

YOUTH PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

A program of the Orthodox Union Karasick Department of Synagogue Services

YOUTH LEADER TRAINING GUIDE

IDEAS AND CONCEPTS
FOR YOUTH LEADER TRAINING

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TRAINING

BULLYING
PREVENTION

INCLUSION

TEAM
BUILDING
EXERCISES

ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES

EVALUATION



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What Makes a good Youth Department?

Importance of Youth Leader Training and Evaluation

The Orthodox Union's Department of Community Engagement has researched best practices from synagogues all over the world, and a common theme from Kansas to Australia is the importance of a robust Youth Department. The Youth Department is the fire that keeps a synagogue breathing and alive; without a structured educational program for our youth, our synagogues cannot sustain themselves. As the saying goes, children are our future and therefore we should be investing funds, time, and effort into them.

The first step to creating a great youth program is to have the staff and lay leadership on board 100%, without their support the youth program will not reach its potential. The next and possibly most essential aspect of the youth program is building and training a creative and responsible staff who are enthusiastically committed to educating our children. Without the tools and staff training, the synagogue might as well be running a babysitting service, and as Orthodox Jews, who stress the importance of education, that is far from our goal.

Whether it is a group of tweens, teens, or adults running your Shabbat youth groups training is essential to the success of the Youth Department. No matter the size, financial capability, or history of your synagogue, staff training is an imperative when working with children to ensure their safety and the efficacy of the program.



THIS GUIDE INCLUDES: “The Ins and Outs of Youth Leader Training: A Step-by-Step Process,” a how to guide to teaching your staff about fostering inclusion by YACHAD; a how to guide to teaching bullying prevention; best practices for evaluating your youth department staff; a compendium of team building exercises; and additional reading material and resources.

The Ins and Outs of Youth Leader Training

A Step-by-Step Process

Best Practices for Annual Youth Leader Training Structure:

There are a number of ways in which to structure youth leader training and evaluation. The Orthodox Union's Department of Community Engagement has assessed and derived best practices for this essential aspect of the synagogue's Youth Department. Before we delineate the key elements of a training session, here are a few recommended ways to structure training and evaluation annually.

- 1. Three to four training sessions a year in which the rules, issues, commendations and evaluations are discussed. This is a great opportunity to refresh and refocus the staff on the Youth Department's mission and goal of success. This is an opportune time to check in with each youth leader on an individual basis (see section on motivation and evaluation).
- 2. Two Shabbos meals or tisches a year split up by age group serviced, in which there are team-building exercises, possibly a guest speaker who will touch upon an aspect lacking or that needs improvement. This is a great venue to invigorate your staff and show your appreciation.
- 3. Fifteen minutes to a half hour before every Shabbat youth group starts, with donuts and OJ, review the agenda for the day, play the parsha game or activity planned for that week so the youth leaders are really prepared each Shabbat.
- 4. Once a month training sessions with an agenda, possibly a guest speaker on different topics of interest and importance to the youth leaders and youth department. Another possibility is to require the youth leaders to attend 10 out of 12 meetings of the year.

Steps for First Youth Leader Training:

Although there are different structures for staff training and evaluation, below you will find a compilation of the key aspects of a one-day first training session for youth leaders.

- 1. **Icebreaker:** Start off with an icebreaker activity which ties into the introduction. (You can find examples of icebreakers in Appendix I.) For example, conduct an activity that has a message that is derived from it and have a short discussion about it that will lead into your introduction.
- 2. **Introduction:** Explain to the youth leaders what the goal of the youth department is. You may want to stress the importance of Shabbat groups and/or educational youth programming in the synagogue context. Perhaps you or the synagogue has another goal in mind. The introduction is most affective when a story, famous quote, or joke is connected to the message that you would like to impart on your staff. Add what you are passionate about, perhaps why you chose to be a Youth Director. Another possibility is to have the rabbi of the synagogue give the introduction.

