

Role-Play

Role-play is an interactive (and sometimes entertaining) method of involving teenagers in resolving issues that they may encounter as teachers. It is also a good way for the adult trainer to get a sense of what issues the teen might bring to the job that need to be addressed. For example, if a teen playing the part of an adult teacher responds to a mock discipline problem with threats of violence, the trainer will know to discuss and promote a program's nonviolent discipline philosophy.

Role-play can be conducted using several methods. Two are described here. In the first, teenagers are given their roles without knowing what the other actors are assigned to say or do. Then they ad lib based on the other actors' performances. This method requires that they think and respond quickly, and it allows the trainer to see how the teenagers might respond to a problem on their own. With the second method, teenagers work in small groups and plan the entire role-play and present it to the rest of the group (like a skit). This method fosters teamwork and allows the teens to present thoughtful solutions to issues.

Preparation

- Prepare handouts on normal childhood behavior to give to each teen.
- Prepare roles to be played.
- Method 1: Write a scenario in which you list the characters involved and some background of the issue (see p. 44).
- Method 2: Write one role description and some background information on an index card for each player (see p. 45).

Activity Directions

- Form role-play groups and distribute development handouts to each member. According to method being used, distribute either a scenario or index cards to the teens. Give them time to think about and plan their roles.
- Each group of teenagers then spends 5 to 7 minutes acting out their skit for the rest of the group.
- Discuss the resolution each small group of teens proposes in their skit. Ask questions such as: What was going on with the children? Was this an effective method of resolving the issue? What other methods might be used to resolve an issue?

Tips

- Encourage teenagers to act like the person being portrayed would really act (teens with a flair for drama sometimes put entertainment value before education).
- Provide props to support the activity. For example, for the role-play about a fight in the garden, provide a toy shovel or a trowel.
- This is a very difficult activity for teenagers who may be shy. Remember to thank each group for its great performance.

Sample Roles for Using Method 1 (each teen gets one description)

Teen Leader: You are working in the garden with three children, all age 7. There is only one shovel. You have asked them to share.

Child 1: You are 7 years old and working in the garden with a teen leader and two other 7-year-old children. There is one shovel that you are supposed to share. But the other two children want it and there is some shoving and arguing among all three of you.

Child 2: You are 7 years old and working in the garden with a teen leader and two other 7-year-old children. There is one shovel that you are supposed to share. But the other two children want it and there is some shoving and arguing among all three of you.

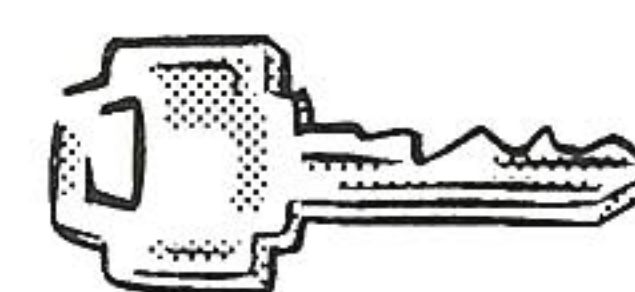
Child 3: You are 7 years old and working in the garden with a teen leader and two other 7-year-old children. There is one shovel that you are supposed to share. The other two children want it, and you are tired and frustrated with them. In the process of fighting over the shovel you become angry enough to throw dirt at them.



Sample Scenario Using Method 2 (give the same scenario to EACH group member)

One teen and three children, all age 7, are working in the garden. There is one shovel. The children begin arguing about who gets to use the shovel, and a little bit of shoving begins. One of the children becomes frustrated and angry and throws dirt at the other two children.

Show how the teen resolves the issue.



Key Ideas to Discuss

- Establish rules of sharing before beginning an activity (for instance you can give each child 5 minutes or 5 scoopfuls of dirt then he or she must give the shovel to the next child).
- Think of tasks for the children who are not using the shovel.
- Throwing dirt is never allowed. You may say “dirt is not for throwing” and give a short time-out for the child who threw dirt.

