

PART TWO: HELPING OTHERS

ABC...Action!

Place three pieces of flip chart paper together on a wall and draw a horizontal line in the middle across all three sheets. Mark off 26 vertical points and write in a letter of the alphabet above each:



Divide the group into teams of five to six members each and distribute 26 paper strips to each team. Make sure each team has a different color. Explain that you will call out a letter of the alphabet and team members will think of an action for helping others that begins with that letter and write it on the strip of paper. Give the group a few examples:

- E: Encourage a friend to volunteer with you.
- H: Help clean up your neighborhood.
- N: Notice if someone needs help.
- R: Remember to say please and thank you.

Explain that the goal is to think of an action for each letter of the alphabet. As you call out each letter, the first team to write an action holds up the strip of paper, reads the action aloud and gets to place it near the letter on the flip chart. If two teams think of an action at the same time, they both get to place their strips on the chart. The team with the most paper strips on the chart at the end of the game is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Strips of colored paper (different color for each team; 26 per team)

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Tell Me a Story

Have youth work in teams to decide on a story they would like to make into an audio recording for someone in need. If the Club does not have an extensive library, team members can search online for a short story of their choosing. Ask members to decide also who they think might benefit most from having a recorded story. Encourage youth to think about a possible audience:

- blind people
- elderly people
- children in a pediatric hospital
- veterans
- soldiers deployed overseas

Instruct youth to divide the story into segments, one for each team member, and practice reading it one time before recording. Give each team a tape recorder and have them tape their reading of the story; one team member can work the recorder while another reads. When they are finished with their audio stories, help each team identify the best way to get copies made and sent to their selected audience.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- Selected book or story
- Tape recorders

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

People in the News

Have youth form into small groups. Instruct them to visit Internet news sites and choose several news articles of particular interest to them. Ask team members to discuss the individuals in the news articles they chose, and think about which one they would like to interact with or write to. Point out that the goal is to select someone who is making a difference in the world and then write to that person to express the group's views on the subject of the news article. Instruct team members to compose a brief letter to the newsmaker explaining why they are writing, acknowledging the individual's work in making change and detailing the group's ideas for ideas that might bring about further change in this area. Once their letters are written, encourage youth to search on the Internet for ways to reach the individual, either by e-mail or regular mail.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Dear Abby

Ask youth to form into pairs or small teams and discuss what issues they think most people their age are most concerned about. Instruct them to decide on the one that is most important to them and write one question to Dear Abby on an index card. Collect the cards and place them in a container. Have each pair or team select a question and search the Internet for information that might help them answer the question. Encourage teams to write an advice-column style letter in a Word document and print it out. Post teams' responses on a bulletin board for all members to see.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Index cards
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Clean Up Your Act!

Divide the group into teams. Instruct team members to think about problems in their community that they would like to do something about. Encourage youth to consider issues such as the following:

- litter
- discrimination and prejudice
- gang violence or vandalism
- drunk driving
- illiteracy

Instruct teams to come to a consensus on the topic that most concerns them and brainstorm ways people - including them - might be able to help address it. Ask them to create posters to promote their idea. When the posters are completed, encourage youth to ask local merchants, libraries and other establishments to put up the posters in their places of business.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Poster board
- Art materials

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Imagine

Hang a long piece of newsprint paper on the wall. Remind members of the song "Imagine" by John Lennon and ask them to think about the ideas in the song. Write the lyrics on a flip chart if members are not familiar with them. Encourage youth to envision what their perfect world would look like and what it would have in it. Instruct youth to work together to create a mural on the newsprint, combining all of their ideas to create an "Imagine" mural.

Lyrics:

*Imagine there's no Heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace*

*You may say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world*

*You may say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one*

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Newsprint paper
- Markers
- Art materials

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

International Pen Pals

Begin the activity by telling members about a recent survey of foreign teenagers by Boston University. Point out that a study of youth in 12 countries showed that "the majority of teenagers viewed Americans as violent, materialistic and greedy, lacking family and religious values." Explain that one way to combat this prejudice is to communicate with people in other countries. Encourage members to write letters to another young person in a country very different from the U.S. Point out that they can write about their everyday lives and will learn about everyday life in another country. Members can find international pen pals through online sites such as Penpal International or International PenFriends.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Let Your Voice Be Heard