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- 3. **Expectations:** Have a written document of expectations for the year that is distributed to the youth leaders. Below are some topics that you may want to address in this document. Another approach to expectations is to first ask them what their expectations are for the year, write them on a board or oak tag and then compare and contrast to your written expectations for them.

a. Being a role model:

- Representative of the synagogue.
- Positive attitude and enthusiasm.
- Not just a job, you are educators of the next generation.
- Team work: work well with fellow youth leaders to teach the children how to behave well with each other.

b. Schedule:

- The importance of being on time and when it is appropriate to leave.
- The training session schedule.
- Other programs, other than Shabbat morning groups they are required to attend.
- If there is a rotation schedule, explain this at this time, with the first month's schedule.
- Consequences of being late or not showing up.

c. Dress code:

- For males and females.
- Importance of being a role model in the synagogue setting.
- This is a modesty and professional issue.
- Explain how the dress code will be enforced.

d. Preparation requirements:

- Preparation is key to the success of the program
- We recommend having a curriculum set up for the youth leaders that they are required to look over before each youth group.
- You can send it out by email weekly, or have a binder for each youth group with the lesson plan for each parsha that includes extra activities.

e. Being present during Shabbat groups and other youth programs:

- You may want to lead a discussion about what "being present" means.

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- What tools would you need in order to be an active youth leader?
 - They have a responsibility not only to be timely, but also to get involved in the running of the group.
 - We don't just need bodies in the room, we need active youth leaders.
- f. Respect for hierarchy and authority:**
- Explain the hierarchy in the synagogue;
 - Who their boss is,
 - Who they have to answer to,
 - And who they should go to for assistance with discipline, parents, etc.
- g. Come to Youth Director with any questions or suggestions:**
- It is important for the Youth Director to be approachable and honest.
 - Especially when dealing with tween and teen youth leaders, there should be an adult in authority that respects their opinions and is responsive to questions.
- h. Additional protocols and policies**
- 4. Conclusion/Discussion:**
- a. Lay ground rules for discussion**
- The goal of this discussion is to create share any apprehension or excitement and to come together as a team.
 - This is an open forum, no judgments or consequences for expressing your opinions or feelings.
- b. Facilitate discussion**
- Use a combination of open-ended, feeling, judgment, guiding and closing questions.

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions are ones that require more than one word answers. The answers could come in the form of a list, a few sentences or something longer such as a speech, paragraph or essay.

- What were your expectations for this training session?
- Did the training session meet your expectations?
- How would you make your youth group, your own?

Feeling Questions

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Feeling questions are ones that ask the participants to reflect on the session and activities. These questions are important for leading an open and honest discussion, where you can address their concerns.

- How do you feel about working as a team with the rest of the staff?
- How do you feel about being a youth leader and representing our synagogue?
- What was your reason for choosing to be a youth leader, and have your feelings changed after today?

Judgment Questions

Judgment questions ask the youth leaders to make decisions about things. These questions allow them to explore their feelings without asking them outright about their feelings.

- What was the best part about the training session today?
- What aspect of the session could use improvement or revision?
- Why do you think this session was a good idea?

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions are succinct and targeted open-ended questions that require a lot of thought to answer properly.

- If you were a parent, what would you want your child to be doing while you were davening in shul?
- If you were the Youth Director, what would you want from the youth leaders?
- What does Jewish education entail?

Closing Questions

Closing questions are guiding the youth leaders to reach the conclusion that you had in mind, and to wrap up the discussion. You may want to use this opportunity to refer back to your introduction.

- Now that we are at the end of our training session, what have you learned today about the importance of the Youth Department?
- Are all the expectations and suggestions discussed today doable for you?
- Is there anything I have not covered today, that you think should be mentioned before we end?

c. Close discussion

- Briefly summarize key points and messages discussed during the session.
- You could end with a story or joke that brings the messages home.
- Discuss what follow-up needs to be made, if any.

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Example of How to Give Over Expectations

It isn't easy being a youth leader, there are a lot of kids who are rude and sometimes even the parents can be rude. However, it is possible to succeed and to be a good leader, once you realized this you are already on your way to being a master youth leader. Here are some tips to aid you on your journey.

