



Developmental Stages of Teens (16 – 18 years) With Implications and Activities for Character Education

What that means for us...

Physical

- Most have overcome the awkwardness of puberty, but some boys are still growing at a fast pace. Many are concerned with body image.

Social

- Strong desire for status in their peer group.
- Interested in coeducational activities. Dating increases.
- Often want adult leadership roles.
- Want to belong to a group, but also want to be recognized as unique individuals.

Intellectual

- Reach high levels of abstract thinking and problem solving.
- Developing community consciousness and concern for the well-being of others.
- Increasing self-knowledge; personal philosophy begins to emerge.

What that means for us...

- Avoid comments that criticize or compare stature, size, or shape.

- Establish a climate that is conducive to peer support.
- Allow teens to plan coeducational and group oriented projects or activities.
- Provide opportunities for teens to plan their own programs.
- Place emphasis on personal development whenever possible.

- Put youth into real life problem-solving situations. Allow them to fully discover ideas, make decisions and evaluate outcomes.
- Encourage civic projects that are a service to others.
- Allow time and plan activities for youth to explore and express their own philosophies.

Source: Volunteers...the foundation of youth development Internet course, University of Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs

Six Pillar of CharacterSM Activities

The following briefly describes each of the Six Pillars of Character. They are accompanied by example activities that are age appropriate. Most require few supplies and could be led by older teens as well as CYS staff.

Trustworthiness

- Be honest
- Don't deceive, cheat or steal
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Activity 1 – Honest Confessions

You have just made the cover of *Honest Confessions* magazine. Draw yourself on that cover and list "articles" that indicate in words or pictures some of the stories included in that issue. Here are some suggestions: "When My Parents Trust Me Most," "When I Trust My Parents Most," "I Destroy/Earn My Parents' Trust in Me When I..." and "I Think Trust Is Really Important Because..."

(Adapted from *Exercising Character*, Josephson Institute of Character)

Activity 2 - We Want Your Trust

A sad fact of modern society is that many adults don't trust adolescents. Ask teens why they think that is. Have them brainstorm a list of places in the community where they like to spend time. Direct them to think of some specific actions they could take at those places to help build trust between them and adults in the community (for example, launch a campaign to clean up litter in a park, start a community recycling program, etc.) End by challenging teens to find a way to let the community know their plans.

(IF5153 *Character Education Teaching Values for Life Grades 7-8*)

Activity 3 – Trust Walk

Supplies: Lots of toys, balls, etc. blindfolds for everyone in the group.

Identify a designated area (approximately 11 feet by 15 feet or the diameter of the center circle on a basketball court.) Scatter the toys and balls throughout the designated area.

Have the group pair up with a partner. Each pair should select one person to wear the blindfold. It is the task of the sighted person to verbally walk the blindfolded person through the area without having them touch any of the obstacles. The sighted person may not enter the obstacle area but may only provide verbal directions. If the blindfolded person touches any of the obstacles they must begin again. When the blindfolded individual successfully completes the task have the pair trade places and repeat the activity.

Discussion Questions:

1. For the sighted person – was this a difficult task? Why or why not.
2. For the blindfolded person – was this a difficult task? Why or why not.
3. Have you ever had a time when you felt you were going into a situation blindfolded?
4. How does it feel to have someone help you through those difficult times?

Respect

- Treat others with respect
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Activity 1 - Labels

Labels: Supplies: Mail labels or other sticky-type labels with one of the following printed on each label.

Comedian Laugh at my idea	Over Emotional Comfort me	Speak softly to me
Expert Seek my advice	Listen to me and get me to talk	Don't let me say anything—you talk
Important Defer to me	Tell me I'm OK	Back away as you talk
Loner Ignore my ideas	Ask me about myself	Walk away in the middle of my talking
Yell at me	Look into my eyes as I talk	Outsider treat me with distrust
Put me down	Help me	Ignore me
Helpless Give me positive support	Pity me	Look at my shoes as you talk to me
Support me	Talk at me when I'm	Reinforce me

Put a label on each person, in a spot where they cannot see it. This could be a headband or on their forehead so others can read it. Ask members to walk around and talk with as many others as possible, but to respond to the labels, not the people. Assign a topic for members to discuss while mingling (e.g. Where to go on vacation, best actor and actress, projects they plan to take next year.) After not more than 5 minutes, stop the group and discuss the following:

Discussion:

1. How was this experience for you?
2. What does this activity tell you about labeling people?
3. What happened to you – the person – when others responded to just the label? How did you feel?
4. What insights does this give us for working with groups?

(Leadership RAP, Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs)

Activity 2 - Etiquette

Using good manners is a way to show you respect yourself and others. Spend this month learning about table manners, dating etiquette and business etiquette. Go to the library, do a web search or ask an expert to help you in this exercise.

