do you live with?

If you could be on any television show what would it be?

If your best friend were to describe you, what would s/he say?

If you could be anywhere but here right now, where would you be?

What is one thing you are really proud about?

Who is your hero or s/hero...somebody you really respect?

## **A SIMPLE TEST**

1. Make and distribute copies of A Simple Test #1. Ask youth to fill out.
2. Ask "How did you do?" and facilitate a discussion with the following point: none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These people are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten.
3. Distribute A Simple Test #2. Ask youth to complete and share answers in groups of two or three.
4. Ask "Was this quiz easier?" Facilitate a large group discussion with the following point:
5. The people who make a difference in your life are the ones who care about you the most

## **A SIMPLE TEST #1**

Name the five wealthiest people in the world.

Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.

Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.

Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.

Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.

Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

## **A SIMPLE TEST #2**

Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.

List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.

Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.

Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.

Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Name three heroes whose stories have inspired you.

## YMCA BRANCH SCAVENGER HUNT

Answer all of the questions and gather all of the information within the allotted time. Teams must stay together at all times and try not to disrupt other members, guests, or staff. The team that gets the most answers correct in the allotted time will receive a special prize!

How many times around the track equals one mile?

Who is working at the membership desk? Have them sign the paper (when not busy).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many locker rooms are there and how are they different?

How many beverage vending machines are there?

What color are the basketballs in the gym?

Where was the basketball invented?

How many lanes are there in the pool?

How many total Aquafina buttons are there on the vending machines?

What are the four core values of the YMCA?

What are the four resident camps run by the Minneapolis YMCA?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How much does a Snickers bar cost in the vending machine?

Does the TV receive the Disney Channel?

How many basketball hoops are there in the gym?

How many steps are there in the branch?

\*\*\*Provided by Amber Sweasy, Ridgedale YMCA

## **SOMETHING UNIQUE**

1. Participants stand in a straight line, side to side.
2. One person takes a step forward and says something that is unique about him/herself. If others have the same quality or have done the same thing, they step forward as well.

## **YOU'VE GOT MAIL**

1. Have youth sit in chairs around a circle with one less chair than there are people.
2. One person stands in the middle of the circle with the "mail bag." That person pulls out a slip of paper and says "I have mail for anyone who....." and reads the paper.

Likes to play sports.	Like the winter.
Likes to stay up late.	Likes the summer.
Rides an MTC bus more than once a week.	Has been on a team.
Family speaks a language besides English.	Has swum in the ocean.
Has been on a farm.	Doesn't like bugs.
Likes bugs.	Has been to camp.
Has had a broken bone.	Has caught a fish.
Likes to read.	Likes to dance.
Has moved more than twice.	Likes school.
3. Anyone who this statement applies to stands up and tries to find a different seat. Whoever is left standing is the next mail carrier.

### **WE HAVE IT IN COMMON....**

1. Give the following instructions: "Partner with one other person. Find eight things you have in common. Common physical characteristics do not count during this exercise." Share with large group.
2. "Staying with your original partner, find another group of two. Find four things the four of you have in common."
3. Share with large group.
4. "Find another group of four. Find two things the eight of you have in common." Share with large group.

Continue until the entire group is together and find one thing the group has in common.

NOTE: Depending on the size of your group, you may need to adapt activity.

### **IN THE HAT (this is also a great van activity)**

1. Prepare questions and place in a hat.
  - a. If you could "uninvent" one thing in the world so it would no longer exist, what would you choose?
  - b. If you could change one of your personality traits, what would it be?
  - c. If you could be invisible for one hour, where would you go and what would you do?
  - d. If you were to perform in the circus, what would you do?
  - e. If you had to describe the single worst thing a friend could do to you, what would it be?
  - f. If you could teach your children only one lesson in life, what would it be?
  - g. If you could be anything in a refrigerator, what would you be?
  - h. If you could remove one show from television forever, what show would it be?
2. Pass the hat around a circle, having youth draw a question and answer it as best as they can. After a youth has answered a question, open it up to the group for further discussion.

### **CANDY, CANDY, CANDY**

1. Purchase 10 kinds of assorted candy and assign a question to each type of candy. Put this information on a large piece of paper.
2. Pass around a bowl of assorted candy and ask participants to choose five different pieces – but don't eat it yet!
3. Post the questions you have assigned to each piece of candy and tell participants they can eat their piece after they have shared the answer to the question.

#### Sample questions:

- a. What makes you laugh?
- b. What makes you cry?
- c. If you could identify yourself as an animal, what would it be?
- d. Have you ever volunteered before? If so, where?
- e. What's one thing about your cultural heritage that you are proud of?
- f. When you were a child what did you want to be when you grew up?
- g. If you could be anything in 10 years without having to go to school, what would it be?
- h. Where do you feel most at peace?



## **TEAM BUILDING: GROUP EXERCISES**

**Purpose:** Provide opportunities for group members to work together as a team and learn to value all members; may require a higher level of familiarity and trust.

### **BALLOON**

1. Split into groups of three and give each group a blown up balloon.
2. Have the players join hands in small group. Each group should attempt to keep the balloon up in the air while continuing to hold hands. Give one minute of practice time.
3. When practice is over, call out the name of a body part. While continuing to hold hands, the group must use that body part to keep the balloon up – hands, heads, elbows, noses, etc. Change parts every 10-15 seconds.
4. When groups are getting good, call out a sequence – elbow, knee, nose. First person uses their elbow to hit the balloon, second uses knee and third uses nose. Remind groups that the balloons should never hit the ground or stop moving and hands must be held at all times.

### **GREAT AMERICAN EGG DROP**

1. Split the group into teams of 4 – 6 people and give each group a set of materials that includes: 20 straws, 30 inches of tape, 3 paperclips, 1 rubber band, and 1 egg.
2. Instruct them to construct the safest “vehicle” for their egg to drop from six feet off the ground, using only the provided materials. The objective is to not break the egg. The only rule is the egg must be inside the vehicle somehow.
3. Give 30 minutes to construct the vehicle and come up with a name and a short commercial for their “vehicle.” Gather back in a large group and have present their commercial. Have one representative per group stand on chair and drop the egg from approximately six feet.
4. Have participants drop the surviving eggs from higher distances until one egg remains.
5. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ Was there a common plan that everyone was committed to?
  - ◆ Did they plan first or just start building?
  - ◆ Would it have saved time to plan first?
  - ◆ Did anyone feel left out or unheard?
  - ◆ What are the similarities between this and the planning we’ll need to do with Youth and Government?

## **TRUST WALK**

1. Pair individuals up with people they don't know as well.
2. Blindfold one member of each pair. Spin them around a few times to disorient them.
3. Have the other member of each pair lead their partner to a destination.

## **ISLAND GAME**

1. Based on the size of your group, make a square on the ground with masking tape that the entire group could each get one foot into.
2. Tell everyone they are stranded on a shrinking island surrounded by shark infested waters. Their job is to get everyone on a small square island without touching the ground outside the square.
3. Continue reducing the size of the square as the group succeeds and builds confidence.

## **TIME BOMB**

1. Attach a timer to a water bottle and place inside four chairs that are taped or roped off.
2. Have a wide variety of "tools" that can be used to rescue the "bomb" – coat hangers, tape, bike locks, brooms, magazines, cord, spatulas, etc.
3. Break into groups of four and give groups five minutes of planning time so they can strategize and assess what tools they would like to use. Have everyone send one representative to the "tool box" to select three tools per group. Take turns selecting one tool at a time.
4. Return to groups and give four minutes of planning time.
5. Gather groups and give each one a chance to rescue the bomb before it goes off.
6. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ How did your group go about planning the first time?
  - ◆ Did you go with the first suggestion or did you gather other suggestions?
  - ◆ What happened when you didn't get the tools you requested?
  - ◆ How did the group plan the second time?
  - ◆ Did you spend a lot of the second time complaining or did you go to work?
  - ◆ What learnings could you take out and apply to how this group works?

## **AMOEBA RACE**

1. Tie a long rope around a team of people, bunching everyone up tightly.
2. Set up a course for the “amoeba” to run: 25 feet, over a box, 25 feet, under a table, etc.

## **STAND UP**

1. Ask participants to sit down with a partner, facing each other and making sure their feet are opposed, knees are bent, and hands are tightly grasped.
2. Ask the pair to try and pull themselves into a standing position. If a pair is successful, ask them to find another pair and stand up with four people. Continue until entire group stands up together.
3. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ Did anyone find that difficult? What made it difficult?
  - ◆ Did anyone find that easy? What made it easy?
  - ◆ Did you feel pressure if you couldn’t get up as fast as another group? Why or why not?
  - ◆ Could you take any hints from watching another group be successful?
  - ◆ How did it feel to accomplish the task as an entire group?
  - ◆ Throughout this session, you may be faced with difficult tasks – both personally and as a group. What lessons can transfer into our group this year?

## **MY ALLOWANCE**

1. Split into groups of four and give each group a sum of money that is to be their allowance.
2. Give groups five minutes to brainstorm uses for the money.
3. Ask each group to come up with three things they would spend their allowance on, taking into consideration individual preferences.
4. Report the decision to the entire group.
5. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ How many items did you come up with on your brainstorming list?
  - ◆ How did your group come to a consensus on three items?
  - ◆ Did you have to compromise?
  - ◆ Was everyone happy with the final decision?
  - ◆ What did you learn about making decisions as a group?
  - ◆ When might this group need to make decisions during the session?
  - ◆ How can we use the lessons of today?

## **IT’S IN THE BAG**

1. Split into groups of 4 and give each group a brown paper bag with five miscellaneous items in it. Anything goes – the odder the better!
2. Give group 10-15 minutes to come up with a 3-5 minutes skit around “being a leader” or “Our Volunteer Experience,” etc.