- 1. Taking Control of the Group:** Tip number one might be the hardest to execute. A leader's worst fear is having the kids fighting and climbing all over the place. First make sure you speak up! A commanding voice is an easy way to show power. Also find a balance between being a strict leader and fun leader. Having a lesson plan with a few extra transition games will give you more confidence and give the children the structure they need to calm down.
- 2. Discipline:** If a child is disruptive or harms another child there are two ways to discipline.

A: Reuven! Why did you push Shimon you are always doing the wrong thing!

B: Reuven! You are such a great kid, it is not like you to hit.

Notice how in B you are labeling him as a good kid; while in A you are labeling him as a menace. Try to start with a complement and say that the action he did was bad, but not that he is bad, because childrens' actions will reflect your tone and actions towards them.
- 3. Never Use Physical Action:** When children are upset and don't know how to share their feelings they may use physical action. Do not fight back. Go to your immediate supervisor, the Youth Director and ask how to proceed. If a child shouts at you draw the child aside or outside of the room and talk the situation out with him without getting the other children involved. If they are old enough, have them take a walk or take a trip to the bathroom to cool off by themselves.
- 4. Positive Reinforcement:** Give rewards for davening well and behaving properly. Incentives are an important educational tool to teach good behavior and proper decorum during groups. Additionally, awarding children with "youth of the month" and special roles during groups, such as handing out the snack, will give the children something to work for and to feel appreciated.
- 5. Role Modeling:** What you are doing isn't like most jobs; you are helping mold these kids and you are a role model. Being a role model to children at an impressionable age is very significant. For example, you may see the children try to dress like you or do their hair like yours. Keep this in mind when you are conducting yourself, children understand more than you think! It is also an opportunity to teach them about something important to you, such as drama and acting. Incorporate your hobbies and interests into your group, the children will eat it up!

Evaluation = Motivation
Key qualities in a good youth leader

Staff evaluations are a very important motivation tool when it comes to professional performance and conduct. To encourage professional standards and improvement we recommend implementing an evaluation system. There are many ways to evaluate your youth leaders; for example, you may want to use a formal evaluation form with a check list of responsibilities and goals. Alternatively, you may want to have meetings with each youth leader to discuss their progress and/or any difficulties they may be having. Another possibility is to have a self/peer evaluation done by the youth leaders themselves. Below you will find a sample evaluation form and a list of key qualities that we have identified that make a successful youth leader.

Group Leader Performance Review

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Name Of Employee Being Reviewed:

Reviewed by: Alon Meltzer

Review Period:

Fall

REVIEW GUIDELINES

Complete this peer review, using the following scale: NA = Not Applicable

1 = Unsatisfactory

2 = Marginal

3 = Meets Requirements

4 = Exceeds Requirements

5 = Exceptional

EVALUATION

	(5) = Exceptional	(4) = Exceeds Requirements	(3) = Meets Requirements	(2) = Marginal	(1) = Unsatisfactory
Demonstrates Required Job Skills And Knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has The Ability To Learn And Use New Skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Uses Resources Available In An Effective Manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Responds Effectively To Assigned Responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meets Attendance Requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Listens To Direction From Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Takes Responsibility For Actions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honors Commitments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goal 1: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goal 2: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goal 3: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goal 4: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goal 5: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Additional Comments:					

Fostering Inclusion 101

From the Experts @Yachad

COMPILED BY: Rebecca Schrag,
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Group Leader Tone:

- Be a positive role model. Group members will treat each other the way they see their group leaders treating them.
- Don't show favoritism.
- Treat every group member age appropriately.
- Remember to model person-first language; for example, when referring to a member of the group with a disability, one would say: "a group member with a disability" NOT "a disabled group member".
- Inclusion isn't only an action, it's a mindset.

Create an Inclusive Space:

- Include all participants as fully functioning members of the group.
- Physical, emotional & medical conditions may or may not be visible.
- Include students in decisions that pertain to them.
- Highlight similarities amongst group members.

