

Positivity Through Improv

Kentucky 4-H State Teen Council 2016-17



Purpose

The 2016-2017 State Teen Council choose Positivity Through Improv as their civic engagement project.

This primary purpose of this program is to use the art of improvisation to implement self and peer positivity in middle to high school aged youth. It should be taught in a way that is engaging, fun, encourages youth to work together, and make its participants feel better about themselves and the world around them.

Objectives

1. Develop self-esteem and self-confidence in each participant.
2. Allow youth to express themselves in a positive way.
3. Encourages team work and positive peer pressure.
4. Teach the program in a flexible, adaptable way that can be adjusted to meet difference audiences.

Facts

- Low self-esteem is a thinking disorder in which an individual views him or herself as inadequate, unlovable, and incompetent.
- Art in all its forms is said to make people feel better about themselves and is a way to express themselves,
- Improvisational theatre, often called improv, is a form of theater where what is performed is created at the moment it is performed.
- The dialogue, action, story, and characters are created collaboratively by the players as the improvisation unfolds in present time, without use of an already prepared, written script.
- Improvisational theater is as old as time. It predates the invention of writing.
- Body image is the way someone perceives their body and assumes others perceive them. This image is often affected by friends, social pressure, the media.
- One of the five basic rules of improv is you can look good if you make your partner look good.
- Positive people live longer.
- Improv performances can differ between different groups, depending on training, goals, and style.

- In professional improve performances, sometimes there is audience suggestions/interactions used to make the story go along.

Lesson Plan

The following activities have been selected with the purpose and objectives of the program in mind. You are encouraged to adapt the lesson to fit different audiences in order to impact the participants. It is imperative to keep your audience engaged and interacting with each other.

Activity 1: Personal Commercials

Activity 2: Alphabet Improv Game

Activity 3: Scene Replay

Activity 4: Inspector Gadget

Activity 5: Foreign Film

Activity 6: Never Ending Story

Activity 7: Pick Your Personality

Additional Ice Breakers

Introduction

In this ice breaker, the group will be partnered up and will be expected to learn all they can about their partner within a given time limit (2-5 minutes is suggested). They then must tell the rest of the group everything that they learned about their partner. This icebreaker will help with speaking and listening skills.

Blob

The whole group can participate in this game. You can come up with topics such as favorite color or favorite food and tell the group the topic. They will then split into "blobs" according to their answer.

Wardrobe change

During this icebreaker one person will be chosen to go out of the room and change something about their appearance. This can be anything from taking a necklace off to changing the way their hair parts. The whole group will examine that person and they will leave the room and change their appearance. They will then come back in and the rest of the group must guess what that person changed about them. This will help develop observation skills.

Conjoined twins

Have your group divide up in pairs. Each pair has to come up with some way to be "conjoined" (yes that means that they have to touch one another) you will then interview each set of conjoined twins.

The players are conjoined twins who must speak simultaneously when giving answers to the questions from the audience. The players receive questions one at a time from the group and are then given the opportunity to spontaneously answer. Generally, the answers are only one or two words. Asking questions that require longer answers challenges the players. The players are forced to follow each other in determining what to say- they are speaking together as they listen. The content of the answers is not important to the game but yield howls of laughter as the players try to come up with the answer and speak in unison.

Minefield

This icebreaker includes the whole group. Using masking tape, you will create a grid on the floor as big as you want. On the grid, you will have a pattern(chosen by the coordinator of the activity) that is the only way to get across the "minefield". Each person will try to get through the minefield, if they step on the wrong spot

then they must go to the back of the line. Sooner or later they will figure the pattern out and everyone will get through the minefield.

Zip Zap Zop!

Stand in a circle. Have kids practice saying “Zip, Zap, Zop.” One person starts by clapping and pointing to someone as he/she says, “zip.” The person he/she pointed to claps, and points to someone else saying “zap.” The person he/she pointed to then claps, and points to someone saying “zop.” Then it starts all over again with the next player clapping and pointing to someone saying “zip!” The game continues until someone gets out. If a player says a word out of order, he/she is out. If a player hesitates too long, he/she is out. When a player is out, they can stay in the game, but turn into “land mines” by crossing their arms over their chest. If a player still in the game points to one of the “mines,” he/she is out too.