## **BACK ART**

1. Form two teams and have each team sit in a row, one person behind the other. Take a vow of silence for the duration of the exercise.
2. Give the person in the front of the row a piece of paper and a pencil.
3. Show the last person in each line a simple hand-drawn picture of an object: flower, ice cream cone, etc. This person uses his/her finger to draw the object on the back of the person in front of him/her.
4. This continues until the drawing gets to the first person in line who draws what they think the object is on a piece of paper.
5. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ What happened to the drawing as it went through the line?
  - ◆ Why did it happen?
  - ◆ What could have been done to make it more accurate at the end?
  - ◆ Does this happen with verbal messages as well? How?
  - ◆ How can this be prevented?

## **CHAIN RELAY**

1. Create teams of three. With masking tape, connect the hands of the team members so the person in the middle is connected to one hand of each of the other team members. The middle person should not be able to use either hand. The people on the outside should have the use of the outside arm/hand.
2. Set up various stations making sure there are two more stations than the number of teams. Some stations suggestions:
  - a. Fold an airplane
  - b. Cut out a circle from a piece of paper
  - c. Blow up and tie off a balloon
  - d. Untie and tie a shoe
  - e. Final task: Do a somersault without breaking connection
3. There are only 2 rules to this game:
  - a. The final task must be done last.
  - b. If connection is broken, the team must be replaced before continuing.
4. Possible discussion questions:
  - ◆ What was it like to be in the middle?
  - ◆ What was it like to be on the end?
  - ◆ Was anyone frustrated during the activity?
  - ◆ Was it easier after you had done a few stations?
  - ◆ How did your team communicate or not communicate?
  - ◆ How can we decrease frustration during our Youth and Government experience?

## **TEAM BUILDING: CLOSURE EXERCISES**

Purpose: Prepare for and reflect on the termination of an activity or group.

### **PASS IT ON**

1. Pass out envelopes that contain one 3X5 index card per group member.
2. Have participants write their name on the envelope.
3. Pass envelopes to the left and give 2 minutes for people to take out a card and write down a strength or note of appreciation to the person whose name is on the envelope.
4. Continue to pass the envelopes until they have gone all the way around.

### **FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS**

1. Have each person in the group make a braided or beaded bracelet.
2. Pass around a large bowl and as participant place their bracelets inside the bowl, have them say one thing they gave to the group this year.
3. Pass the bowl again and ask each participant to close their eyes, select a bracelet and say one thing they will take from the group this year.

### **PAPER ON THE BACK**

1. Tape a piece of paper on everyone's back.
2. Have everyone write one thing s/he appreciates about each person.
3. Have each participant choose one comment to read out loud.

### **LETTER TO YOURSELF**

1. Have youth answer questions on a piece of paper – how they felt about their YAG experience, how they have changed, what things they learned that they would like to remember for the future, etc.
2. Give them envelopes and have them insert the paper, seal the envelopes and address the letter to themselves at their home address.
3. Mail the letters shortly after the session ends.

### **MEMORY BOOKS**

1. Have each participant prepare one page to insert in a memory book that will be distributed to everyone. The page could be art work, "Remember When's", quotes or notes, pictures, etc.
2. Collect each page and compile with a cover for a YAG Book.

## **STONES**

1. Sit in circle and pass around a basket of small, attractive stones or beads. Have each participant take one.
2. Ask participants to say one thing they learned or will take from the group and one thing they would like to leave with the group. As each person finishes, everyone should pass their stone to the left and receive a stone from the right.
3. By time everyone has spoken, all items have been touched by everyone and each person has the stone they chose originally.
4. Provide leather and wire to make necklaces with the items.

## **CANDY, CANDY, CANDY**

1. Purchase 10 kinds of assorted candy and assign a question to each type of candy. Put this information on a large piece of paper.
2. Pass around a bowl of assorted candy and ask participants to choose 5 different pieces but not to eat it yet.
3. Post the questions you have assigned to each piece of candy and tell participants they can eat their piece after they have shared the answer to the question.
4. Sample questions:
  - ◆ What was the highlight of your Youth and Government experience?
  - ◆ What was a challenge you faced?
  - ◆ What did you learn about yourself?
  - ◆ What did you learn about the group?
  - ◆ What will you miss?
  - ◆ What words of advice would you give a Youth and Government group who is meeting for the first time?

## **SPIDER WEB**

1. Stand in a circle and have one person start by holding on to a piece of the yarn and throwing the ball to someone else. Whoever is throwing the yarn says something they have appreciated about the person who is catching the yarn.
2. The new person with the ball of yarn holds the end piece and throws it to someone else, saying something they appreciated about that person during the session.
3. This continues until everyone has been appreciated and is holding a piece of string, creating a web.
4. The group leader makes an analogy about the web and the Youth and Government session.
  - ◆ How was our group like this web this session?
  - ◆ How did we support each other?
  - ◆ What happened when one of us was down or didn't follow through? (Kneel to the floor, holding piece of string.)
  - ◆ What happened when one of us completed something or had a success? (Raise piece of string up.)
  - ◆ How can we carry those lessons with us as our session ends?

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

### He Said...She Said

**Purpose:** Generate a discussion about personal views of "leadership" and character development.

**Time:** 15 minutes – 1 hour, depending on how many quotes are used

**Description:**

1. Write a number of quotes from the following list on a flip chart or black board so they can be uncovered one at a time.
2. Uncover one quote at a time and read it out loud. Ask participants to silently think about if they agree or disagree with the quote.
3. Create a continuum on an imaginary line with one end being "a positive leader would always agree with this or act this way" and the other end being "a positive leader would never agree with this or act this way." Ask participants to place themselves on the line based on their feelings about the quote.
4. Generate discussion by asking people why they placed themselves where they did along the continuum. Get specific examples of real world scenarios as much as possible to encourage quality discussion. A few follow up questions are included for some of the quotes as well.

### QUOTES

What is right is right, even if no one is doing it. What is wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it.

-Unknown

*How does a leader deal with peer pressure and following the crowd?*

We hate some persons because we don't know them; and we will not know them because we hate them.

.....-CHARLES CALEB COLTON

*How does a leader deal with hatred and bigotry?*

Hold yourself responsible to a higher standard than anyone else expects of you. Never excuse yourself.

.....-HENRY WARD BEECHER

*Do leaders make mistakes? How do they handle them?*

Action is character, right? What a person does is what s/he is, not what s/he says.

.....-SYD FIELD

*ARE THERE PEOPLE WHO ARE LEADERS WHO DO NOT HAVE VERY GOOD CHARACTER AND MAKE POOR CHOICES?*

Justice is my being allowed to do whatever I like. Injustice is whatever prevents my doing so.

.....-SAMUEL BUTLER  
*What if what you "like" is against the law?*

Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up.

.....-JESSE JACKSON  
*Who are some people you look down on and don't help up?*

Civilization should be measured by the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained.

-W.H. Auden  
*Are leaders always peacemakers?*

Character is revealed by how we behave when we are sure we won't be found out.

-Thomas Babington MacCaulay

I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul.

-Maya Angelou  
*What kind of "giving" might she be talking about?*

If we remain non-violent, hatred will die as everything else does, from disuse.

-Mahatma Gandhi



## Leadership Collage

*Purpose:* Define “leadership” and identify areas of personal growth.

*Time:* 45 minutes

*Equipment:* Magazines, scissors, glue, paper

*Description:*

1. Write the word “leadership” or “a leader” on newsprint.
2. Ask participants to write down their definition of “leadership” or “a leader.”
3. Share with group. If it doesn’t come up in sharing, challenge them to think of both positive and negative leadership.
4. Ask participants to browse through magazines and cut out images and words that represent both positive and negative leaders/leadership.
5. Share collages with group.
6. Facilitate a discussion about positive leadership and come up with a list of traits and behaviors for a positive leader.
7. Ask participants to pick an area of personal growth that they could work on during their YAG experience. Share with a partner.

## Real Life Leaders

*Purpose:* Explore leadership styles and behaviors by analyzing a familiar person and reflect on your own leadership.

*Time:* 30 minutes.

*Equipment:* Real Life Leaders Worksheet

*Description:*

1. Have each participant identify and share with the group a leader that they personally know and consider a positive leader.
2. Give participants 5 minutes to make a list of that person’s specific leadership skills and behaviors:
  - a. What do they do?
  - b. What do they say?
  - c. How do they interact with people?
  - d. What are they good at?
  - e. How do they deal with challenges and adversity?
3. Share with the group and write on newsprint.
4. Ask, “Do you see any themes around our definitions of good, positive leaders?” Clump together responses in themes.
5. Pass out “Real Life Leaders” and have participants put the themes in the first columns. Do a self-assessment by filling in the columns.
6. Share chart with a partner and have each participant select one thing they are going to do to develop their leadership skills in the next year.

# REAL LIFE LEADERS

LEADERSHIP SKILLS & BEHAVIORS	I see this skill/ behavior in my own leadership style. 1 = not at all 5 =sometimes 10 = always	It is important to me to develop this skill/ behavior in myself. Yes, Maybe, No	If it is important to me, how can I go about developing this skill?

## **Leadership Characteristics**

**Purpose:** Discuss and prioritize a list of leadership characteristics.

**Time:** 30 minutes.

**Equipment:** "Leadership Characteristics" Worksheet

### **Description:**

1. Have each participant look through the list of leadership characteristics. Ask if there are any questions about any of the characteristics.
2. Have youth circle the 4 that they feel are the most important in a youth leader. Have them put a box around the 4 that they feel are the most important in an adult leader.
3. Get into groups of 3 and have them share with each other.
4. Have each group come up with a list of the 5 most important characteristics for a youth leader and an adult leader.
5. Share in large group and discuss if there were any differences. Why or why not?

## LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Circle the four most important characteristics for a youth leader to have.

