

For Staff: Group Activities for Youth

Skills for Success

Read the Story: 10 minutes

As a group, read “Learning to Succeed” by Marlo Scott on p. 13. Ask for volunteers to take turns reading aloud.

Discussion: 10 minutes

Ask teens to look back at the story and star all the parts where Marlo demonstrates a skill that helps him be successful in the workplace (e.g., he adapts to laboring in the hot sun, adjusts to different editors, learns to focus, smiles and chats with customers to keep them from getting mad, anticipates what his boss needs, doesn’t complain, keeps confidentiality). Explain that job skills include self-control, good communication, and resilience. Point out that these “soft skills” are strengths and qualities that help in any job and outside of work too, and that we keep building these skills our whole life.

Then, facilitate a brief discussion by asking the following questions: “Of all Marlo’s job skills, which ones do you have? Which ones would you most like to develop? Why?”

Drawing or Writing Activity: 20 minutes

Explain to the group that now that they’ve read the story, they’re going to do an activity where they illustrate the importance of having job skills like Marlo’s.

Ask each group member to choose a part of the story that they starred. Once all group members have selected a part, hand out drawing paper and markers/colored pencils. Have group members draw a line down the middle of their papers.

Explain that on the left side, they are going to either draw a picture of Marlo showing off the job skill they starred or describe it in their own words. Then, on the right side of the paper, they are going to explain how using this skill helped Marlo on the job. For example, at Kmart, Marlo reads his customers’ moods. That keeps them engaged in a long check-out line.

As the group works, move around the room offering support and encouragement. To close the activity, ask for volunteers to share their drawings and summaries.

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The Adult I Want to Be

Read the Story: 10 minutes

As a group, read “Who Will I Be as an Adult?” by Anonymous on p. 8. Ask for volunteers to take turns reading aloud.

Drawing Activity: 25 minutes

Introduce the drawing activity by explaining to the group that, like the writer of “Who Will I Be as an Adult?,” they’ll think about the type of adult they want to be and the kind of life they want. Then they’ll create a special poster that displays their hopes, goals, and obstacles.

Hand out large pieces of drawing paper or poster board and markers. Have group members title their poster “Getting the Life I Want.” Then have them turn their paper horizontally, make five columns, and label them: “What Being an Adult Means to Me,” “My Positive Thoughts and Small Accomplishments,” “Adults in My Life Who Build Me Up Instead of Tear Me Down,” “My Fears and Doubts About Becoming an Adult,” and “Negative Thoughts and Behaviors That Hold Me Back.” (It might take a while for your group to write down these headings, but this helps them take ownership of their drawings and words.)

In each column, group members can draw or write their thoughts and ideas. If they get stuck, they should refer to the story for examples. As group members write and illustrate their posters, move around the room offering support and encouragement.

When all group members are done drawing and writing, explain to them that the first three columns they created are the attitudes, beliefs, and people they want to hold onto to as they become the adult they want to be. Then tell them that the last two columns are the thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors they want to let go of.

Next, tell group members to rip the last two columns off their poster. They should crumple these last two columns into a ball, and toss them into a wastebasket or other large container. Now, tell them to keep what is left. (Remind them that if they focus on the thoughts, attitudes, and people in their lives that motivate them, they’ll get closer to becoming the adult they want to be and having the life they want. Encourage them to put this poster up to inspire them.)

Ask if any volunteers wish to share any parts of their poster with the rest of the group before closing the activity. ■