Promote good citizenship by encouraging youth to write letters to the editor of the local newspaper about an issue that affects them as well as other members of the community. Members may want to write about topics such as the following:

- a new bike path for safer bike-riding
- law enforcement patrols in certain areas
- clean-up of parks or vacant lots
- flower- or tree-planting near schools
- benches and shelters at bus stops
- fire safety presentations for residents
- a blood drive
- increasing recycling among residents

Encourage members to send their letters by e-mail or regular mail or, if possible, to hand-deliver them.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Anti-Cruelty Society

Divide the group into small teams. Ask teams to talk about ways they have seen youth inflict cruelty against each other through hazing, bullying or outright violence. Encourage them to come up with examples and then to brainstorm some ways to counter this type of violence. Instruct each team to come up with one form of cruelty they have witnessed or experienced and then to identify three different ways to address or combat it. Give each team a sheet of flip chart paper and ask members to use it to record their ideas. When teams are finished, ask members to move to the next team's flip chart and add any new ideas to that topic.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

One-for-All Candy Hunt

Tell members that they are going to participate in a candy hunt. Explain that you have hidden candy throughout the room (or Club), enough for each member to have one. Tell youth that there are special rules for the candy hunt:

- Each member may pick up only one piece of candy.
- If a member finds more than one piece, he or she may not pick it up, but may help others who have not found one by giving hints.
- Pointing or leading is not allowed.
- No one may eat the candy until everyone has a piece.

Begin the candy hunt, making sure members are following the rules. When all members have found a piece of candy, congratulate them on making sure everyone had a chance to enjoy the game.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- One candy bar or piece per member (hidden throughout the room or Club)

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Good Deeds...Good People

Have youth work in pairs to search the Internet for people who have done something for the common good. Point out that there are many ways for people to help others. Give an example by talking about Bill Gates - through his company - equipping Clubs with computers. While youth are completing their research, distribute two index cards to each pair and ask them to write the person's name on one index card and, on the other, a brief description of what the person did for the common good. Collect all the cards from pairs and distribute them at random to all members. Ask members who have the description cards - one at a time - to read aloud what the person has done. Ask those who think they have the matching card to read theirs and determine the correct match by group consensus.

Activity Type

Pair and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Index cards
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

The Giving Game

Explain to youth that they will play a game called "The Giving Game." Say that the goal of the game is to do an act of kindness or a good deed for someone else. Ask members to think about something nice they can do for someone else in the group - something they are willing to do without telling the other person who did it. Distribute several cards to each member and ask them to make two or three good deed cards. Instruct youth to:

- Write a good deed on each card.
- Decorate the cards.
- Make a symbol or an icon that identifies the cards as made by them (*not* their name).

Collect the cards and distribute several at random to each member. Have youth walk around the room and pass along their cards to other members. (Have a few extras on hand to make sure everyone receives one.) Encourage members to think about how it feels to receive a card. Allow youth to continue to pass along the cards for a few minutes. Ask members if any of them received their own good deed cards back.

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Colored card stock (cut to 3" x 2" cards, several per member)
- Art Materials

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Pocket Poems

Have members work in pairs or small groups to find poems and decorate them to send to soldiers deployed overseas. Explain that during World War II, soldiers were often given "pocket poems" to carry with them for courage, inspiration and comfort. Encourage youth to think about the kinds of messages that might be uplifting to soldiers. Have them search the Internet to identify several poems they think would be good, decorate them and write an appreciative message. If any member knows someone personally who is in the armed forces overseas, he or she can personalize the poem and message.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Paper
- Art materials
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Secret Pals

Have each member write a positive comment about every other youth in the group. Instruct members not to write their names on the cards, but to write the name of the person the comment is for. Collect the cards and distribute them to recipients. Give youth a few minutes to read their comments to themselves. Encourage youth to keep their cards and read them from time to time to remember their positive qualities.

Optional: Have youth make a colorful collage of the cards they received.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Index cards

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Send Your Love

Ask youth if they know a song by Sting called "Send Your Love." Write selected lyrics on a white board or flip chart. Instruct youth to brainstorm ways they can "send their love into the future." Explain that the group will be making a time capsule for future Club kids. Challenge youth to think about their hopes and dreams for the future - ways they think the world will be better, particularly for young people. Ask members to write each of their ideas on a piece of construction paper and decorate it. Have them roll the papers into scrolls and tie with ribbon. Place all of youths' hopes and well wishes for the future into the box with the lid and seal it. Tell youth that the box will be kept for future Club members to open in the future and receive the wishes.