Put a square around the four most important characteristics for an adult leader to have.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Can envision results in their mind before anything actually happens.                      | 14. Is not a workaholic – keeps things in their life balanced. |
| 2. Can communicate that vision to other people.  | 15. Believes in themselves without being cocky.                |
| 3. Great credibility – when they say they will do something, they do it.                     | 16. Focuses on the positive, not the negative.                 |
| 4. Can juggle complicated tasks and make it seem simple.                                     | 17. Can create and stick to an agenda.                         |
| 5. Can move groups from being stuck in the present to looking at the future.                 | 18. Can move off an agenda when necessary.                     |
| 6. Can make people want to change.   | 19. Has passion and intensity.                                 |
| 7. Can get groups to work in new and different ways.   | 20. Challenges others respectfully.                            |
| 8. Willing to assume responsibility for change – even if things don't turn out for the best. | 21. Pays attention and listens carefully.                      |
| 9. Able to overcome resistance to change.  | 22. Capable of influencing others.                             |
| 10. Willing to take risks.   | 23. Puts "know-why" ahead of "know-how."                       |
| 11. Thinks about what to do in "worst case" possibilities.                                   | 24. Knows themselves.  |
| 12. Rehearses mentally.  | 25. Reliable.  |
| 13. Develops trust in the group.   | 26. Persistent.  |
|  | 27. Solves problems instead of blaming.                        |

## Leadership Initiatives

**Purpose:** Discuss leadership using a group initiative experience from the following pages.

Time: 1 hour

### Description:

1. Select and lead participants through one of the following initiatives.
2. Facilitate a discussion around leadership after the group completes the initiative.
3. Select some of the following discussion questions:
  - ◆ What was that like for people?
  - ◆ What did you do together that worked well?
  - ◆ What was uncomfortable for you?
  - ◆ Who assumed a leadership role during the activity?
  - ◆ How did the group determine who would lead?
  - ◆ Did the leaders want to lead? Why or why not?
  - ◆ Did anyone try to take on a leadership role, but they feel they were unsuccessful? Why or why not?
  - ◆ How did people communicate?
  - ◆ Describe the leadership behaviors that were illustrated in this activity.
  - ◆ What are the traits of a good leader?
  - ◆ Were you a leader or follower during the initiative?
  - ◆ Is being a follower an important role in a group? Why or why not?
  - ◆ What are the traits of a good follower?
  - ◆ How did you lead or follow during this activity? Were both roles needed?
  - ◆ Were there too many leaders?
  - ◆ What one word would you use to describe the group leadership?
  - ◆ What did you learn about being a leader and/or being a follower? How can you take that and apply it to your life?
  - ◆ How does this activity resemble real life?
  - ◆ How does your own leadership behavior in this activity compare with your typical leadership style?

### **Traffic Jam**

1. Tape blank pieces of paper on the floor so there is one more than the total number in your group and leave a small amount of room in between pieces. For example, a group of eight would look like this:

X		X		X		X				A		A		A		A
---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---

2. Place youth on the squares facing each other – the X's stand back to front and face the A's who are standing back to front.

3. The challenge is to exchange places: all X's need to end up on A's squares and vice versa.

4. Legal moves are:

- ◆ A member may move into an empty space in front of him/her;
- ◆ A member may move around a member from the other group into an empty space.

5. Illegal moves are:

- ◆ Any move backwards;
- ◆ Any move around a person facing the same way as you are (you are facing their back;
- ◆ Any move which involves two members moving at the same time;
- ◆ Any move off the squares.

### **The Matrix**

1. The challenge is to get an entire group through a maze you have constructed using masking tape during a specific time limit (15 minutes for a group of 8).

2. There is one and only one path:

→→	1 ↓			
	2 ↓		10→	11↓
4 ↓	←3	8→	9↑	12→ →
5→	6→	7↑		

3. If a person steps on a square that is not part of the correct path, the leader blows a whistle or makes some sort of noise.

4.

4. If you get into the Matrix and step on a square that is not part of the path, you need to leave the exact way you came in. If you walk off without retracing your steps, you will lose a minute of your time.

5. Only one person is allowed on the Matrix at a time and there is no talking.

6. Give the group 2 minutes to strategize before enforcing the “no talking” rule. If they are struggling during the initiative and getting frustrated, give them another talking strategizing session.

### **Blind Shapes**

1. Line participants up in a straight line.

2. Blindfold each participant with a bandana.

3. Place a rope in front of the group and then place it each participant’s hand.

4. The task is to form a perfect square with 90 degree angles in ten minutes. When they think they have formed a square, they should all raise their hands and wait for instructions to remove their blindfolds.

5. If the group has not formed a square in ten minutes, have them select one leader. At this point, only the leader can talk and they can have another ten minutes.

6. Variations could include asking the group to form other shapes and compare the experiences after they have done it once.

### **Birds on A Wire**

1. Participants stand on a log and think of an animal. The animal should reflect a certain aspect of their personality.

2. Have each person state their animal, make a sound like their animal makes, and tell why they chose that animal.

3. Participants must arrange themselves in order (alphabetically, by size, etc.) without touching the ground or using any outside props AND without talking. Participants may only communicate using their animal sounds.

4. Anyone who falls off or talks goes back to the end of the line, or everyone goes back to the starting position.

# CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The following statement was taken from the YMCA of the USA website to illustrate why character development is one of the most important things we do at the YMCA:

## THE CHALLENGE TO Ys

The Y's commitment to character development makes it extraordinarily valuable to the communities and people it serves. Building on this commitment and making it part of everyday operations and programming can be challenging.

What are the three challenges that Ys must accept to enjoy all possible benefits in recommitment to Character Development?

1. To embed character development and the Y's four core values -- caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility -- into the Y's culture (who the staff and volunteers are, and how they operate) so it will last.
2. To become involved in a long-term process in which character development gives focus to everything they do in the Y, including programming, hiring, planning and budgeting.
3. To ensure that everyone - staff and volunteers at all levels of the organization - is involved and committed to this process. Everybody must accept the role of a teacher of values as an integral part of his or her job. All staff and volunteers must accept the challenge to teach the Y's core values first and foremost by leading by example in their own attitude and behavior.



## **YMCA CORE VALUES**

Listed below are Youth and Government topics that are related to the four core values. These topics are meant as a discussion piece for your delegation.

### **Honesty**

- ◆ Representing yourself factually (vs. just giving opinion or falsifying information).
- ◆ Reporting a Code of Conduct violation to an adult (witnessing and not reporting a violation is the same as participating and carries the same consequences).

### **Caring**

- ◆ Befriending someone new at each meeting or conference.
- ◆ Helping a fellow delegate with research/questions/answers on his/her bill.
- ◆ Caring for your fellow delegates – knowing that you are a part of a team and your actions reflect on the team as a whole.

### **Respect**

- ◆ Respecting the opinions of others.
- ◆ Understanding another delegate by learning the opposite side of the issue.
- ◆ Leaving intense debate on the floor/in committee/at delegation meetings.

### **Responsibility**

- ◆ Knowing when deadlines are and getting your materials in to time.
- ◆ If you are missing information – ask for it!!
- ◆ Plan how to get your fees paid by the delegation deadline (through fundraising, monthly payments, and scholarships).
- ◆ Understand the expectations and consequences of the Code of Conduct.

# CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Taken from the YMCA of the USA website:

[www.ymcausa.org/programs/Characterdev/TeenActivities.html](http://www.ymcausa.org/programs/Characterdev/TeenActivities.html)

## Chain Stories

*Purpose:* To encourage creativity and imagination in participants as they think about the four Character Development values.

*Value(s):* Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

*Facility and Equipment:* None

### Description:

1. This is a great activity when you have time but not lots of energy in you or your participants.
2. Introduce the topic (story) by starting off talking about one of the four values and what it means. Explain that you will start a story line out loud and then each child will have a chance to continue until the story comes to an end.
3. EX.) "Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Johnny who brought his favorite video game with him to the YMCA one day to show his friends. Johnny left his game out on the table after lunch and Billy saw it sitting there. Billy really wanted that video game for Christmas but did not get it. He went over, picked up the game, and..."

## Circle of Friends

*Purpose:* To explore the value of friendship. To develop awareness of one's relationships with others. To develop friendships within the group.

*Value(s):* Caring

*Facility & Equipment:* Blank paper - one sheet for each participant; Pencils/pens - one for each participant; Whom Do You Trust? - one copy for each participant.

### Description:

1. Ask participants to write their names in the center of their papers. Then ask them to put the names of their friends in a circle around their own names - the names of people they feel closest to should be written nearer their own names, and those people they are not as close to should be written farther away. Allow about ten minutes.
2. Tell participants to draw a connecting line between the names of their friends who know one another. Help participants analyze their charts by asking the following questions:
  - a. Do you have a small circle of friends who all know one another, or are your friends more dispersed?
  - b. What qualifications must a person have in order to become one of your friends?
  - c. What were the qualities of these friends that attracted you to them?
  - d. What are some of the things your friends like to do together?
  - e. When was the last time you did something with your friends?
  - f. What are the differences among your friends?
3. Have participants form into groups of four or five people with whom they feel comfortable sharing their "circle of friends." Ask them to discuss how they feel friends should be treated.
4. Describe the Whom Do You Trust? activity, and give everyone a copy of the worksheet. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for participants to complete the worksheet.

5. In the same small groups formed in step 3, have participants share their answers from the worksheets for 20 to 25 minutes.
6. Allow participants about 10 minutes to plan how they will improve their relationships or how they will do something they have been meaning to do for a friend.

## **Discussion**

*Purpose:* To discuss the value of honesty

*Value(s):* Honesty

*Facility and Equipment:* None

*Description:*

1. Introduce House Rules for the discussion (See YMCA Program Store Catalog)
2. Read the following story and discuss the questions that follow.

You and a friend are going on a hike with the rest of the kids at the Y. The counselor realized that he may have left the food storage room unlocked. He asked you and your friend to run back and see if the door was locked. When you get there, the door is open, so you step inside and look around. You notice a shelf with lots of candy on it. This is your favorite kind of candy, and you are very, very hungry!

- ◆ What are your alternatives? (What are the different things you could do?)
- ◆ What should you do?
- ◆ What would you do?

## **Four Values Tag**

*Value(s):* Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

*Facility & Equipment:* Gym or Playing Field.