Ask a group of your friends' ways they want to be shown respect. Then turn this list into a checklist on how you will treat others your age for the next week. Then try it for a second week.

Activity 3 - Respect Book

Create a book that summarizes how young people show respect. Each way serves as one page of the book and can be illustrated. (You may want to do this as a computer activity if you have a writing/drawing program.) Provide teens with time to share their book with all CYS programs.

(Adapted from: Character Education Teaching Values for Life, Instructional Fair, Grand Rapids, MI)

Responsibility

- Do what you are supposed to do
- Persevere keep on trying
- Always do your best
- Use self-control
- Be self-disciplined
- Think before you act – consider the consequences
- Be accountable for your choices

Activity 1 - Goldilocks on Trial

Goldilocks goes on trial for allegedly breaking into the home of the Three Bears. Have teens act out the trial by having everyone serve as a specific character. Some teens will serve as the jury which will make the final determination of her guilt or innocence.

Activity 2 - Make a Machine

Divide the large group into smaller groups of six. Explain that machines are made up of many moving parts. Each group is to make a machine, with each member becoming a moving part, complete with sound. Examples of machines are a lawn mower, vacuum cleaner or record player.

Discussion questions:

1. How did your functioning machine relate to responsibility?
2. Does the size of the machine part have anything to do with the machine working?
3. What would happen if one part of the machine decided not to work?

(Leadership RAP, Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs)

Activity 3 - Workplace Skills

Have the teens list some of the factors that are important to keeping a job. Examples could include:

1. Following directions
2. Cooperating with co-workers
3. Being Dependable
4. Taking initiative
5. Being eager to learn
6. Being loyal
7. Being honest
8. Being receptive to constructive criticism
9. Being patient; not expecting instant gratification

Discuss why these characteristics are necessary or harmful. Have the teens share incidences they know of as examples.

Ask “What are some reasons for losing a job?” (Possible answers might include always coming in late, calling in sick too often, talking instead of working, making personal calls on the company phone, not following directions, arguing with the boss and co-workers, refusing to wear safety equipment, using alcohol, or drugs, goofing around, etc.)

(Adapted from Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character – 2002-2003 ed. Adapted from “Learning for Life: A Partner in Education” (a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America))

Fairness

- Play by the rules
- Take turns and share
- Be open-minded; listen to others
- Don't take advantage of others
- Don't blame others carelessly

Activity 1 – Fairness Jury

Imagine that your group is a kind of jury. Your job is to decide the fairness of each statement. If you can't agree, you can try to convince one another to change or give in. But, you must reach a consensus – that is, there can only be one group decision for each statement.

Read the following statements. Be sure you let the participants discuss the questions and come to consensus.

1. An allowance should be based on doing chores around the house.
2. Firefighters should be men because men are stronger than women.
3. Sometimes promises have to be broken.
4. When sharing, everyone should always get an equal amount.
5. If my friend is allowed to do something, then I should be allowed to do that too.

Discussion questions:

1. Was it difficult to come to a consensus on these statements?
2. Did a statement that seemed fair to you seem unfair to someone else?
3. Is it always important to understand what is and isn't fair?

(Adapted from CHARACTER COUNTS! Good Ideas!, Josephson Institute of Ethics, 1996)

Activity 2 -Teen Scenarios

Have the teens respond to the following situations and discuss the answers they select.

You give the school lunch lady a \$10 bill for your lunch. She is very busy and mistakenly gives you change for a \$20. Would you:

- a. Tell the lunch lady that she gave you too much change and return the extra \$10
- b. Keep the extra \$10
- c. Other

When your homeroom teacher steps out of class for a minute, you see another student take money from her desk. The money was collected as part of a school fundraiser. Would you:

- a. Say nothing, because it is wrong to tell on a classmate
- b. Tell the teacher or other school official
- c. Talk to the student and ask him or her to return the money
- d. Leave an unsigned note or phone message that points to the student's guilt.

You are doing poorly in class. If you do not earn a good grade on the final test, you may have to go to summer school. A day before the exam, another student tells you she has a stolen copy of the final test. Would you:

- a. Take the stolen copy of the final test
- b. Not take the stolen copy of the final test
- c. Other

You agree to go to the prom with a friend because the boy or girl you really like is dating another student.

Five days before the prom, your dream date asks you to the prom. Would you:

- a. Go to the prom with my friend, because a promise is a promise.
- b. Break the date with my friend by making up an excuse, and then go to the prom with my dream date.
- c. Tell my friend the truth and then go to the prom with my dream date.
- d. Other.

(Adapted from High School Ethics Challenge, Ken Newbury, Ph.D., Toledo, Ohio Public School System)

Activity 3 - Sports Scenarios

Have the participants move to a large open space. Designate one side of the space as strongly agree, the opposite side of the space as strongly disagree and explain that the space between the two extremes represent degrees on the continuum. After reading a situation ask the participants to move to the place which most clearly reflects their feelings about the situation. Ask them to discuss their decisions.