Accommodating:

- Frame or explain what you will be doing with the time you are spending together and review the schedule regularly.
- Modify the activities, for the individual, as necessary with their input.
- Preferential seating, break leniencies and extra bathroom breaks should be given and modified.
- For snacks, take into account special diets.
- Prepare group member for transitions between spaces and activities.

Activities:

- Activities should be fun, engaging and appropriate for all group members.
- Explain instructions clearly and in multiple ways. For example, you can combine explaining the instructions verbally with a visual presentation.
- Pray out loud so everyone can follow along.
- Use brail, transliterated and enlarged lettered prayer books as needed.
- Engage multiple learning modalities to engage all different types of learners, using most of the 5 senses: visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic.
- Everyone should have equal opportunity to participate.

Fostering Inclusion 101

From the Experts @Yachad

Know Participant Needs:

- Learn about your group members' social, educational, physical and emotional needs.
- Look for the strengths of each individual and build from there.
- Be aware of potential reactions to medications and challenges and be prepared to react appropriately.
- Know who they are and where to find a guardian in case of emergency.

Special Equipment/ Personnel:

- Individuals may have special equipment which is the property of the individual and shouldn't be touched without permission from the individual.
- Shadows assigned to work with a group member should not be asked to perform other tasks without permission.

Disability Education:

- Work with the individual and their family in identifying what information they would like shared with others.
- Encourage open questions and conversations with the group members.
- Anticipate questions about particular disabilities from the other children, even before the questions are asked.

Bullying Prevention

Info and Tips to Teach Your Youth Leaders

The synagogue's Youth Department should have policies regarding bullying and any form of abuse regardless of the age of the perpetrator or victim. We recommend the rules be in the positive form and not negative; for example, "what to do" instead of "what not to do". Below you will find a number of recommended tips and facts to be aware of regarding bullying and the prevention of bullying. This does NOT replace the synagogue's policies; this should be used as an additional educational tool.

Did You Know?

- Two ways to prevent bullying are good role modeling and rewarding for good behavior towards others. Establish an environment for inclusion and respect that welcomes all students. (See previous section on inclusion for more details.)
- Most bullying happens during transitions, between activities, going from one place to another, or free time; therefore, keep an extra eye on the children or engage them in an activity or song while transitioning from one activity or physical space to another.
- A quick and affective response is important. Respond when bullying happens, stop it on the spot, find out what happened and support all children involved.
- Helping students correct their behavior is an effective way to prevent bullying. Give them examples of positive behavior and help them understand that violating the rules comes with consequences. Be consistent with the consequences of bad behavior but not overly excessive with the punishments.
- There are three types of bullying:
 - 1. Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things, which includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm

Bullying Prevention

Info and Tips to Teach Your Youth Leaders

2. Social Bullying involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships, which includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions, which includes:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures



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Team Building Exercises

THE PARTY

MATERIALS:

- 1. Large banner paper.
- 2. Markers.
- 3. Masking tape.
- 4. Medium-sized balloons, several per person.
- 5. Pens for each person.
- 6. Several slips of paper for each person.
- 7. Toothpicks or safety pins for popping balloons.

PREPARATION:

Hang the banner on the wall in a location where it can be seen by all. Clear an area in the room where the group can sit in a circle with a space in the middle for a pile of balloons.

ACTIVITY:

Have teens sit in a circle. Pass out pens, paper, and balloons to each person. Set up a scenario, something like this:

“You’ve all been invited to a party. It’s like pot-luck, but instead of bringing food to share, you’re bringing yourself and the strengths you believe you contribute to this group. For example, you may be a creative thinker, or very organized, or able to keep others motivated. On the slips of paper, write down the strengths or talents that you bring to the party. Once you’ve written these down, carefully put them into your balloons, blow them up, tie them, and put them in the circle.”

