

# FOCUS

A Herff Jones Impact Resource For Advisers

February, 2004

## **FEBRUARY FOCUS: LEADERSHIP & PROBLEM SOLVING**

The greatest way to put your student activity program on the right road is to attend leadership training conferences.

The **LEAD (Leadership Experience And Development) Conferences** are for NHS, NJHS, and Student council leaders and advisers. This is a way to energize your leadership abilities and your school. The conferences are designed for both middle and high school students. They are held on weekends so that the loss of school time is minimal. They are sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP.)

2004 LEAD conferences are scheduled for:

**February 27-29**  
*Hilton Rye Town*  
*Rye Brook, NY*

**March 12-14**  
*Williamsburg Lodge*  
*Colonial Williamsburg, VA*

**March 26-28**  
*Hilton Milwaukee City Center*  
*Milwaukee, WI*

For more information contact NASSP at 1-800-253-7746. Also check with your state associations for their conference dates. Some states also have district meetings that are more localized and within easy driving distance. These are a great source of training for your students.

### **CHAINS**

This is an easy activity to help your students in the areas of problem solving and working together. Dealing with problems that require good communication plus working with others is sometimes a challenge. One must learn to communicate in a way that is understood by others. It is often harder to make wise group decisions than to make wise individual decisions.

This activity takes about 20-25 minutes with discussion time.

Materials needed are:

- \* 2-3 pairs of scissors for each team
- \* 2-3 long strips of masking tape (about 2 feet in length) for each team
- \* 20 sheets of scrap or construction paper for each team
- \* 1 long strip of cloth (that can be torn, such as an old sheet)

Divide the group into teams of five and have them sit on the floor or around a table in a circle. Give

each team their supplies. Tie each team's wrists together and tie them tight enough that they have to work together to use their hands, but not so tight to be uncomfortable. They should now be sitting side by side in a circle with their wrists tied together. Explain that the object of the activity is to work as a team to create the longest chain using their supplies. Give them 10 minutes and at the end compare chains to see which one is the longest.

Construction paper makes colorful chains that later could be hung in the room or donated to a day care. A variation is to make them do the activity without talking. Some discussion/processing questions include:

- ◆ **What problems did you encounter?**
- ◆ **How did you solve the problems?**
- ◆ **Did the activity get easier as you went along? If so, why?**
- ◆ **How did you get your team to work together?**
- ◆ **Did any of you observe other groups and make changes based on what you saw?**
- ◆ **Did your group choose a leader? If so, how did you choose one?**
- ◆ **How did it work if you did not choose a leader?**
- ◆ **What would you do differently if you were to repeat the activity?**
- ◆ **What did you learn about working with others from this activity?**

*This newsletter is a joint effort of Jackie Burch and Herff Jones, Inc.*



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## ADD A WORD

This is another “working together” activity. The idea is that when there is a problem, the more people that provide input the better the outcome. People bring many viewpoints to a situation. These viewpoints allow them to see things in a different light.

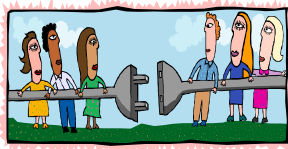
This activity takes about 25 minutes with discussion time. The materials needed are:

- \* One piece of paper and a pen or pencil for each team

Divide the group into teams of four. Give each team a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Explain that the object of the activity is for each team to create the longest sentence that they can. You will give them the first few words of the sentence. They will then take turns with each person adding a new word to the sentence. The sentence must make sense and come to a logical ending. They must go in the same order each time and cannot talk during the activity. Give them sixty seconds to complete their sentence.

Once time has been called, have each team count the number of words used. Have the sentences read aloud. Repeat this process several times. Some sentence starters could be:

- ◆ A loud crash
- ◆ One dark night
- ◆ The next time
- ◆ People who are
- ◆ My adviser said
- ◆ The elephant ran



After several rounds change the rules. This time the team may talk and make suggestions on what the sentence will say. Give them 60 seconds and repeat the process of counting the words and reading the sentences. The number of words per sentence should increase now that they are able to talk.

Discussion/processing questions include:

- ◆ How did your team do when you couldn't talk?
- ◆ Did you feel pressure when it was your turn?
- ◆ How did the activity change when the group could talk?
- ◆ Was the team able to create longer sentences when you could talk?
- ◆ When you have a problem to solve is it helpful to have someone to give you suggestions?
- ◆ How can people with different backgrounds than you help you to solve a problem?
- ◆ Why is it important for people from different backgrounds to work together on problem solving?



## QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

“There are two ways of meeting difficulties. You can alter the difficulties or you alter yourself to meet them.”



## VISION

“A leader's job is to look into the future, and to see the organization not as it is...but as it can become.”



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*Remember Valentines Day  
February 14*