Lyrics:

*Inside your mind is a relay station
A mission probe into the unknowing
We send a seed into a distant future
Then we can watch the galaxies growing*

*This ain't no time for doubting your power
This ain't no time for hiding your care
You're climbing down from an ivory tower
You've got a stake in the world we ought to share*

*You see the stars are moving so slowly
But still the earth is moving so fast
Can't you see the moon is so lonely
She's still trapped in the pain of the past*

*This is the time of the worlds colliding
This is the time of the kingdoms falling
This is the time of the worlds dividing
Time to heed your call*

*Send your love into the future
Send your precious love into some distant time
And fix that wounded planet with the love of your healing
Send your love
Send your love*

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Small box with lid
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Art materials
- Colored ribbon

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Kindness Quilt

Tell members that the group is going to make a "kindness quilt" to remind them of ways to be kind to others.

Explain that each patch in the quilt will contain a drawing and words describing an act of kindness. Give examples:

- Say thank you when a friend helps you out.
- Be a buddy to someone.
- Open the door for another person.

Distribute construction paper and art materials. Ask youth to cut the construction paper in different colors into 5" x 5" squares. Instruct them to write and draw their acts of kindness on the squares. When everyone has finished, piece them together on the floor into a quilt. Hang on a bulletin board or wall in the Club for all members and staff to see.

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers
- Art materials
- Scissors
- Tape

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Share a Smile

Have youth "share a smile" with others who need it. Explain to members that each of them will be making something special to send to someone who could use a boost, such as:

- elderly people
- children in a pediatric hospital
- veterans
- soldiers deployed overseas

Ask youth to use their creativity to make one of the following items:

- an illustrated letter
- bookmark
- door hanger
- holiday greeting card
- placemat

When youth have finished their gifts, help them figure out the best way to deliver them to the recipients.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers
- Art materials
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Show Me the Money!

Have youth work in teams. Read them the following story and ask them to brainstorm ideas about how they might respond to this situation. Instruct members to come to a consensus and then write their idea on a flip chart page.

A wealthy uncle has passed away and left you a large sum of money. You know that your uncle would have liked the money to go toward something useful, something for the common good. What will you do? Will you donate the money to a foundation, create your own non-profit organization, use the money to support yourself so you can devote your time to volunteering or use it for your own education so you can tackle some of the issues facing society? Which do you think will have the most impact?

When all teams have finished, ask them to share their ideas with the large group and explain their reasoning.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Talent Pool

Instruct youth to draw a nine-box grid on their papers, with three rows across and three rows down. Ask members to think about the things they can do, talents and strengths they have. Give a few examples:

- draw
- write
- play basketball
- sing
- speak

Instruct youth to write one of their talents in each of the nine squares. Have them write one sentence for each telling how they can use their talents to help others.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Sticky Situations

Write several hypothetical situations on index cards. Situations should require some thought on the part of Club members:

- A close friend is thinking about using drugs.
- You go to a party with a driver who drinks and then wants to drive home.
- A classmate asks you to give him the test questions to a test you've already taken.
- A popular girl at school is nice to you but treats your best friend poorly.

Divide the large group into teams and give one situation to each group. Instruct team members to come up with a skit or one-act play to illustrate how they would respond to the situation they have chosen. Ask teams, one at a time, to perform their skit for the large group.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Hypothetical situations (one for each group)

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- The Arts

What Gives?

Divide the group into four teams. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and markers. Assign each group one of the following four words and have them write it in big letters in the middle of their flip chart page:

- giving
- goodness
- human
- spirit

Instruct each team to work with its assigned word similar to a crossword puzzle, using words that represent acts of kindness, caring, sharing, positive spirit, etc. They will build on the original word, one letter at a time, broadening up and out with each word connected to another by a common letter. Challenge team members to come up with as many words as they can. The team that builds the puzzle with the most words is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Step Into the Future

Have youth work in teams to brainstorm ideas about what they think the future will be like. Encourage them to envision a future where there is peace, no violence, people are kinder and take care of the environment. Ask teams to write a creative depiction of this future world in a descriptive paragraph. Instruct them to write three steps that they could take personally that would move us toward the desired future. For example, if team members want elderly people in the future to be treated better, a team might commit to doing a service project in an assisted-living facility.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development