Allow 5-10 minutes for the teens to complete this activity. When everyone is done, designate one person to pick a balloon from the pile, pop it, and read the slip(s) inside. After a slip has been read, ask the author to step forward, share a little more, and then write his name and strength on the banner paper. This person becomes the next to pop a balloon from the pile. Continue doing this until all the balloons are popped and everyone has been included on the poster.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss how the group can use the information they’ve gained from hearing everyone share their strengths. Consider discussion questions such as:

- 1. How can what you’ve learned from others today be used in the future to improve the way this group works together?
- 2. Are there any people who you think overlooked one of their strengths? Who? What is the strength?

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Team Building Exercises

- 3. How can you make the most of the strengths and talents of group members and still allow everyone a chance to try new things or use new talents?
- 4. Imagine the group was going to assign official jobs for each member. Based on the strengths people shared, what roles do you think people should have?
- 5. Is the group missing any strengths? What are they and how can you build them? What if you can’t? How can you overcome not having certain strengths or prevent the lack of them from becoming a group weakness?
- 6. Each of the children in our youth department has their own strengths, how do you propose utilizing and playing to those strengths in the group setting?

WRAP-UP:

Have a teen volunteer type a summary sheet of the strengths people bring to the party and give everybody copies to keep.

TALENT CHAIRS

MATERIALS:

- 1. Chairs for each participant minus one chair.
- 2. A list of starter questions.

PREPARATION:

Clear the room and place enough chairs in a large circle for all the participants, minus one chair. Determine who will be the first leader.

ACTIVITY:

Have the first leader stand in the center of the circle while all the others are in the chairs. The leader begins a statement by saying “Stand up and find another chair if you....” and finishes the statement with an attribute that may apply to the other participants.

Everybody who possesses that attribute will stand and find another chair that is not immediately next to them, unless that is the only other chair available. The leader claims one of the empty chairs and one person will be left standing. This person is the new leader and repeats the process, etc.

SAMPLE STATEMENTS:

- 1. Stand up and find another chair if you have red hair.
- 2. Stand up and find another chair if you are wearing white socks.
- 3. Stand up and find another chair if you’ve been to another country.

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- 4. Stand up and find another chair if you go to sleep-away camp.
- 5. Stand up and find another chair if you are a helpful person.
- 6. Stand up and find another chair if you smile a lot.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss the discovery process and how the group can use the information they’ve gained about themselves. Use questions such as:

- 1. What were some surprises you found out about others?
- 2. Were you surprised by the ways in which you were similar to some other people in the group? Explain.
- 3. How can you use what you’ve learned about each other in future group activities?
- 4. When you were the leader, did you find yourself trying to find attributes to include certain people in the circle? Did you try to find attributes to exclude certain people in the circle? Why was that?
- 5. When you were not the leader, were you looking for ways to be included in the group that had to find a new chair? Why? Did you try to find ways not to be included in that group? Why?
- 6. How would identifying common attributes in the children in your group help enhance the group?

TREASURE HUNT

MATERIALS:

- 1. “Treasure Hunt Questions” handout.
- 2. “Treasure Hunt Score Sheet”, one copy for each team.
- 3. Pen or pencil for each team.

PREPARATION:

Read the “Treasure Hunt Questions” and modify or add questions as needed, but use about 15 questions. Design a “Treasure Hunt Score Sheet” and make a copy for each team.

SUGGESTED TREASURE HUNT QUESTIONS:

- 1. Who is involved in a club, activity, or a sports team or works in addition to going to school?
- 2. Who has spent time volunteering in the community?
- 3. Who has spoken up for a cause or an issue even when others didn’t support your opinion?
- 4. Who is from a different cultural background? (teams decide what ‘different’ means.)
- 5. Who currently mentors someone, has mentored others, or is being mentored by someone?

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- 6. Who has confronted someone who has made an inappropriate comment?
- 7. Who can correctly name the capital of our state?
- 8. Who has chosen not to go along with friends even when they were pressuring you?
- 9. Who speaks more than one language?
- 10. Who has attended a teen workshop or leadership conference?
- 11. Who has ever been nominated or has run for a position to lead others, including for a sports team, a scout or youth group, a school club, or another organized group?
- 12. Who has written a letter to the editor or to a member of Congress, mayor, school principal, or another authority?
- 13. Who has stood up to a bully, either for yourself or on behalf of someone else?
- 14. Who has been involved in a leadership-specific group such as a student council, youth leader program, counselor-in-training program, political campaign team, youth mentoring team, or another group that means a lot to you?

