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# What Leaders Need to Know



If you asked kids to identify the assignment they dread the most, chances are that most of them would say “public speaking.” Speaking in front of their peers is probably even more nerve-wracking to them than speaking to a group of total strangers. Therefore, the goal of these public presentation materials is to help young people overcome their fear of public speaking and increase their public speaking skills in a nonthreatening environment.

## Why Learn About Vocal Expression?

Public speaking can seem daunting, but if a young person develops these skills early on, the skills will be an asset throughout his or her life. People develop poise and self-confidence as they grow accustomed to standing before a crowd and sharing their thoughts and ideas.

As communication skills become more critical to the career world, so does the need for kids to learn these skills. It’s also important for them to experience early success with expressing themselves. This means that even though you may be afraid of public speaking because of bad experiences in the past or lack of experience, it’s time to put your fears aside and really encourage your members to stand up and speak up! Many kids don’t take the chance to practice public speaking because the people around them make it sound scarier than it is.

The activities in this section of the *Communications Toolkit* should make

public speaking seem fun, not impossible. This requires you to create an environment where all levels of participation are applauded, regardless of the speaker’s age or skill level.

## A Comfortable Setting

Many of the activities mention doing them “in a comfortable setting.” Creating a comfortable setting will take some thought and planning. Keep in mind that young people, like adults, have a variety of personality types. That means that some kids will naturally be more outgoing than others. Try not to push them too hard or too fast. Encourage them to share ideas using a variety of methods. As they become more comfortable with sharing their ideas and with the reactions their actions receive, they’ll be more adventurous in the projects they undertake.

## Life Skills

Participating in the public speaking warm-ups and activities in this section will help young people develop their ability to:

- Organize their thoughts and ideas.
- Communicate information to someone else in a confident and convincing manner.
- Problem-solve and be flexible (for example, overcoming stage nerves or adapting information to different audiences and situations).
- Use resources wisely (specifically, to honor the time allotted for a presentation or speech)!

- Develop useful, marketable skills (for example, speech writing and delivery techniques).

- Manage stress and feelings.

- Evaluate their work and set goals for improvement

## Self-Assessment & Evaluation

After each activity or project you lead with young people, please help them think about what they learned. Make copies of the “What I Learned” self-evaluation form on page 8 and distribute them to your group. Ask them to think quietly about the questions and make notes about what they learned, how they feel about their skills in that area and what they’d like to learn more about. Then lead a discussion with the whole group and ask if anyone wants to share what they came up with. Young people may want to keep their “What I Learned” forms to refer to later and as a way to document their learning process.

## Public Speaking in Other Projects

The skills young people learn while practicing public presentations translate well to other project areas and should be integrated into project activities whenever possible. Part of the experiential learning model is giving kids a chance to share with others what they’ve learned about a particular subject. By demonstrating a skill or illustrating an idea before a group, kids are

practicing their public speaking skills and gaining confidence. Soon it will seem natural to them to express their ideas without a thought about how scary public speaking “should be.”

## You May Want to Know

You may want to know the following points before getting started with helping young people learn more about public speaking.

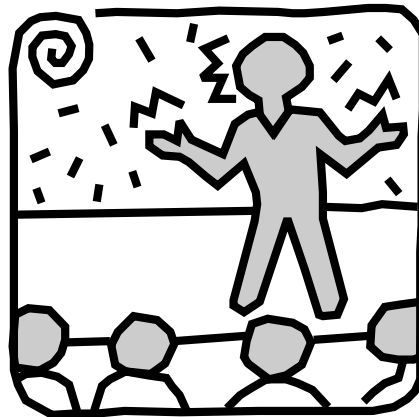
1. The basic processes for writing and delivering a speech or demonstration (see the “Writing for Public Speaking,” “Delivering a Vocal Presentation” and “Overcoming Stage Nerves” skill sheets located on pp. 35, 31 and 34, respectively).
2. How to help kids evaluate and feel good about their experiences in communication (see the “What I Learned” sheet on pg. 8).
3. Where to go for field trips, where to find speakers to visit or how to find out who’s talking around town.
4. The developmental needs of the kids in your group (see the *Ages and Stages of Child and Youth Development* publication which is available from Purdue University on the World

Wide Web at [<http://www.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/NCR/NCR-292.html>]).

## Who’s Talking Around Town?

To connect the idea of vocal expression to careers and make public speaking come alive for your group, you may want to arrange a group visit with someone who uses public speaking as a major part of his or her job, such as:

- Actors
- Lawyers
- Lobbyists
- Managers
- Ministers
- Politicians
- Presidents of professional associations and civic organizations



- Professional speakers
- Radio broadcasters
- Teachers
- Telephone operators
- Television personalities
- Tour guides

Many organizations, such as Toastmasters and Optimists Clubs, focus on communication skills and may be good sources of guest speakers.