Park Bench

Materials include 2-3 chairs, that should be set up in a straight line like a bench. The first player will go and sit on the bench silently, then the second player will come and interact with the first player. The second player will try to make the first player move off the bench by saying different things about them (REMEMBER: Keep it 4-H appropriate!). If the second player achieves their goal and gets the bench, another player will then come and do the same to the second player. If the second does not achieve their goal another player will come in and try to steal the bench from the first player. Each player will approximately 1-2 minutes to achieve their goal.

Flip Sheet

For this activity, you will need a tarp. Layout the tarp on the ground and have all team members stand on it. The smaller the tarp the more challenging the exercise! No Tarp? Use taped together newspaper sheets - the fragile paper makes the challenge even more interesting! While standing on top of a completely open tarp, the group must create a plan to get everyone on the opposite side of the tarp without anyone stepping off. The size of the tarp should be defined by the number of individuals in the group.

Got You!

Begin by having the participants stand in a circle, their arms out to the side, left hand palm up, right index finger pointing down and touching their neighbor’s outstretched palm. When the group is ready, say, “*When I say the word, “Go!” do two things: grab the finger in your left hand, and prevent your right finger from being grabbed. 1 – 2 – 3 – Go!*” Repeat several times.

Three-Headed Monster

Ask three students to come up front and link arms. They are now a three-headed monster. As a three-headed monster, they must talk in one-word turns. Have the students ask them questions or give them a scene or an object to tell a story about. The monster must answer the question or tell a story, making it up as they go along.

Name that person

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. For example, I have a pet iguana, I was born in Iceland, my favorite food is spinach, my grandmother is called Doris and my favorite color is purple. Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (Note: if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!)

Charades

Split everyone up into two teams. If you are using blank slips of paper, everyone should receive equal amounts of blank slips of paper. Have the players write down ideas for the opposing team to have to act out. Now obviously, you could write impossibly hard clues, but in the effort of fairness/fun, try to keep the phrases down to earth. Place these slips in a hat (or other container), and when everyone is finished, place the hat in front of the opposing team. Next, determine a 'batting' order for the players on the team. It is often easiest to just go down the line (if you are all sitting on a couch), or clockwise (if you are sitting in a circle). Flip a coin to determine which team goes first. A player from that team should stand up and act out the clue. If the team can correctly identify the clue within the time limit, they get a point. After the time is up, or the clue has been guessed, the next team goes, and you simply repeat.

Name Pulse/ Rush down the Line

In this game, everyone is split into two groups that face away from each other in straight, parallel lines. The only member of the group that can look at the instructor is the one at the very beginning of the line, the rest must look forward. The instructor will either show them a specific action, hand movement, or say a specific word mixed with others. When the correct action, movement or word is said, the

first person of the group will squeeze the person next to them's hand. This will move through the group, until it reaches the person on the end. The person at the end must raise their hand or a object of some kind when the "pulse" reaches them. The first group to raise their hand/object correctly, wins. Then the person in the front will move to the end. This can then be repeated.

Posers

Everyone in the group will be in a circle. One person will volunteer to step outside while the group picks the leader. The volunteer will enter the room to be in the middle. The leader will "strike a pose", and the group must follow. The person in the middle will have 3 guesses to guess the leader. This can be played multiple times.

Capture the Bacon

Everyone in the group is separated into 2 groups, one on each side of the "path" made with rope or cones. There will then be an object in the middle, known as "the bacon". Everyone will have a number 1 through 3. The only to get the bacon is to enter through either end of the ropes when their number is called. Whoever gets the bacon and leaves the open path wins. But, the catch is that, if you get tagged, you must drop the bacon, when it is dropped on the floor, you may try to get "the bacon" again. This can be played multiple times.

I'm a nerd/ Who am I

Put everyone is in a circle, and ask one person to volunteer to be in the middle. They will say "I'm a nerd and you're a nerd too if...". They will fill in the blank with a favorite ice cream flavor, color, T.V. show, etc. If you share that interest, you must race to a person's spot who shares that interest. There will always be someone in the middle, so this can be repeated multiple times.