*Description:*

There must be an odd number of people. The leader calls out one of the four values and everyone (including the leader) finds a partner and locks elbows. One person will be left without a partner. Partners tell each other what they have done this week/day that fits the value. If one partner doesn't have an example, partners must split (and leader can now grab one of those partners) or leader may also grab a partner of a pair that is still talking after counting to 15. The same leader or new leader (if new partners were formed) calls out a different value and so on.

## Key Words

*Purpose:* To help teens understand other key values and how each falls under one of the four Character Development Values.

*Value(s):* Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

*Facility and Equipment:* Sheet with key words on it, pencils

### *Description:*

1. Hand out to each participant a sheet with the key words on it and a pencil.
2. Instruct them to choose the ones (by circling) they feel are important to their definition of values and cross out the others.
3. Then instruct them to note what sort of difference that principle or value has made in their life lately.
4. Finally, rank order your list in terms of importance to you.
5. After completing this exercise, the leader can go through the list with the participants and categorize each word under one of the four Character Development Values. (See list below)

### KEY WORDS

Reconciliation	Empathy	Forgiveness
Brotherhood	Commitment	Uniqueness
Patience	Discipline	Caring
Strength	Love	Honesty
Open	Cleanliness	Creative
Prayer	Helpful	Humility
Faith	Respect	Kind
Sincere	Loyalty	Sharing
Peaceful	Fairness	Integrity
Acceptance	Responsibility	Freedom
Salvation	Growth	Grace
Mission		

## **No Negatives**

*Value(s):* Respect

*Facility & Equipment:* Blank paper – one sheet for each group; Pencils/pens – one for each group

### *Description:*

1. Introduce the exercise by saying, "Self-defeating thoughts and negative words can come between you and your dreams – if you let them. You can be anything you want to be if you can rid yourself of these thoughts and words. You can choose to live a life without negatives."
2. Divide participants into groups of three and give each group one sheet of blank paper.
3. Give the groups a limited time to write down as many negative words and self-defeating thoughts as they can.
4. Ask each group to report on its list, omitting any words or thoughts mentioned by preceding groups.
5. Close with some comments about how we have control over our attitude. "We choose between being positive or negative. Practice being positive!"

REF: YMCA Teen Leadership Programs, p.107 / Mary B. Zoller (12/97)

## **Physically Challenged**

*Purpose:* To help participants understand and respect those with physical challenges and to appreciate their health.

*Value(s):* Caring, Respect

*Facility and Equipment:* Wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, blindfolds, canes, multi-purpose room or gym

### *Description:*

1. Borrow the above equipment from a local hospital, pharmacist, or doctor for a day.
2. Explain to participants that this activity will help them appreciate their gifts of sight and good health. You could even invite some physically challenged people in to help with this activity.
3. Set up an obstacle course in the room where you are with cones, chairs. Allow each participant to try and maneuver the course with the different equipment.
4. Afterwards, discuss what it felt like in each instance (not to be able to walk or have to walk with assistance, or not to be able to see). What other senses or muscles did they rely on or use? How would it be if you had to use this equipment every day as part of your life?

## **Quiet Time**

*Purpose:* To better understand one another and pay attention to one another through communication other than verbal.

*Value(s):* Caring, Respect

*Facility and Equipment:* Board games, cards, sports equipment, gym and/or multi-purpose room

### *Description:*

1. Pick a period of time (30 minutes for younger children, 1-2 hours for older youth) and explain that during that time there will be no spoken communication at all.
2. Provide enough activities for all to be involved in something. Doing "nothing" is not an option.
3. Explain that they will have to find other ways to communicate than speaking (writing should also be discouraged) when choosing teams, explaining the rules of the games, etc.
4. After the time is up, discuss with participants how they communicated with one another; was it difficult, frustrating?
5. Can be a good activity during an international theme week because of the many languages in our world, or good for a first time for a group to be together and break down communication barriers, or for understanding handicaps (deaf, mute).

## **Recognition of Participant Exemplifying Character Trait**

*Purpose:* To provide recognition and encouragement to participants who demonstrate the Character Development values.

*Value(s):* Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

*Facility and Equipment:* Coupons from local restaurant, certificate.

### *Description:*

1. Convince a local restaurant(s) that advertises "Value Meals" to give you several coupons good for one of the "Value Meals" (many will be glad to help once you explain the Character Development program to them and how you will use them)
2. Develop a simple system for recognizing a program participant who demonstrates a particular value (for example: a day camper who, during "Caring Week" at camp helps a new camper make friends, etc.)
3. Present that participant with a coupon for a "Value Meal" because of the ways they showed caring to other people.
4. A simple certificate can also be created to give them.

## **String Throw**

*Purpose:* To demonstrate how positive reinforcement for one another can bring a group together and make them stronger.

*Value(s):* Caring, Respect

*Facility and Equipment:* ball of string

### *Description:*

1. In a circle, hang on to one end of the string and toss the ball to someone else. You must say one positive thing about that person when you throw the ball.
2. This person then hangs on to the string and throws the ball to someone else, saying one positive thing about them.
3. This continues until everyone has received the string and a positive statement and a spider web has formed. Everyone should hold the string tightly.
4. Share how tight the web has become when everyone has shared something positive. Now ask one person to drop the string. Ask another person to drop the string.
5. See how loose the web becomes when only one or two is no longer part of a positive group. One by one drop the string until the entire web falls to the ground.
6. Can be a good activity for a group who is having trouble getting along.

## **The Body Talks**

*Purpose:* To give participants an opportunity to practice communicating acceptance nonverbally – using gestures, body language, and facial expressions.

*Value(s):* Caring

*Facility & Equipment:* None

### *Description:*

1. Divide the group in half; name one half 1s and the other half 2s.
2. Explain that all the 1s are to move about the area and the 2s are to stand still. The 1s are to greet 2s using gestures, body language, and facial expressions to communicate the message, "I want to get to know you and to be your friend." The only thing they may not do is speak. This is nonverbal communication.
3. Have the 1s and 2s switch roles, and repeat this exercise.
4. Ask all to share their thoughts about how it felt "listening" to nonverbal communication.

REF: YMCA Teen Leadership Programs, p.203 / Mary B. Zoller (12/97)

## **The Gift That Lasts**

*Purpose:* To help a group recognize its members as individuals. To help identify the needs of individuals and attempt to meet them. To practice nonthreatening ways of dealing with interpersonal conflicts.

*Value(s):* Caring

*Facility & Equipment:* 3x5 cards, one for each participant; Pencils/pens – one for each participant.

### *Description:*

1. Give each participant a 3x5 card.
2. Have all members write some "weakness" or concern they have about themselves, something that keeps them from being all they could be, on their cards. They should sign their cards with "Dear Abby" pseudonyms, such as "Shy" or "Discouraged," reflecting their problems.
3. Collect the cards and divide the group into threes. Give each triad three cards from people outside their small group.
4. After reading and discussing a card, members of the triad write a "gift" on the other side of the card – something that will help the person deal with his or her problem. Then they sign their names on the gift side.
5. When all groups signal that they are done, collect the cards. Lay all of the cards, problem side up, gift side down, on a table or in the center of the floor. Instruct each participant to find and collect his or her card and read the gift. Allow enough time for all who wish to discuss the gifts they have been given to locate one of the givers and have a short discussion.

REF: YMCA Teen Leadership Programs, p.107 / Mary B. Zoller (12/97)

## **The Outsiders**

*Value(s):* Respect

*Facility & Equipment:* None

### *Description:*

Place one group member outside a circle formed by others standing in a close huddle, arms on each others' shoulders and legs touching. The person outside tries to break into the circle. Members try to keep the person out. When a person succeeds – or gives up – the group, including the outsider, discusses feelings, interactions, and so on. How did it feel to be "selected" as the outsider? How did the others feel? The activity can be repeated with a different outsider.

REF: YMCA Teen Leadership Programs, p.101 / Mary B. Zoller (12/97)



## **Triangle of Love**

*Purpose:* To help participants identify positive ways to respond to others when there are disagreements on questions of faith.

*Value(s):* Caring

*Facility & Equipment:* Blank paper – one sheet for each participant; Pencils/pens – one for each participant.

*Description:*

1. Have each person draw a triangle on both sides of a sheet of paper.
2. Have each participant write in the triangle on one side all the people that he or she feels exhibit the theme "Love thy neighbor."
3. In the triangle on the other side of the paper, have each participant list all the things that she or he has done in the past year that exhibit helping a "neighbor."
4. Ask each participant to share with another member of the group and discuss why they chose these people and what they liked about them. Also, sharing their lists of what they feel they have done this past year to be helpful to others.
5. Discuss as a group.

REF: YMCA Teen Leadership Programs, p.181 / Mary B. Zoller (12/97)

## **Trust Shield**

*Purpose:* To provide the opportunity for participants to focus on their beliefs related to trust and to share these briefly with others.

*Value(s):* Honesty

*Facility & Equipment:* Blank paper – one sheet for each participant; Pencils/pens – one for each participant; Trust and Relationships – one copy for each participant; masking tape.

*Description:*

1. After reviewing the House Rules, give each participant a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask everyone to draw a shield and divide it into four sections, numbering them 1 through 4. Then read the following directions:
  - ◆ "In Section 1, put some words or pictures that say what you value most about being trusted."
  - ◆ "In Section 2, put some things that make it easy to trust someone."
  - ◆ "In Section 3, put symbols of things that cause us not to trust others."
  - ◆ "In Section 4, put some things that you value most about your family and closest friends."
  - ◆ Allow time for participants to complete all four drawings.
2. Subdivide the group into smaller groups of three and have each participant describe, section by section, what is on his or her shield.
3. Tape the shields on the wall or in some other prominent place, and let participants do a "gallery walk" and look at everyone else's shields.
4. Distribute copies of the Information Sheet: Trust and Relationships for all to read on their own.