TREASURE HUNT SCORE SHEET:

Suggestion: Use three columns: One for the question, a second for the points gained in that question, and a third for the running total.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into teams of four or five and pass out a score sheet and pencil to each team. Ask teams to identify a scorekeeper who will be responsible for tallying the points throughout the activity. Each team will go on a ‘Treasure Hunt’ for particular qualities in people on their team. Explain that the facilitator will read a series of questions and that for each question; the team earns one point for each member who fits what the question asks. Encourage them to be honest in answering each question. The scorekeeper needs to tally the score for each question and then tally the overall score for all of them. Work through each question slowly. Give the teams time to talk about the question because they’ll discover new things about the questions and new things about the others on their team. Move on only when you think all teams have tallied their scores for a given question. Plan to spend about 25-30 minutes asking the questions and allowing teams time to discuss them. When you’ve read all of your selected questions, ask the teams to calculate their overall score.

DISCUSSION:

Determine and acknowledge which team had the highest overall score. Take 10-15 minutes to discuss the activity and draw out participants’ ideas about incorporating what they learned in their small teams into the cooperative workings of the large group.

Consider discussion questions such as:

- 1. What did you learn about others on your team? How diverse is your team? Were there any individuals who responded to all the same questions? Were there any questions where everyone received a point? Where your team received no points? Explain.

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- 2. What questions caused the greatest discussion within your team? Explain.
- 3. Which questions was the most challenging for your team? Which was the easiest to answer? What can this group do with the information you learned from this activity?
- 4. What was the most interesting response in your group? Explain.
- 5. What questions would you add to this treasure hunt?
- 6. Can what you learned from this exercise influence the way you run your youth group? Explain.

BUILDING MODELS

MATERIALS:

- 1. Identical bags of simple building materials such as ball-and-sticks, toothpicks and marshmallows, or Legos. Assure that each bag has the same number of each color and size. Each bag should contain 60-80 pieces. Prepare two bags per team.
- 2. For each team, a non-transparent box large enough to contain an individual structure.

PREPARATION:

Divide the group into an even number of teams with an equal number of team members. A team size of three works best, however teams of four can be used. Arrange the room so that teams can work remotely from each other. Place a row of chairs (one for each team) at a front table that is large enough to hold all of the boxes.

ACTIVITY:

Give each team one bag of materials and one box. Instruct them to build any kind of structure they wish without modifying the pieces. (For example, they cannot bend or break toothpicks.) Encourage creativity. Give them five minutes to complete their structures. Remind them to keep their structures away from the view of the other teams. After five minutes, have each team put their structure into their box.

Instruct the teams to assign roles to their members as Explainer, Messenger, or Builder. If there are four members to a team, two can be Messengers. The teams must make these assignments before proceeding. The Explainer from each team will carry their team's box to the front table and place it at one of the chairs. The Explainers are then to choose a different box to sit in front of. You can choose how to accomplish this; however they should not be able to choose based on the structure in the box. They may have to do this with their backs to the table if the boxes do not have covers. Give each Builder another bag of materials. The Builder's job is to build a new structure identical to the

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model their Explainer has selected. They will do this with the information that the Messenger brings to them. The Explainer must tell the Messenger what the design looks like, including the color of the pieces. These are the rules:

- 1. Only the Explainer can view the model; not the Messenger or the Builder.
- 2. Only the Builder can touch the new structure or the raw materials.
- 3. Only the Messenger can speak to the Explainer or the Builder.
- 4. The Builder can ask the Messenger questions but cannot speak to the Explainer.
- 5. Messengers can keep going back and forth as much as necessary.

For an additional challenge, set a rule that the Messenger can't see what the Builder is building until the end. If there are two Messengers on a team, they must take turns going to the Explainer, and one cannot go to the Explainer until the other has completed communication with the Builder. Give the teams ten minutes to complete this phase, then have all three members from each team get together with both structures to see how well they completed the task.