Paper Airplane Game

This icebreaker works with groups of any age or size. Each participant writes something about themselves, like "I play the piano", on a piece of paper, then creates a paper airplane from that paper. Once the airplanes are created, the entire group stands in a circle and flies their planes into the middle. Going into the middle of the circle, each participant picks a different airplane then they started with. Once everyone has one, the group leader will lead the first person in opening their plane and reading what it says. The participants then take turns trying to figure out who had what paper airplane. In the process, the participants share a part of their lives while learning about the rest of the group. This is the perfect ice breaker to introduce the group!

Who's the Better Boss?

Who's the Better Boss is a fantastic icebreaker that is for all ages and works with groups of 8+ people. Depending on the group size, the leader will split the group into small groups of 2 or 3. Each small group will pick a "boss". This boss will instruct the other[s] in doing random things such as "go untie 3 people's shoes" or "go touch 3 people's knees". After the task is completed, the small group picks a different "boss" and continues rotating until each person has been "Boss" for at least 3 turns. In playing this game, the entire group is quickly engulfed in giggles as there is kids running around doing crazy things. This makes the entire group comfortable with each other, and encourages improvising as the "boss" makes up fun instructions.

Human Knot

This icebreaker requires at least 6+ participants. (The bigger the group, the more fun the icebreaker as it is more challenging). Standing in a circle, the participants all reach their hands in the middle of the circle. Each participant grabs the hands of another. It is important, however, that the kids grab two different people's hands and that they don't grab the hands of anyone directly next to them. Once everyone is holding hands, a huge knot is created. The group, in order to "win", must untangle the human knot without letting go of each other's hands. If the group is especially quick at unraveling the knot, the leader can make things harder by either timing them or not allowing them to talk. Another way to promote leadership and teamwork is to select one participant to be the talking leader and to lead the others in unraveling the knot.

Story Time

Story Time is a fun icebreaker that works with groups of all ages or sizes. Participants get in a circle and the group leader selects one participant to start. The first person starts with "Once Upon a Time.." and says a sentence to begin a story like, "Once upon a time...There was a little girl named Samantha" One by one, each person adds a sentence to the story, changing the plot and adding in goofy characters. This icebreaker will have the group having fun and laughing at their creation in no time while encouraging improvisation, fun, and teamwork.

Name Game

The Name Game is a great icebreaker to do with large groups to help introduce the participants in a fun way. Once the group is in a circle, one person starts the game, by saying "My name is ___ and I put a ___ in the box" and using a funny gesture to put their item in the middle of the circle. Each item must start with the first letter of their name. For instance, "My name is Cody and I put a cookie in the box" while

rubbing their tummy like they are hungry. Then the next person must say, "His name was Cody and he put a cookie in the box" doing the gesture and then they do their own item and name. This goes around the circle, challenging the participants to remember all the others' names and improvising their own fun item. This helps the group get to know each other while getting them comfortable with talking in front of the others.

Activity 1: Personal Commercials



Description: In this activity student's will collaborate with another student to create a commercial that positively advertises their partner.

Materials: Example list of positive attributes.

Directions:

1. Give an introduction of the task, the contents of a commercial, and the importance of positivity when viewing yourselves and others.
2. Split the group into partners and give them an example list of positive attributes. Explain that in each group you will take turns making a “commercial” to present in front of the whole group that advertises positive traits of your partner.
3. Give the partners time to get to know each other and create their commercials.

4. Allow the group to present the commercials.

Reflection: Glow and grow- have students comment on what the commercials “glowed”, or did well, on and what they could “grow”, or improve, on.

Application: This activity helps students learn how they can apply positive communication in their lives.

Activity 2: Game Board Challenge



Description:

In this activity, student's will split up into groups of three. One person will be the "game piece" the other two will act out a given scenario. The facilitator of this activity will lay out pieces of paper in a line to resemble a game board. One end of the line will be marked "start" the other "finish". The facilitator will tell everyone a scenario and the two people from each group will take turns acting it out. Whoever has the best presentation gets to have their third group member (or "game piece") move up one on the board. The first team to get to the finish line wins.

Materials:

- list of scenarios
- paper

Directions:

1. Lay paper on the ground in a "game board" pattern.

2. Split participants into groups of three (this can be adjusted based on the size of the group).
3. In each group assign two “actors” and one “game piece”.
4. Move all the actors to one side of the room and move the game pieces to the starting line on the game board.
5. Read one scenario to the actors and let each group of two have a turn acting it out.
6. Have the entire group discuss whose presentation was the best. Help them reach a final decision if necessary.
7. Instruct the game piece from the team with the best presentation to move forward one space (step on the next piece of paper).
8. Continue to give scenarios to the group until a game piece reaches the finish line.
9. Keep in mind you can put down or take up the paper to lengthen or shorten the game.