## *Information Sheet*

### Trust and Relationships

- ◆ Trust must be present in order for two individuals to have a meaningful relationship. The best way to build trust is by following the time-honored principle from Matthew 7:12, "Do unto others as you would have the do unto you" - The Golden Rule.
- ◆ Start by accepting yourself for what you are; work at avoiding self-put-downs and negative judgements of yourself. Then do the same to others. People like to be accepted, and when acceptance is two-way, it enhances a relationship.
- ◆ The second factor important to building trust in a relationship is dependability. When you say you are going to do something, do it. Not doing it decreases trust; doing it increases trust.
- ◆ The third factor in building a trusting human relationship is consistency. You will feel better about yourself and your relationships will be enhanced if you say what you believe. Not doing so causes personal stress and confuses those with whom you are trying to build a relationship.
- ◆ The fourth and final factor in trust building is openness. Keep in touch. Share openly and frequently. Relationships are for sharing, caring, and listening. Include a commitment to openness, and trust will build.

REF: YMCA Teen Leadership Programs, p.217-218 / Mary B. Zoller (12/97)

### **TV Respect**

*Purpose:* To recognize respect and dis-respect in society.

*Value(s):* Respect

*Facility and Equipment:* A tv/vcr, video of TV show

#### *Description:*

1. This activity can be done either as a group at the YMCA or as an "assignment" for them to do on their own at home.
2. First discuss the meaning of respect and dis-respect. Look it up in the dictionary and have each child tell what it means to them.
3. Pick a favorite TV show and watch it and look for ways that the characters show respect and dis-respect (lack of respect). After the show, talk about examples of both that they saw. (If doing this as a group at the Y, make sure the show you watch is age appropriate) In the cases of disrespect, how could the characters have acted differently to show respect?

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION ACTIVITIES

### Grab the Bananas

*Purpose:* Conflict Resolution Skills – show the power of cooperation in conflict resolution.

*Time:* 30 minutes.

*Equipment:* Score-keeping cards.

#### *Description:*

1. Divide the youth in to groups of three, with two people as players – designate one as “A” and the other as “B” – and a third as a referee-scorekeeper.
2. Ask the youths to imagine the following scenario:  
You (A&B) are the only survivors of a shipwreck and have managed to reach, in a weakened condition, a remote desert island. You come from different countries and speak different languages so you can’t talk to each other. Rescue is uncertain; in any event it will not be possible for at least 10 days. The island contains one source of food – bananas. In your weak condition, you can harvest only four bananas a day. There is a chance that this may not be enough for both to survive.
3. You have two choices: you can share the four bananas evenly, or you can try to grab all four bananas. If both players grab, they will lose the bananas through their destruction. If one grabs and the other shares, the grabber gets all four bananas.
4. The referee will say, “1, 2, 3, show!” Each player will bring their hands up from under the table or from behind their backs at the same time. If your hands have an open palm, it means you’re sharing. If your hands are a closed fist, it means you’re grabbing. The referee will conduct ten rounds, one for each day on the island and will mark the score on the score card.
5. Discuss the game afterwards.
  - ◆ Did one party’s choices early in the game lead to mistrust and make it so that more got grabbed?
  - ◆ Did those who cooperated generally have a better chance of survival?
  - ◆ Did individuals attempt to use some sort of strategy
  - ◆ How might you have been able to communicate?
  - ◆ Would real people behave as they did in the game?
  - ◆ What if the situation changed so that the two parties saw themselves as enemies from the beginning?
  - ◆ What if both people were close friends and cared for each other very much?
  - ◆ Does this happen in real life?
  - ◆ How would a positive leader act in a situation like this?

### Grab the Bananas Score Sheet

If both A & B grab, A = 0 points; B = 0 points.

If both A & B share, A = 2 points; B = 2 points.

If A grabs & B shares, A = 4 points; B = 0 points.

If A shares & B grabs, A = 0 points; B = 4 points.

A	B
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.
TOTAL:	TOTAL:

## CONSTRUCTION GAME

*Purpose:* Communication Skills – Demonstrate the challenge of effectively understanding verbal messages.

*Time:* 45 minutes.

*Equipment:* Tinker toys, blocks, legos to build a model and provide each group with the same pieces used in the model.

### *Description:*

1. Build a structure using 10-30 building pieces. Put behind a screen or box to hide from participants.
2. Divide participants into small groups and seat them around a common work area. Give each group the exact same pieces (unassembled) that you used to build the model.
3. Have each group select one runner who will be the only person who can view the model. They are to direct the members of the group to produce a structure exactly like the one behind the screen. The runner is to do this by observing, racing back to the group and verbally instruct the group members on how to build the model. The runners cannot use body language and must clasp their hands behind their back when giving instructions.
4. When a group thinks they are finished, they should signal the facilitator who will compare it to the original. If identical, that group is declared the winners. If not, the facilitator returns the incorrect model to the group and they continue. After the first group has successfully completed their structure, the remaining groups should continue until done or until the frustration level becomes uncomfortable.
5. Debrief using the following questions:
  - ◆ What were examples of the runner using effective communication?
  - ◆ Did the runner give instructions that were too general and easily misunderstood?
  - ◆ Did the receivers provide direction through adequate feedback?
  - ◆ Why is feedback so critical?
  - ◆ Did all the group members participate?
  - ◆ Did the pressure of competition adversely affect the runner's ability to provide effective communication?
  - ◆ Did the group develop common terms for certain pieces?
  - ◆ What did the runner wish to express non-verbally that was more difficult to express verbally?
  - ◆ What kind of language or cultural differences affected the group's performance? What does that suggest about working in multicultural settings?
  - ◆ What does effective communication have to do with being a good leader?
  - ◆ How can you use what you've learned through this game to become a more effective communicator? More effective group member? More effective leader?

## **ZOMBIES**

*Purpose:* Appreciating Differences – show the value of diversity.

*Time:* 30 minutes.

*Equipment:* A whistle or other attention-getting device.

*Description:*

1. Explain to the group that they will become zombies in a few minutes. As zombies, they must all do the same things, though not necessarily at the same time.
2. Have the group decide on five things a zombie can do – sit down, stand up, walk around the room stiff-legged, sharpen pencils, etc. They can only do these five things and nothing else.
3. Explain that you will be the zombie patrol. If you see a zombie doing something they are not able to do, you will blow your whistle and all zombies must freeze until you count to fifteen.
4. Discuss –
  - ◆ What was it like to be a zombie?
  - ◆ After a while, how did it feel to always do the same things?
  - ◆ How does diversity make life more interesting?
  - ◆ What are some different types of diversity?
  - ◆ Are there ever problems related to diversity?
  - ◆ How does a leader feel about diversity?
  - ◆ How do they handle situations that may come up relating to diversity issues?

# **SAMPLE OF CLUB OFFICERS AND BYLAWS**

The following was provided by the Fort Bend Club out of the Houston District.

## **CLUB OFFICERS**

4.4 Duties of the President. The President shall preside at all meetings. He shall act as a liaison between the members of the Club and the YMCA Coordinator. He shall be responsible for scheduling necessary meetings, directing the Secretary to provide notification of those meetings, and performing any other duties normally associated with the office of President.

4.5 Duties of the Judicial Coordinator. The Judicial Coordinator shall train members participating in the judicial section, shall assist them in the formation of judicial teams, and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He shall schedule and preside at judicial training meetings. He shall be responsible for coordinating mock trials, with the purpose of allowing all teams the equal opportunity for training prior to competition.

4.6 Duties of the Legislative Coordinator. The Legislative Coordinator shall train members participating in the legislative section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He shall schedule and preside at legislative training meetings and shall serve as Parliamentarian at all official meetings of the Club. He shall prepare a plan for the allotment of the Club's legislative seats, which shall be subject to approval by majority vote of the officers.

4.7 Duties of the Media Coordinator. The Media Coordinator shall train members participating in the media section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He shall schedule and preside at media training meetings.

4.8 Duties of the Vice-President. The Vice-President shall assist the President, shall preside at all official meetings at which the President is not present, and shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Vice-President.

4.9 Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes at all official club meetings, issue informational notices to club members at the direction of the other officers, facilitate the registration processes, complete any necessary clerical work for the YMCA Coordinator and for the other officers, and fulfill any clerical duties that may arise in connection with the District and State Conferences. He shall be responsible for keeping the official membership roster of the Club and determining the voting strength of the membership. He shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Secretary.

4.10 Duties of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep the financial records of the Club, coordinate its fundraising activities, and perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Treasurer.

# CLUB BYLAWS SAMPLE

## Article 1. General Provisions

1.1 Club name. The name of this organization shall be the Fort Bend YMCA Texas Youth and Government Club, called "the Club."

1.2. YMCA Coordinator. The person designated by the Fort Bend YMCA to oversee and assist the Club shall hereinafter be known as "the YMCA Coordinator." All Club actions shall be subject to the approval of the YMCA Coordinator.

## Article 2. Membership

2.1 Eligibility for membership. Membership in the Club shall be open to any individual who is eligible to participate in the YMCA Texas Youth and Government program or who has participated in the program during the previous six months; and who is not a member of any other YMCA Texas Youth and Government club.

2.2 Requirements of membership. The membership of the Club shall consist of those who have registered with the Secretary and met all other requirements of membership.

2.3 Attendance at District Conference. All members shall be required to attend the District Conference. This requirement may be waived by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

2.4 Financial obligations. Payment of assessed dues by the specified deadline shall be a requirement to maintain membership. This requirement may be waived for individual members by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers

2.5 Fundraising. Participation in mandatory fundraising activities shall be a requirement of membership, but such requirement may be waived for individual members by majority vote of the Club or of the Club officers.

## Article 3. Meetings

3.1 Club Meetings. Meetings of the Club may be called by the President at his discretion. The President shall call a meeting upon the request of a majority of the Club officers or of one-third of the membership of the Club.

3.2 Procedure. All meetings shall be conducted according to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised except as specified in these bylaws or special rules of the Club.

