

Where Have I Been? The Middle School Years...



Goals

Participants will be able to:

- Reflect on their middle school experiences and determine the positive changes they would like to make in high school

Pre-group Preparation

- Copy and cut Fish for Thought strips and place in basket
- “Where Have I Been and Where Am I Going” handout (one per participant)
- Optional: Obtain A quote book, a Billboard Top 100 Song List, magazines

Materials

- Pens or Pencils
- “Fish for a Thought” slips, cut into strips with one thought per slip
- Basket
- Blue scarf or blue construction paper
- “Where Have I Been and Where Am I Going” handouts
- Construction paper, different colors
- Markers
- Scissors, glue
- Blank sheets of paper
- Poster board
- Optional: A quote book, a Billboard Top 100 Song List, magazines
- Butcher paper or white board
- Post group agreements and goals for the session

Check In – Middle School

- Ask participants to share one fun thing they remember about middle school

Icebreaker: Fish for a Thought

- Place basket full of slips in the center of the circle, cover it with a blue scarf or blue construction paper
- Ask for a student to volunteer and “fish” a thought out of the basket, read the thought out loud and complete the sentence

- Generate discussion regarding the thoughts and let students comment on any similarities they notice
- Go around the circle until all students have “fished” at least once

Discussion

What was it like to be the one who was fishing? What was it like to complete the thought? Did people notice any similarities or differences in how they feel? Did you like this activity? Why or why not?

As we look towards the future and deal with transitions, changes, and growth it is important to know where we stand, how we feel, our strengths, our areas for improvement, our confidence level, our fears etc. Change often brings all of these things to the surface and it is important to take time to recognize how we feel so we can deal with the changes successfully.

Activity 1 – Where have I been, and Where am I going?

- Pass out the “Where Have I Been and Where Am I Going” handouts to each participant
- Ask them to reflect on the Middle School Column and record where they were in middle school with their Attendance, Academics/ Grades, Behavior, Activities, Family Life, Friendships, Relationships etc.
- Give examples for the students if they need more direction (i.e. like science class, on basketball team, my family is living together, like spending time with my grandma, etc.)
- Ask them to record where they are now with all of those aspects of their life and record that in the Present Column
- Ask them to reflect on the future, the remainder of High School and beyond, where do they want to be
- Then ask each student to circle or underline those items that they see in two or more columns (i.e. good grades in Math, playing soccer, my friend _____, etc.)

Discussion

What were the activities or aspects of your life that stayed the same? Are they positive aspects or negative/ challenging aspects in your life? Do you have any power to change them? What are some things about school that you can change? About friendships

and/or relationships? About family? How would changing those things in a positive way affect your success in high school?

Change is an important part of our growth. Now that we have identified some areas of change and some parts of our life that we would like to keep the same, we will look at who will support us through these changes.

Activity 2 – My Mantra

- Sometimes when we are confronted with challenging situations we can use our own mind and the power of positive thought to turn a situation around
- Athletes and people who have survived major disasters, accidents, and other traumatic situations have often talked about how they held onto hope by using positive thoughts, also known as a mantra
- Mantras can be a song, a quote, a saying, or just a simple positive message that means a lot to you
- We are going to think about our own mantras today
- Optional: Read some examples from a quote book or Top 100 song list
- Pass out blank sheets of paper and give the students 5 minutes or so to brainstorm a mantra, a song lyric, a quote, or something someone once said to them that brings them comfort and relief
- Once the students have chosen a mantra they can write their mantra on another blank sheet of paper
- When all students are done have them read their mantra to the group and tape it to the big poster board to create a collage of mantras to display

Discussion

Take a few moments to look at our group collage. What is powerful about your mantra? How can you use it to help you in difficult times? How will you use your mantra to help you succeed in high school?

Check Out – Share your mantra

Have group member share one positive word about the collage of mantras