Reflection: What was your favorite part of this activity? How did the responsibilities of the game pieces and actors differ? How could you have made your presentations better?

Application: Explain to students that we must work together and clearly communicate ideas in order to complete something, whether it be a task or game board.

Possible Scenario List:

- Salesman selling a product to a possible customer
- Two people on a roller coaster
- Shopping for presents for a friend
- Bus driver and unruly child on the bus
- Chefs making a dish
- Buying your first car
- Leading a 4-H meeting
- Making a movie
- On a safari hunt

Activity 3: Scene Replay



Description:

In this activity, students will perform a short scene, but each time with a different spin on the scene. It focuses on teaching participants to work as a team and react positively to change.

Materials:

- List of scene ideas
- List of scene changes

Directions:

1. Split the group into teams of four.
2. Give one team a scene to act out.
3. Give the other teams the same scene, but with a scene change from the list.
4. Give the teams time to practice their scene, encourage creativity and cooperation.
5. Have each team present their scene in front of the group.

Reflection:

Glow and Grow....

- After each group's presentation have the other students comment a "glow" and "grow". A "glow" is something the group did well and a "grow" is something they could do better.
- Ask the group discussions questions such as, "what did you like?", "what did you not like?", "what did you learn?"
- Help participants make the connection that there can be a positive outcome, even when a situation may change.

Application:

Students can apply what they learned from this game by using teamwork, and reacting to change in their everyday lives.

Scene Ideas:

- Bear outside your tent
- Lost in the woods
- Road trip
- Learning to drive
- Celebrity sighting
- Doctor's visit
- Just bought a new car
- Getting in trouble at school

- A party
- Upset neighbor

Scene Changes:

- On the beach
- In the rain
- With an accent
- On a different planet
- In a museum
- As a younger/older person
- At an amusement park
- In the grocery store
- During a snowstorm
- As an animal
- On a life

Activity 4: Inspector Gadget



Description:

In this activity, the students will need to get their imaginations rolling with a fun mystery inspired lesson. The students will play as Inspector Gadget trying to fix what was done by the villains that disrupted their crime scene by changing the scene around.

Materials:

1. Props to make a scene.
2. Four People
3. 2 magnifying glasses and 2 fedoras (optional for the inspectors)

Directions:

First the leader of this exercise will need to set up the scene as a crime scene and explain to the students how this will work. The leader will then pick two inspectors

and two villains. The Inspectors will then have 2-3 minutes to inspect their crime scene, after their time is up they will go out of the room. The two villains will then come to the crime scene and they may change up to 3 things in the crime scene, it can be big changes or minor changes. Once the villains complete their task, the inspectors will then come in and they may have 4-5 minutes to figure out what the villains changed. This should all be done in complete character of a true Inspector Gadgets and Villains.

Reflections:

Have the students talk about what they thought was hard about this activity and, what they could have done different. Also, ask the students if they thought it would've been easier to do by their-selves.

Application:

This activity helps students realize the importance of details and how working as a team can be better than going solo because in some situations details can "drown" you if you're in it all alone.

Activity 5: Foreign Film



Materials:

- Bag of scenarios for participants to draw from

Description:

Participants will get in groups of four. Two players play out an improvised scene in gibberish, two will translate what they are trying to do. The idea is for the actors to work together to build a story based on their scenario. The scenarios are each set in a different country and the “gibberish” is the language they would speak. Note: the gibberish speakers cannot speak English; however, they can make up words, do facial expressions, and act out activities pertaining to their given scenario.

Directions:

1. Put students into groups of four, read the description, and let each group draw a scenario out of the bag.

2. Have them decide who will be “gibberish speakers”, and who will be “translators”.
3. The two gibberish speakers will be the actors listed in the scenario. The translators will try to explain to the audience what the gibberish speaker are trying to say.
4. Encourage teamwork and creativity in the scenes.
5. Take turns letting each group present in front of everyone.

Reflection:

- What made this activity difficult?
- What are some things that helped you understanding what the gibberish speakers were trying to act out?
- What did you learn from this activity?
- What is something positive you can take away from this activity?