3.3 Notification of meetings. Notification shall be provided to all members and interested parties at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. This notification shall include a summary of business to be conducted at the meeting. Meetings may be called with two days advance notice with the approval of a majority of the Club officers.

## Article 4. Officers

4.1 List of officers. The officers of the Club shall consist of the following: President, Judicial Coordinator, Legislative Coordinator, Media Coordinator, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

4.2 Terms of office. Each club officer shall serve a term of one year from the time of their election, or until their replacement is elected.

4.3 Vacancies. If the office of President shall fall vacant, the Vice-President shall assume



the office of President. If other offices shall fall vacant, the President shall appoint an acting replacement who shall serve until the election of a permanent replacement.

4.4 Duties of the President. The President shall preside at all meetings. He shall act as a liaison between the members of the Club and the YMCA Coordinator. He shall be responsible for scheduling necessary meetings, directing the Secretary to provide notification of those meetings, and performing any other duties normally associated with the office of President.

4.5 Duties of the Judicial Coordinator. The Judicial Coordinator shall train members participating in the judicial section, shall assist them in the formation of judicial teams, and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He shall schedule and preside at judicial training meetings. He shall be responsible for coordinating mock trials, with the purpose of allowing all teams the equal opportunity for training prior to competition.

4.6 Duties of the Legislative Coordinator. The Legislative Coordinator shall train members participating in the legislative section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He shall schedule and preside at legislative training meetings and shall serve as Parliamentarian at all official meetings of the Club. He shall prepare a plan for the allotment of the Club's legislative seats, which shall be subject to approval by majority vote of the officers.

4.7 Duties of the Media Coordinator. The Media Coordinator shall train members participating in the media section and shall act as liaison between them and the President and YMCA Coordinator. He shall schedule and preside at media training meetings.

4.8 Duties of the Vice-President. The Vice-President shall assist the President, shall preside at all official meetings at which the President is not present, and shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Vice-President.

4.9 Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes at all official club meetings, issue informational notices to club members at the direction of the other officers, facilitate the registration processes, complete any necessary clerical work for the YMCA Coordinator and for the other officers, and fulfill any clerical duties that may arise in connection with the District and State Conferences. He shall be responsible for keeping the official membership roster of the Club and determining the voting strength of the membership. He shall perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Secretary.

4.10 Duties of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep the financial records of the Club, coordinate its fundraising activities, and perform any other duties normally associated with the office of Treasurer.

4.11 Selection of Webmaster. By majority vote, the officers shall select the Webmaster. The Webmaster shall be responsible for the maintenance of and content of the Club website.

## Article 5. Nominations

5.1 Offices requiring nomination. Any member desiring to seek office at the District or State level must receive the nomination of the Club in order to do so.

5.2 Qualifications. A candidate for office must meet the applicable District and State qualifications for the office being sought, as well as being a member of the Club.

5.3 Filing deadline. All candidates seeking the nomination of the Club must declare to the President their intention to do so, prior to the specified filing deadline. This filing deadline

shall be determined by the President and announced at least two weeks in advance.

5.4 Necessity of nomination election. In the event that multiple candidates file for the same office, an election shall be held to determine the nominee of the Club. Two weeks notice of the election shall be required unless waived by majority vote of the Club officers.

5.5 Governor. Candidates for Governor shall be elected by the membership of the Club.

5.6 Section offices. Candidates for District or State section offices shall be elected by their respective sections.

## Article 6. Elections

6.1 Times of election. Officer elections shall be held annually, before June 1 but after the State conference. Nomination elections shall be held, as necessary, at a time chosen by the President and announced at least two weeks in advance. Nomination elections for statewide, judicial, legislative and media offices shall be held after the August meeting but before the registration deadline of the District Conference. Nomination elections for Hyde House offices shall be held after the District Conference but before the State Conference.

6.2 Method of voting. Voting in all officer elections and nomination elections shall be by secret ballot, with the exception of absentee ballots. Ballots which result in a tie shall be decided by a secret-ballot majority vote of the officers after the second ballot.

6.3 Absentee voting. Absentee voting via e-mail, phone, and written ballots shall be permitted in all elections. Absentee ballots must be received by the President, Vice-President, Secretary, or, in the case of section nomination elections, the respective section coordinator, before the election.

6.4 Coordinator elections. Candidates for section coordinator shall be elected by their respective sections.

## Article 7. Treasury

7.1 Dues. Any dues shall be assessed by majority vote of the membership of the Club.

7.2 Fundraising. Any Club fundraising efforts shall be approved by majority vote at a Club meeting, or by majority vote of the Club officers. In any case such that participation shall be a requirement of membership, efforts shall be ratified by majority vote of the membership of the Club.

## Article 8. Amendments

8.1 Adoption. These bylaws may be amended at any Club meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing, and distributed to the Club, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. But a majority vote of the Club membership shall be sufficient to adopt an amendment without prior notice.

8.2 Distribution of amendments. An amendment shall be distributed to the Club by the President or Secretary upon the request of any Club member.

*Last amended January 27, 2005*

Bylaws of the Fort Bend YMCA Texas Youth and Government Club

# HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF TEXAS YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

## History

The Texas Youth and Government Program was organized in 1946. Its first Legislature was held in December of 1947, under the chairmanship of Dr. Humphrey Lee, Chancellor, Southern Methodist University. The Texas Program was modeled after the New York State Program, and was organized under the auspices of the Southwest Area Council of YMCAs.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Youth and Government Program is to prepare a selected group of young people for moral and political leadership in the American democratic process by providing guidance, training and experience in the theory and practice of determining public policy on the state level. It is called "a laboratory in citizenship and government."

The program also affords youth the opportunity to comprehend the meaning and importance of the personal experience with the Judicial branch of our state government. The Judicial system of the Youth and Government Program began in Texas in 1960. Since then, other programs have been added including lobbyists, government planners and media. A complete list of program opportunities follows.

## What it is

It is a training program originally promoted and developed through the Hi-Y and Tri-Hi-Y Clubs or High School groups of the YMCA under the auspices of the Texas State Youth and government committee of YMCAs. It is an educationally sound method of learning about our process of government by providing opportunities for high school youth to study and debate public issues, write legislation, and participate in a Youth Legislature.

## YMCA Phases of Program

The Youth and Government Program is a leadership training experience in three phases: (1) local club training, (2) district training Conferences, (3) the annual Conference in the State Capitol replicating Texas Government and its functions. The program, operated entirely by the youth members, is centered in the local clubs, schools and communities with the YMCA Youth conference being the climax.

## Club Participation

Middle School, high school, homeschool and community groups with adult advisors have been chosen as the medium through which the program is conducted. They offer the best source of potential youth leadership on a co-ed basis and in the appropriate age group. They also have stability, experience, motivation and sense of purpose. Regular weekly meetings are scheduled lending themselves to the study and discussion of public affairs.

## PROGRAM SECTIONS

### **LEGISLATURE (Includes JuniorYG)**

The youth legislature is composed of the **JuniorYG, Hyde House, Hyde Senate, House of Representatives** and the State **Senate** with the appropriate officers for each body.

Members of the legislature prepare legislation (Bills) for consideration, debate and action. Research using the library, internet, interviews of experts and so forth to develop a strong bill is a must. Student will learn parliamentary procedure and oral presentation skills.

**Hyde House** targets first year students in Legislative. Typically, freshman or first time sophomores enter this section.

**Hyde Senate** is for first year or second year students with more experience in legislature.

**JuniorYG** is middle school students. JuniorYG participate in the local conference and/or events. In February JYG participants attend the JuniorYG State Conference. At the State Conference there are four sections: **House, Senate, Duran House and Ambassador House** (Middle School) with appropriate officers for each.

Students that have participated in this section for two years may not have to go to Hyde House when they enter high school but may be able to go to the House of Representatives if there is space available.

### **JUDICIARY (TRIAL AND APPELLATE) High School Only**

The judicial program including the trial and appellate courts, provide opportunities for youth to experience the state system of jurisprudence and law enforcement. Trial courts are held with youth judges, attorneys, and witnesses. Some of what students will learn in this section: knowledge of legal procedure, ability to communicate, questioning skills, reasoning ability, knowledge of law, organization, critical thinking, preparation and teamwork.

### **NEWS MEDIA (PRINT, BROADCAST, and Cyber Media) High School Only**

Reporting and editing of the news has become a very influential factor in government. News media trains youth in political reporting skills using different outlets: Newspaper, Video News broadcast and web pod casting and blogging. Students must create a newspaper, news broadcast, web podcast or blog. Steps to be in media: 1. Student selects which media they want to be in. 2. Complete the state assignment by the deadline. 3. Based on assignments submitted, students are selected to be part of the District Media Staff. 4. Participate in District Conference 5. The best from each District are selected to be part of the State Y&G Media Staff.



### **STATE AFFAIRS FORUM High School Only**

This program provides an opportunity for students to present proposals for the solution of state, national and international problems. Working in teams of three students, they develop and present their proposals. The proposals are reviewed by youth leadership and offered as ideas for future legislation. Research, writing, debating and development of visuals for their proposal are part of this section.

**MODEL UNITED NATIONS High School Only** While focusing on role-playing an “adopted” country, students in grades 9-12 exercised the arts of compromise and diplomacy to attempt to solve pressing global problems. Model United Nations aims to teach students to be responsible “world citizens” in our global community.

**LOBBYIST (STATE ONLY)**

The lobbyist program is designed to provide experienced legislative delegates the opportunity to work with the total legislative body. Students attempt to influence the outcome of action on bills through participation in hearing committees, access to the various news media outlets and interaction with representatives and senators. Lobbyist participants are also involved with the Youth Governor and his/her cabinet.

**Governor's Cabinet (State Only)**

A select group of students works with the Youth Governor as part of his advisory team. Students represent the different Districts in the state. Upperclassmen are selected for this group. Students learn the importance of different point of views, critical thinking, communication, teamwork and effective leadership.

