

READING

INSTANT MEETING
AGES: 12 - 17

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Lined Paper
- Pencils
- Poster Paper
- Markers and/or pencil crayons
- Copies of "Create Your Own Character Worksheet" on page 4

OPENING

(Optional) Arrange a short tour at your local library. Ask the librarian to show the children around while talking about why reading is important as well as introducing them to the section where they can find books appropriate for their age level.

Hold your usual meeting at the library (if allowed), or a nearby area outside etc., where you can continue to talk about reading with your group.

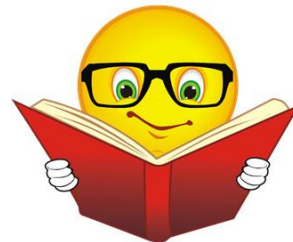
Enjoy your usual Opening.

Afterwards ask everyone what types of books they like to read and if they have any favorite series or authors they would like to share with the group. Ask everyone to give a brief synopsis of their favorite book/series and explain what makes it interesting to them.

Let them know that today they will get to design their very own poster for a novel. However, first everyone needs to learn a few things about how characters and story can affect the reader.

ACTIVITIES

HIDDEN MESSAGES



Read the following passages and ask the group to respond to each one. Ask everyone how they visualize the character who is speaking, i.e. Could they be a role model or someone who shouldn't be looked up to at all? If so, why? What message is this character presenting with their words to a reader? How are these character's different from one another?

GOAL: To encourage reading and literacy skills within the group as well as have everyone start thinking about the messages the characters' can carry within a work.

PROGRAM AREAS COVERED:
The Arts from A to Z, Explore Your Creativity

PREPARATION TIME:
10-15 minutes for printing and gathering supplies
Calling ahead to set up a Library Tour (optional)

A “Oh my God Becky, did you see what Amelia was wearing today? Her outfit was so like sooo hideous!”

C “Matthew dumped me last night. He said I wasn’t cool enough to be his girlfriend anymore when I told him I’m not okay with him smoking. I think I’m going to sneak a cigarette from my dad’s jacket after supper tonight. My life is over if I don’t win him back.”

B “Andrew needs help with his homework so I’m going to stay after class and tutor him instead of going to play basketball with the guys. He doesn’t talk much, but he helped me clean up the paint I spilled in art class last week. Is that okay mom?”

D “My parents told me I could be anyone when I grew up, but I’d have to study hard and go to class everyday. Some days I don’t want to, but I know it will pay off when I’m rich and famous and all those slackers are working at a gas station for the rest of their lives.”



CHARACTER CREATION

1 Ask everyone to close their eyes and picture their favorite character from a book. What do they look like? Why do they like this particular character? What do they like to do? Are they a positive influence or a negative influence in the story? Are they a leader or a follower?

3 Ask everyone to write down the traits of a character that they admire or would like to create.

2 Hand out the “Create Your Own Character Worksheet” and a pencil to each person.

4 Ask the group to also think about what this character portrays with their actions and words within a story they’ve read or written themselves or just in their own imaginations.



PROMOTIONAL POSTER

1 Hand out poster paper and markers and/or pencil crayons.

3 Also, ask everyone to draw their character in a way that represents the goals, personality etc. that they wrote down on their worksheet.

2 Ask everyone in the group to come up with a title for a book their character could be in and a tag line as well that sums up who their main character/story plot is about.

4 Have each individual present their poster to the group and talk about what is going on in the poster and who their character is, what they represent etc.



ACTING OUT

1 Split the group up into teams of 2-4 people, depending on how many people are in attendance.

2 Hand out a few sheets of lined paper to each team.

3 Ask everyone to work together to create a short skit utilizing the character's they just created. Let them know that the skit can be set in any time period or place, even the moon if they want.

4 Ask them to make their skit as crazy and as creative as possible, writing dialogue that really shows who and what their characters are all about. Give the teams 15-20 minutes to write their script for the skit.

5 Ask each team to perform their skit for the group.

6 Have everyone clap at the end to show encouragement.

7 Ask the teams not performing what they thought about the character's in the script and see if it fits with what the writer was trying to create.



CLOSING

Congratulate the group on the great characters and skits they created. Ask them to continue reading as much as possible, without ignoring homework of course, and to think about the influence a character can have within a story. Let them know that they are welcome to bring examples of other positive or negative characters to future meetings to discuss the messages they send to readers or what the group would change about them.

Also, have everyone take home their worksheets to use as inspiration if they feel like writing a longer story about their character.

Enjoy your regular Closing.



Create Your Own Character Worksheet

By: _____

Date: _____

What is your character's name?

What does your character look like?

Where is your character from?

How old is your character?

What kind of accent does your character have?

What kind of personality does your character have?

What goals does your character have?

What challenges does your character face?

What does your character do in his/her spare time?

What other ideas do you have for your character?