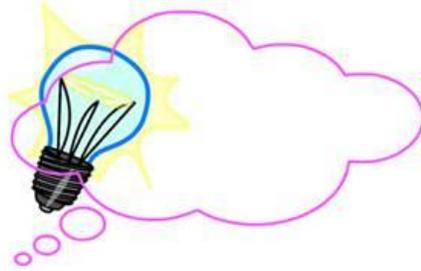
Application:

Explain to students that sometimes we don't understand someone's ideas or what they are trying to say. That doesn't mean you can't work together to complete a task.

List of Scenarios:

- China: a rice farmer in the fields and the boss of a millionaire business.
- Italy: a restaurant chief and customer ordering spaghetti
- France: an artist painting a picture and a tourist at the Eiffel Tower
- Scotland: a person playing bagpipes and a person who spotted the Loch Ness Monster.
- Egypt: engineer trying to build a pyramid
- Mexico: Owner of a taco truck and a pepper farmer

Activity 6: Never Ending Story



Description:

In this activity participants, will be working together to come up with a story by only saying one word each, at a time. The group will have a topic to base their story upon and the story will go from there.

Materials: a list of topics for the stories

Directions:

1. Introduce the idea of the game, explain that each person can only say one word at a time. Explain the importance of teamwork during this game.
2. Have the group sit in a circle, choose a topic, and pick someone to start the story.
3. Allow the story to play out. Be sure that the story is making sense
4. Give them the option to play again with another topic.

Reflection:

Have student tell what they learned during this activity. Ask them what they did well and what they could have did better.

Application:

This activity helps students learn how to work together and apply teamwork into their lives. Stress the importance of listening to others.

Example List of Topics:

- Teacher
- Tourist
- Doctor
- Musician
- Circus
- Desert Island
- Dentist
- Boat ride
- Airplane ride
- Mount Everest
- Chef

Activity 7: Pick A Personality



Description: The purpose of this activity is to replace negative attitudes with positive ones. It involves participants reflecting on how they view themselves.

Instructions:

1. Have students brainstorm in their heads a favorite and least favorite personality trait.
2. Explain to them that they are going to improv two scenes for each scenario based on these personality traits
3. Split youth into groups based on number of participants. Give them scenarios to act out.
4. Have the participants act out each scenario twice (The first time focusing on the negative trait, the next time on the positive trait).

Reflection: Have students discuss the pros and cons of their personality traits. Emphasize that negative and positive traits make up a well-rounded individual.

Possible Questions....

- Which trait bad or good, helped you get through the situation better?
- Which scenario made you feel better?
- What are some reasons for you disliking the personality trait you portrayed as bad?

Application: When working in groups, being aware of your traits can be help with teamwork and problem solving.

Example Scenarios:

- desert island
- sinking boat
- forgot about a school project
- shark in the water
- You're camping and there's a bear outside your tent