**Officers**

Students can run for office such as: Governor, Attorney General, Chief Justice, Print Editor, Executive Broadcast Producer, State Affairs Forum Chair, Speaker of the- House, Hyde House, & JuniorYG House along with Senate President Pro-Tem. Eligible students run at the local District Election and the winners of each District Election then run at the State Election. Students must develop and implement their campaign strategy. They will learn the importance of different point of views, listening, critical thinking, communication, teamwork and effective leadership.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT PROGRAM**

Participation in the Texas Youth and Government Program for many clubs is a year long activity. However, the most active months begin with the school opening in August and conclude with the State Conference which is usually held in January and February.

There are many details to be handled and deadlines to be met. A calendar of events and deadlines will be sent to each YMCA early in September and distributed to each club. Failure to meet some deadlines may disqualify a club from participation.

Bulletins will be given to participating YMCAs beginning in September. A schedule of these bulletins and their content will be sent with the first bulletin.

### **How to Start**

There is no one way to start participation in the YMCA Youth and Government Club. However, there is one basic requirement that youth must be a member of a YMCA sponsored club and this club must have a minimum of ten members.

There are three ways in which high school age youth are organized into clubs.

**School-Sponsored Groups:** Most of the groups are a part of the high school and/or middle schools. A faculty person may be the sponsor and the YMCA club supervisor assists the sponsor as needed providing all Youth and Government information. Home schools are another groups supporting YG.

**YMCA Professional Staff Sponsors:** Many programs are sponsored by YMCA professional staff who meet with interested youth and gives them help in organizing clubs. The staff person usually will assist in finding a volunteer sponsor after the club is organized. In some situations, the Y staff person may remain as the sponsor.

**YMCA Volunteers:** Many times adult volunteers in YMCAs or in the community will become sponsors of youth groups. This often happens when adults become acquainted with young people in their neighborhoods and want to help advance the Youth and Government Programs.

**ALL CLUBS MUST PARTNER TO THE LOCAL YMCA. IF THERE IS NOT ONE, PLEASE CONTACT STATE DIRECTOR TO ESTABLISH YOUR CLUB AS AN INDEPENDENT CLUB.**

## **CLUB PLANNING FOR YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

At an early meeting of the club the members should review the total program. After this review, members can determine the section in which they will enroll. At this time the club can decide if it will sponsor a candidate for one of the officer positions.

Legislative delegates should begin immediately to consider state issues for possible bills. Visits to state legislators, state departments and careful reading of newspapers are a good source for real issues. Under the legislative section of this manual readers will find instructions on how to write a bill.

Judicial delegates should pursue their interest by visits to a real court, talks with attorneys and judges to gain as much information as possible about the judicial system. The District Conference director will send out a case to be tried at the District Conference and Attorneys can prepare for the trials.

News Media - print editors and reporters - will publish the Austin Conference newspaper. Any preparation that these delegates can make before coming to Austin will help in their work. It is suggested that they prepare by getting as much information as they can on how to interview people, how to report on legislative and judicial activity, how to write a good news story or editorial, and where to find news. Members of your city's newspaper staff would be a good resource for this preparation. News Media (broadcast) will produce a video tape in Austin.

State Affairs Forum and Model United Nations participants should begin research for and preparation of position papers or Proposals on pre-assigned proposal topics.

## **THE COST AND FUNDING OF THE PROGRAM**

The delegate's expenses for the Youth and Government Program are:

- District Conference registration fee and travel
- Austin Conference registration fee and travel
- Hotel Room
- Meals in Austin
- Extra spending money

The registration fees for District and the Austin Conference will be announced in one of the first bulletins. Hotel room rates will be announced early in the year also. The registration fees and all Hotel monies (for Austin Conference) must be paid before going to the conferences.

Registration fees are determined by cost and plans for each conference.

Most of the clubs have fund raising projects during the Fall months. These projects have included; candy sales, bake sales, pancake breakfasts, shows, dances and athletic events.

Organizations such service clubs, Women's Clubs, foundations and corporations have responded to request for contributions.

## **PLANNING FOR THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

Each participating YMCA endorses a Participation Agreement indicating its intention to participate in the program by providing leadership and supporting the rules and policies of Youth and Government. Forms are provided for this action.

Organize youth clubs. Each must have a minimum of ten members.

Develop a schedule of regular meetings.

Begin a careful study of state issues, and news reporting, etc.

Consider nominating club members for office (see section on qualifications and officers to be chosen).

Send to your District Conference Director the following:

1. Registration List for Delegates to District Conference
2. Registration Fees
3. Legislative Bills
4. Officer Nomination Forms
5. State Affairs Forum Proposals
6. Attorney Team Forms
7. Media assignments



Determine transportation to the District Conference. Are parents dropping their child off to the location of District conference? Is the school or YMCA providing transportation? Is there an additional cost for this?

Provide a letter to parents with information such as where the district conference will be, time to meet, dress code expectation, time to drop off and pick up, information if they want to come see their child at the competition, supplies to bring (a pen), section materials such as a copy of their Bill.

## **Planning for Austin**

Soon after District Conferences each YMCA will receive delegate allocations for each phase of the program. (See Calendar)

SEND TO YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT HEADQUARTERS

1. Individual delegate and advisor registration forms with fees (see calendar)
2. Registration form
3. Bills, proposals, position papers, etc. needed to register

### **Hotel Reservations**

Reservations for hotel rooms should be made directly with the State Director. Four delegates will be housed in each room when possible. Forms will be sent by the State Director within one of the Bulletins.

### **Forms, Etc.**

All forms and other material referred to will be mailed to each YMCA.

# YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

## **Board of Management**

A Board of Management determines Youth and Government policy, oversees the program, controls the budget and directs all activities. The Board membership is representative of the participating YMCA's and youth delegates. The membership of the Board has 30 persons. Each district is represented by one staff and one lay person and a third person from either criteria. The 4 youth officers are members. Nine members at large are elected. The supervisor of the State Director is also a member. This program is a Branch of the YMCA of Greater Houston, Houston, Texas.

## **State Director**

A part-time Director is employed to direct the program. This person is employed through the YMCA of Greater Houston.

## **Staff Program Section Leaders**

The Staff Program Section Leaders volunteer to work with the State Director in managing sections of the program. Many other volunteers are needed to give leadership to groups, committees, legislature, trials and many other activities.

## **Youth and Government Districts**

Texas is divided into eight Youth and Government Districts. Each year, a one day conference is held in each District. The District Conference is a training experience to prepare delegates for the Austin Conference and to nominate officers and other youth leaders for Austin.

Delegates are required to attend a District Conference to qualify for attendance at Austin. A YMCA may send as many delegates as desired to the District Conferences and allocation of Austin delegates is based on District Conference participation.

A YMCA staff person in each District is appointed Conference Director and manages the Conference in cooperation with other District leaders.

General rules for management and procedures at the District Conference are explained in this manual. It is the intent that District procedures be the same as those used in Austin. This Resource Manual should be consulted carefully.

## **Districts**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Odessa and Midland  | 5. Dallas, Palestine, Corsicana, Tyler, and Abilene                    |
| 2. Austin, Victoria, Killeen, Round Rock, and Waco; Corpus Christi | 6. El Paso and West Texas  |
| 3. Houston, Port Arthur, and Beaumont                              | 7. San Antonio, Valley, and Corpus Christi (currently with District 2) |
| 4. Arlington, Fort Worth, Cleburne, and Wichita Falls              | 8. Amarillo  |



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## **TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

### **YMCA YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT**

The Texas YMCA's programs actively support the schools by helping students develop and demonstrate:

- Habits that will lead to a successful future in school and work
- Growth in concepts such as task management and flexibility, self-control, and learning to make decisions based on ethical values
- Responsible and caring behavior
- Understanding of alternative perspectives, world-views, and multicultural issues
- Critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving skills
- Organized reasoning and thought patterns

Examples in Social Studies:

- YG empowers students to learn how the government functions including understanding the historical context while analyzing its response to current issues.
- YG delegates are given the opportunity to be part of a legislative body. Interacting with peers requires compromise, cooperation, and evaluation of both conflicting and overlapping societal priorities when dealing with a scarcity of resources.
- Participating students develop and support their own ideas through logical, justified, and suitable explanations appropriate to the topic and the audience.
- As a part of the legislative debate, students engage their audience, utilizing authentic communication skills.
- Voting on legislation and candidates allows students to apply critical thinking and evaluation skills with real and immediate feedback.

Practical Living and Vocational Skills

- Self-Advocacy
- Respect
- Cooperation
- Team Building

Writing Skills

- Developing a cohesive, well-developed argument supported by concrete facts
- Articulating a position in a logical, well-developed manner
- Engaging the audience with a topic that is coherent and relevant to their interests



## HIGH SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Our program supports the Texas Department of Education's following learning goals and expectations.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS, comprise the state-mandated curriculum that establish what every student, from elementary school through high school, should know and be able to do.

### PSYCHOLOGY

#### RULE §113.45

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Science of psychology. The student differentiates the processes of theory development and validation.           | 12. Individual experience. The student understands the multifaceted aspects of mental health.  |
| 3. Science of psychology. The student understands the relationship between biology and behavior.                   | 13. The individual in society. The student will understand the influence of society and culture on behavior and cognition.   |
| 4. Science of psychology. The student understands how sensations and perceptions influence cognition and behavior. | 14. Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. |
| 5. Individual development. The student understands that development is a life-long process.                        | 15. Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.  |
| 6. Individual development. The student understands behavioral and social learning theories.                        | 16. Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.                           |
| 7. Individual identity. The student understands the principles of motivation and emotion.                          | 17. Social studies skills. The student develops long-term and short-term goal-setting skills for individual and community problem solving.   |
| 11. Individual experience. The student understands basic elements of cognition.                                    |  |

### SOCIOLOGY

#### RULE §113.46

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2. Foundations of sociology. The student understands how society evolves and cause and effect of social and institutional change. | 5. Culture and social structure. The student differentiates and recognizes examples of subculture and counterculture. |
| 3. Culture and social structure. The student examines world cultures.   | 6. Individual and society. The student understands the process of socialization.                                      |
| 4. Culture and social structure. The student understands types of groups and their functions.                                     | 10. Social inequality. The student understands the nature of social stratification in society.                        |
|   | 11. Social inequality. The student understands the impact of race and ethnicity on society                            |



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12. Social inequality. The student understands changing societal views on gender, age, and health.