1. Two players are late for the bus to an away game. The head coach sends the assistant coach out to find and pick up the star player but ignores the benchwarmer that the coach sees arriving at school just as the bus pulls out.
2. The coach "twists the arm" of a teacher to withhold turning in a failing grade for the star player till after the key game so there's no risk of ineligibility. (ask the participants to move.)
 - a. The teacher agrees and turns in the failing grade late but with the explanation that it was late and should have impacted the eligibility had it been turned in on time. (ask the participants to move)
 - b. The administration shrugs it off, but parents of the player who would have had more playing time if the star had been ineligible report to the league/state association office. (have the participants move)
 - c. The state association imposes the hard penalty on the school and the coach for violations and deceit. (ask the participants to move.)
3. A volleyball player touches the ball as it goes out of bounds, but the official calls it "out" as though she had not touched the ball. The player tells the official she touched it and the call is changed.
 - a. The girl's father goes nuts, yelling negative comments at his daughter for her "stupid move."
 - b. The coach substitutes for the girl and she does not return to the match.
4. The coach notices that officials are letting play go a little, not calling even moderate contact as fouls and instructs his players to "push it" and to get as physical as they can get away with, especially with the opponent's star player.

(Adapted from Pursuing Victory with Honor 2003 training)

Caring

- Be kind
- Be compassionate and show you care
- Express gratitude
- Forgive others
- Help people in need

Activity 1 - Thank You Notes

Supplies: paper and pens or pencils.

Saying thank you to others for the kindness they show you is so important. It may not always be necessary to send formal, written thank-you notes for many occasions, but it is a very thoughtful gesture to thank someone who has spent money on you, sent a gift or taken time to do something special. For which of the following situations would you send a thank you note to someone?

1. A birthday gift from Aunt Marion.
2. Someone lends you a pencil at school.
3. A friend lends you a dollar.
4. A friend's family invites you to spend a week at their lake cottage.
5. A friend's older brother takes you to the movies.
6. Your grandmother gives you \$50 for Christmas.
7. You go to a cookout at your neighbor's house.
8. You spend the night at your best friend's house.
9. Your sister gives you an old sweater that is too small for her.
10. A friend's dad takes you to a baseball game, buys you dinner at a very expensive restaurant, and then takes you to meet the players and get their autographs and pictures.
11. Your 4-H leader gives you a ride to the 4-H meeting.

12. You receive a trophy at the County Fair for your woodworking project.
13. You receive a scholarship to assist with the registration fees to attend a county or state camp.
14. Your neighbor gives you aluminum cans for your 4-H club's clean up.
15. You receive a pen set from your 4-H Council to recognize you for your years as a member of 4-H.
16. Your project leader spent extra time with you on your project.

Answers: 1,4,6,10,12,13,15,16

A thank you note should include:

- Reason you are writing the thank you note
- The occasion for the recognition or gift
- The gift specifically unless it is money
- Why the gift is important to you

Take a few minutes and have each club member write a thank you note to someone who has done something special for them.

(Ohio State University 4-H Youth Development Programs)

Citizenship

- Do your share to make your school, center and community better
- Cooperate
- Stay informed; vote
- Be a good neighbor
- Obey laws and rules
- Respect authority
- Protect the environment

Activity 1 - Save An Egg

Supplies: drop cloth or large piece of plastic. For every team of four members you will need: one raw egg, 25 straws, and 6 feet of masking tape.

A community can be many things – your hometown is a community, your neighborhood is a community, in fact, your CYS is a type of community too. Communities are delicate, some people get lots of attention while others may feel totally left out. Things that a community provides to people may only be directed to a few people instead of everyone. But we know that everyone in a community needs to be taken care of.

In this activity, every group of four people is a community. The egg represents members of the community. Each group will have 7 minutes using the supplies you are given to create a device that will keep their egg safe when it is dropped by an adult or older teen while standing on a chair. (Please take extra caution when the individual is on the chair. Make sure there are those that are serving as spotters.) After 7 minutes, with everyone watching and listening, have one group at a time present their egg and safety device to the official “egg dropper.” The object is to see how many devices were constructed that really keep the egg from breaking.

Discussion questions:

1. What challenges did you face in keeping your eggs safe?
2. What challenges do communities face in keeping all of their citizens safe?
3. How can we as a club make sure that all our members feel like they are valued citizens and a part of the total community?

(Adapted from Adventures in Peacemaking, Project Adventure, 1995)

Activity 3 – Serving your Community

It doesn't take lots of people to complete a community service projects; in fact, one person is enough. This month think of 1-2 activities you can do by yourself to help your community. Some ideas might

include organize a bingo party, costume party at a local nursing home. Do yard work for an elderly neighbor or friend, or help a friend with homework.

Adapted from materials written for US Army Child and Youth Services and USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

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