Post Test

1. I had fun participating in this program

Agree Disagree

2. I feel better about the way I see myself and others after participating in this program

Agree Disagree

3. I worked together with my peers during these activities

Agree Disagree

4. I feel more confident about presenting in front of groups after this program

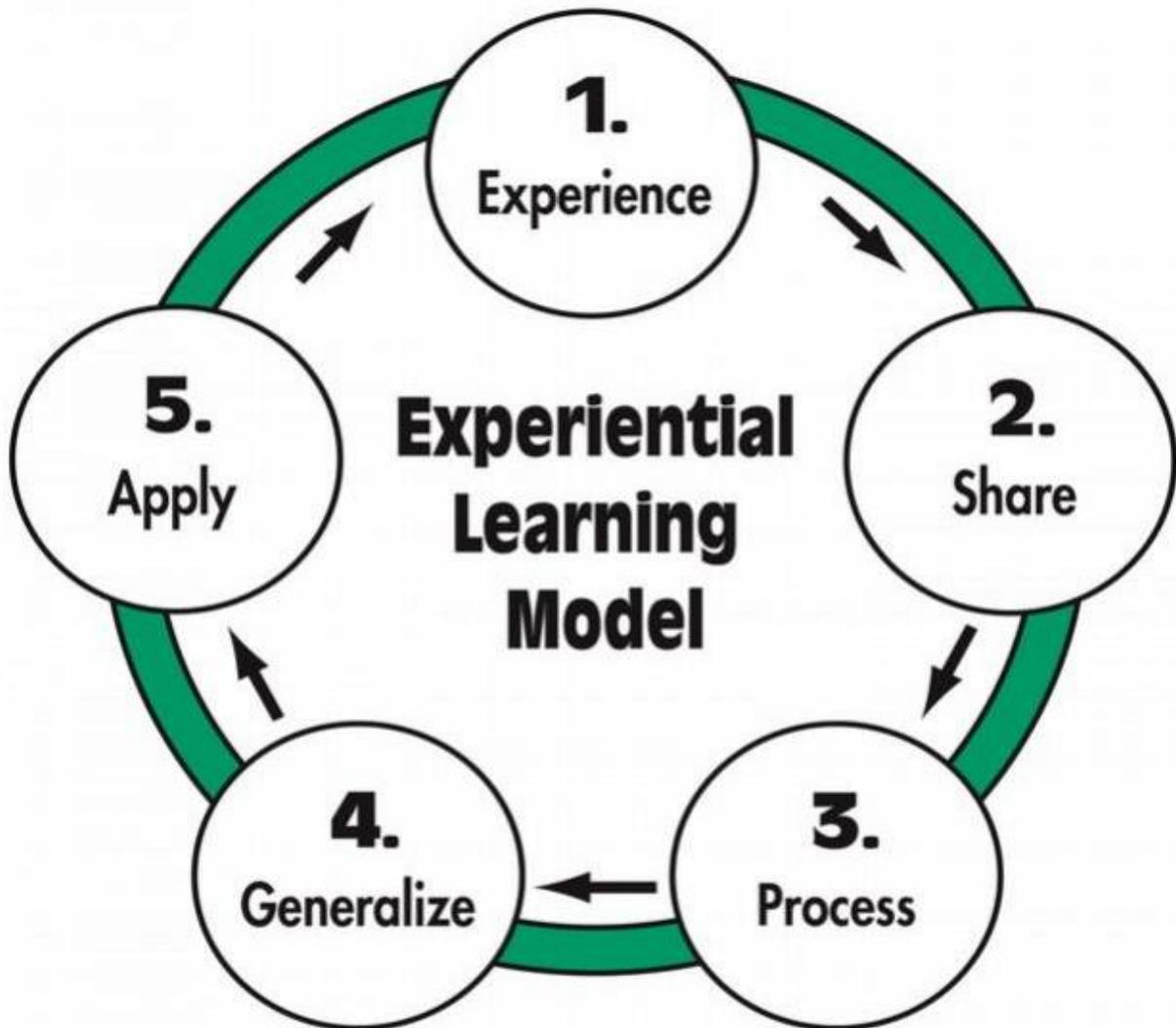
Agree Disagree

5. What are some things you learned in this program that can be used in the real world?

Appendix A: Resources

- www.improvcomedy.org
- dosomething.org
- improvencyclopedia.org
- johngordon.com
- wiki.kidzsearch.com

Appendix B: Experimental Learning



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E., "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals"

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Appendix C: Why is Experiential Learning Important?

Experiential learning is a teaching methodology where focus is placed on the process of learning and not the product of learning. Experiential learning is learner and activity centered and creates an environment where learners can reflect and apply their experience to real world situations.

However participating in an experience is not enough, and in order for an activity to truly be called experiential, it needs to encompass the following elements:

- **EXPLORATION: "Do it"**

Perform or do an activity with little to no help from the facilitator/teacher.

Examples might include: making products or models; role-playing; giving a presentation; problem-solving; playing a game.

- **SHARING: "What Happened"**

Publicly share the results, reactions and observations. Get the participants to talk about their experience. Share reactions and observations. Discuss feelings

generated by the experience. Let the group (or individual) talk freely and

acknowledge the ideas they generate.

- **PROCESSING: "What's Important?"**

Discussing, analyzing, reflecting, looking at the experience. Discuss how the experience was carried out. Discuss how themes, problems, and issues are brought out by the experience. Discuss how specific problems or issues were addressed.

Discuss personal experiences of members. Encourage the group to look for recurring themes.

- **GENERALIZING: "So What?"**

Connect the experience with real world examples. Find general trends or common truths in the experience. Identify "real life" principles that surfaced. List key terms that capture the learning.