13. Social institutions. The student identifies the basic social institution of the family and explains its influences on society.

14. Social institutions. The student identifies the basic social institutions of economics and politics and explains their influence on society.

15. Social institutions. The student identifies the basic social institutions of education and religion and explains their influence on society.

16. Social institutions. The student understands the basic social institutions of science and the mass media and their influence on society.

17. Changing world. The student understands how population and urbanization contribute to a changing social world.

18. Changing world. The student understands how collective behavior, social movements, and modernization contribute to a changing social world.

19. Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

## **UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

## **RULE §113.44**

7. Government. The student understands the American beliefs and principles reflected in the U.S. Constitution and why these are significant.

8. Government. The student understands the structure and functions of the government created by the U.S. Constitution.

9. Government. The student understands the concept of federalism.

10. Government. The student understands the processes for filling public offices in the U.S. system of government.

11. Government. The student understands the role of political parties in the U.S. system of government.

12. Government. The student understands the similarities and differences that exist among the U.S. system of government and other political systems.

13. Citizenship. The student understands rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

14. Citizenship. The student understands the difference between personal and civic responsibilities.

15. Citizenship. The student understands the importance of voluntary individual participation in the U.S. constitutional republic.

16. Citizenship. The student understands the importance of the expression of different points of view in a constitutional republic

18. Science, technology, and society. The student understands the role the government plays in developing policies and establishing conditions that influence scientific discoveries and technological innovations.

19. Science, technology, and society. The student understands the impact of advances in science and technology on government and society.

20. Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

21. Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

22. Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.



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## **COLLEGE READINESS & STUDY SKILLS**

### **RULE §110.48**

1. The student reads widely for a variety of purposes from numerous sources and cultures.
2. The student builds an extensive vocabulary through reading and systematic word study.
3. The student comprehends texts using a variety of strategies.
4. The student reads critically to evaluate texts and the authority of sources.
6. The student expresses and supports responses to various types of texts.

## **VISUAL MEDIA & PRODUCTION**

### **Media Students**

### **RULE §110.49**

1. The student recognizes/interprets visual representations as they apply to visual media.
2. The student analyzes and critiques the significance of visual representations.
3. The student produces visual representations that communicate with others.

## **CREATIVE WRITING**

### **RULE §110.52**

1. The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes to develop versatility as a writer.
2. The student selects and uses recursive writing processes for self-initiated and assigned writing.
3. The student applies the conventions of usage and the mechanics of written English to communicate clearly and effectively.
4. The student evaluates his/her own writing and the writings of others.

## **RESEARCH & TECHNICAL WRITING**

### **RULE §110.53**

1. The student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences.
2. The student selects and uses recursive writing processes for self-initiated and assigned writing.
3. The student writes to investigate self-selected and assigned topics.
4. The student applies the conventions of usage and mechanics of written English.
5. The student evaluates his/her own writing and the writing of others.



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## **PUBLIC SPEAKING I, II, III**

## **RULE §110.57**

2. Invention. The student plans speeches.
3. Organization. The student organizes speeches.
5. Proofs and appeals. The student uses valid proofs and appeals in speeches.

7. Delivery. The student uses appropriate strategies for rehearsing and presenting speeches.

## **COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS**

## **RULE §110.58**

1. Communication process. The student demonstrates knowledge of various communication processes in professional and social contexts.
2. Interpersonal. The student uses appropriate interpersonal communication strategies in professional and social context.
3. Group communication. The student communicates effectively in groups in professional and social contexts.
4. Presentations. The student makes and evaluates formal and informal professional presentations.

## **DEBATE I, II, III**

## **RULE §110.60**

1. Role in society. The student examines the historical and contemporary contributions of debate in decision-making and democratic processes.
2. Analysis of issues. The student analyzes controversial issues.
3. Propositions of value. The student develops and demonstrates skills for debating propositions of value.
4. Propositions of policy. The student develops and demonstrates skills for debating propositions of policy.
5. Logic. The student applies critical thinking, logic, and reasoning in debate.
6. Proof. The student utilizes research and proof in debate.
7. Case construction. The student identifies and applies the basic concepts of debate case construction.
8. Refutation. The student identifies and applies the basic concepts of argumentation and refutation.
9. Delivery. The student uses effective communication skills in debating.



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## JOURNALISM

## RULE §110.62

### Media Students

1. The student demonstrates an understanding of media development, press law, and responsibility
2. The student demonstrates an understanding of the different forms of media and the different types of journalistic writing.
3. The student reports and writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and researches self-selected topics to write journalistic texts.
4. The student demonstrates understanding of the principles of publishing through design using available technologies.
5. The student demonstrates an understanding of the economics of publishing.

## PHOTO JOURNALISM

### Media Students

## RULE §110.65

1. The student interprets/critiques visual representations.
2. The student produces visual representations that communicate with others.
3. The student incorporates photographs into journalistic publications.





## MIDDLE SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Our program supports the Texas Department of Education's following learning goals and expectations.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS, comprise the state-mandated curriculum that establish what every student, from elementary school through high school, should know and be able to do.

### Social Studies Grade 6

### TEKS Chapter 113, Subchapter B, Rule §113.18

**6.11 Government.** The student understands the concepts of limited and unlimited governments.

**6.12 Government.** The student understands various ways in which people organize governments.

**6.14 Citizenship.** The student understands the relationship among individual rights, responsibilities, duties, and freedoms in societies with representative governments.

**6.21 Social studies skills.** The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

**6.22 Social studies skills.** The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

**6.23 Social studies skills.** The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.

### Language Arts Grade 6

### TEKS Chapter 110, Subchapter B, Rule §110.18

**6.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development.** Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing.

**6.11 Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Persuasive Text.** Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis.

**6.12 Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Procedural Texts.** Students understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents.

**6.14 Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

**6.17 Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts.** Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and

information to specific audiences for specific purposes.

**6.18 Writing/Persuasive Texts.** Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues.

**6.19 Oral and Written Conventions/Conventions.** Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing.

**6.22 Research/Research Plan.** Students ask open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them.

**6.23 Research/Gathering Sources.** Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather.



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**6.24 Research/Synthesizing Information.**

Students clarify research questions and evaluate and synthesize collected information.

**6.25 Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas.** Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience.

**6.26 Listening and Speaking/Listening.**

Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings.

**6.27 Listening and Speaking/Speaking.**

Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.

**6.28 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork.**

Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.

**Social Studies, Grade 7**

**TEKS Chapter 113, Subchapter B, Rule §113.19**

**7.14 Government.** The student understands the basic principles reflected in the Texas Constitution.

**7.15 Government.** The student understands the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution.

**7.16 Citizenship.** The student understands the rights and responsibilities of Texas citizens in a democratic society.

**7.17 Citizenship.** The student understands the importance of the expression of different points of view in a democratic society.

**7.18 Citizenship.** The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society.

**7.21 Social studies skills.** The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

**7.22 Social studies skills.** The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

**7.23 Social studies skills.** The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.

**Language Arts Grade 7**

**TEKS Chapter 110, Subchapter B, Rule §110.19**

**7.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development.**

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing.

**7.11 Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Persuasive Text.**

Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis.

**7.12 Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Procedural Texts.**

Students understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents.

**7.14 Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

**7.18 Writing/Persuasive Texts.** Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues.

**7.19 Oral and Written**

**Conventions/Conventions.** Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing.



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**7.23 Research/Gathering Sources.** Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather.

**7.24 Research/Synthesizing Information.** Students clarify research questions and evaluate and synthesize collected information.

**7.25 Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas.** Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience.

**7.26 Listening and Speaking/Listening.** Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings.

**7.27 Listening and Speaking/Speaking.** Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.

**7.28 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork.** Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.

## Social Studies Grade 8

## TEKS Chapter 113, Subchapter B, Rule §113.20

**8.15 Government.** The student understands the American beliefs and principles reflected in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and other important historic documents.

**8.16 Government.** The student understands the process of changing the U.S. Constitution and the impact of amendments on American society.

**8.17 Government.** The student understands the dynamic nature of the powers of the national government and state governments in a federal system.

**8.18 Government.** The student understands the impact of landmark Supreme Court cases.

**8.19 Citizenship.** The student understands the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States.

**8.20 Citizenship.** The student understands the importance of voluntary individual participation in the democratic process.

**8.21 Citizenship.** The student understands the importance of the expression of different points of view in a constitutional republic.

**8.22 Citizenship.** The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic.

**8.29 Social studies skills.** The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

**8.30 Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.**

**8.31 Social studies skills.** The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.

**8.32 Social studies skills.** The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.



**Language Arts Grade 8**

**TEKS Chapter 110, Subchapter B, Rule §110.20**

**8.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development.**

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing.

**8.11 Comprehension of Informational**

**Text/Persuasive Text.** Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis.

**8.12 Comprehension of Informational**

**Text/Procedural Texts.** Students understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents.

**8.14 Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

**8.15 Writing/Literary Texts.** Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas.

**8.18 Writing/Persuasive Texts.** Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues.

**8.19 Oral and Written**

**Conventions/Conventions.** Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing.

**8.22 Research/Research Plan.** Students ask open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them.

**8.23 Research/Gathering Sources.** Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather.

**8.24 Research/Synthesizing Information.**

Students clarify research questions and evaluate and synthesize collected information.

**8.25 Research/Organizing and Presenting**

**Ideas.** Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience.

**8.26 Listening and Speaking/Listening.**

Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings.

**8.27 Listening and Speaking/Speaking.**

Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.

**8.28 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork.**

Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.