DISCUSSION:

While every team had the same goal, it's likely that each worked very differently together. Take 10-15 minutes to discuss how the teams worked together and what they experienced and learned about communication. Use questions such as:

- 1. After building your structures the first time, what was your reaction when you realized what you would do next?
- 2. Describe what it was like to be the Explainer, the Messenger, or the Builder. Which role do you think was the most challenging? Why?
- 3. If this had been an exceptionally important task involving communication, about how well would your team have done? What would need to change for your team to be more effective as communicators? (Relate this to a specific example that may occur on the job)
- 4. Was there any time during this activity when you wanted to cheat, maybe by peeking at the model? Why did or didn't you do this? (Relate this to real-life situations where people are given clear instructions on what is or isn't acceptable in the process of completing a task.)
- 5. In what ways does this activity relate to how rumors and gossip spread? Were there times when you found yourself doubting the information being communicated to you? If it were a rumor going around, how would you have responded?

WRAP-UP:

Ask teens to observe the specific roles they play in their circle of friends or in other groups of which they belong. Remind them to look at interconnectedness and communication among people in different roles and how groups have successfully established those roles.

Appendix 1
Team Building Exercises

TRAVELING TEAMS

MATERIALS:

- 1. Bandannas or other material to be used as blindfolds one for each team.
- 2. Objects for building an obstacle course such as chairs, desks, hula hoops, balls, collapsible tunnels, yarn or string, etc.

PREPARATION:

In an open area set up a relatively easy obstacle course. Provide challenge while allowing small groups to get through the course without feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. Create areas that can be identified as the walking path, free of impediments. Allow space between obstacles.

ACTIVITY:

Allow the entire teen group to determine the path through the obstacle course. Divide the group into teams of three and give each a blindfold. At this point, tell the teams that they will determine how their members will travel the obstacle course. Someone is chosen as the Guide, who guides the Traveler through the obstacle course by letting them know verbally what direction to step in. The course is done at walking speed, and guides are responsible for knowing where other groups are around their Traveler. Each member gets to be the Traveler, so once the team finishes guiding one person through, they switch roles and guide another member through. After all members have played the Traveler, the group will discuss their learning experiences.

DISCUSSION:

Take 10-15 minutes to discuss how the teams worked together and what they learned. Use questions such as:

- 1. Did you trust your team members before the exercise? Why or why not? Do you trust them more or less after the exercise? Explain.
- 2. How successful was your team in working together to get through the course? What would you change if you did it again?
- 3. When you were the Traveler, how well do you think your teammates communicated? When you were a guide, how well do you think you communicated? When there was a communication breakdown, what happened? How did your team deal with that?
- 4. What communication skills did you rely on when you were the Traveler?
- 5. If trust didn't exist in a team, how would you work to develop it?
- 6. Does this exercise teach you anything that could help you in relating and communicating with the children in your youth group? Explain.

Appendix II
Additional Resources

More Team-Building Exercises

- 1. www.onlineexpert.com/elearning/user/pdf/NatSem/ManagingDiverseWorkforce/Team-BuildingGamesActivitiesIdeas.pdf
- 2. www.deca.org/_docs/chapter-resources/DECA-teambuildinggames.pdf
- 3. www.huddle.com/blog/team-building-activities/

More Literature on Bullying Prevention

- 1. <http://d2kbrjgcbfmyqt.cloudfront.net/NCSY%20bullying%20pamphlet.pdf>
- 2. www.edutopia.org/blog/bullying-prevention-tips-teachers-parents-anne-obrien
- 3. www.naesp.org/principal-magazine/principal-septoct-2010-juggling-act/no-place-bullying
- 4. www.stopbullying.gov/
- 5. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf
- 6. www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012314.pdf
- 7. www.nea.org/assets/docs/Nationwide_Bullying_Research_Findings.pdf
- 8. www.educationworld.com/a_special/bully.shtml
- 9. www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2013/01/03/teaching-social-skills-to-prevent-bullying-in-young-children