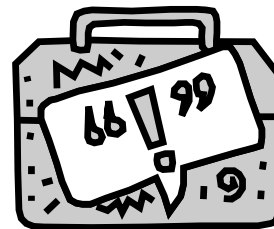
## Beyond the Toolkit: More Ideas & Resources

To encourage your group to learn more about public speaking and vocal expression, refer to the “Video, Media and Technology” and “Visual Communication and Graphic Design” sections of the *Communications Toolkit*.

The World Wide Web and other sections of the Internet offer information on developing vocal expression skills. Use the general categories listed here as search terms with any of the Internet search engines: “public speaking,” “vocal expression,” “speeches,” “speech writing,” “speakers.” You could also have the participants come up with their own set of search terms. (See pg. 134 for information on Internet safety.)

## SKILL SHEET:

# Delivering a Vocal Presentation



In any speech, demonstration, play or choral reading you must be aware of *how* you're delivering your message as well as the content of the message. This skill sheet describes the basics to remember for delivering vocal presentations. For information on writing a piece to be delivered before an audience, refer to the "Writing for Public Speaking" skill sheet on page 35.

## Delivering a Speech

### Voice

As many famous people have discovered, your voice can be a powerful tool. But like any tool you must practice with it to use it well. When giving a speech, you want the entire audience to hear you. The following points may help:

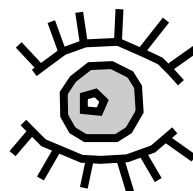


- Project your voice and speak up. Voice projection is not shouting, and you can do it without straining. Speaking from the back of the throat makes your voice sound weak and tires it faster; use your diaphragm muscles to make your voice carry. The diaphragm muscles are between your chest and stomach. Using them will help you relax and make your voice sound stronger.
- Try to sound like yourself. Use a conversational tone with familiar words.
- Speak at a comfortable pace so everyone can hear and understand your entire speech.
- Enunciate (pronounce clearly) all vowels and consonants.
- Don't slur your words – practice pronouncing the d's, t's and ing's on the end of words.
- When you're rehearsing a speech, have someone stand near the back of the room to give you feedback on your projection and delivery, as well as content.

**Remember:** A strong confident voice will make your message more believable.

### Eye Contact

Eye contact, or lack of it, can make a difference in how receptive the audience is to your message. These points may help:



- Maintain eye contact with your audience. Try to memorize your opening and closing statements so that you can maintain steady eye contact when you need to hold the audience's attention.

Your audience will be more receptive and attentive if you look at them.

- Try not to stare at a fixed object. Let your eyes travel casually and naturally from person to person throughout your speech.
- Look for friendly faces with whom to make eye contact, but don't neglect the rest of the audience. Once you get into the body of your presentation, watch the faces of the audience members to see whether they understand and follow you.

## **Gestures and Expressions**

Gestures can be a powerful addition to any speech. They can also be a terrible distraction. The following points may help you turn gestures into a public speaking asset:



- Use gestures only if they are natural to you. Effective hand gestures come from being relaxed and spontaneous, not from fidgeting.
- Smile! If you look like you enjoy what you're doing, so will your audience. Be dramatic, but match your facial expressions to your words. Look serious and sincere if your message is serious, smile if your message is positive.

## **Posture**

Posture is very important to maintaining an interested and confident appearance. The following points may help.

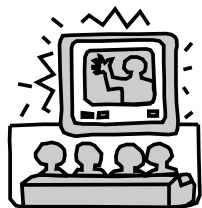
- If a podium is available, place your notes on it, but don't lean on it. Leaning gives the impression that you're tired, sick or bored.
- If you choose to walk while you talk, maintain your upright posture and hold your notes above your waist. Avoid pacing because it is distracting and may make you look nervous.

## **Other Tips**

- Warm up your vocal chords and facial muscles before beginning your presentation.
- Be yourself, don't try to imitate others.
- Practice speaking techniques, not just individual speeches.

## SKILL SHEET:

# Using Visual Aids



Some speeches just stand alone. Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," President John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech are examples of

memorable speeches given without the help of visual aids. However, audiences may need the help of visuals to fully comprehend some messages.

Visual aids come in many forms, such as slides, overhead transparencies, posters, flipcharts, videos, puppets or other actors, and objects.

For information on creating presentation graphics see the "Designing Presentation Graphics That Work" skill sheet on page 67.

## When To Use Visual Aids

In many situations, using a visual aid would enhance your presentation, such as:

- **When you're presenting complicated information.**

If the information you're presenting is detailed and has many parts to it, you might want to use posters or overheads to organize your thoughts. You can point to individual items or place a check mark by items as you talk to keep the audience moving with you.

- **When pictures speak volumes.** Some pictures really do speak a thousand words and can be very appealing to an audience. Showing slides, videos or posters may be more effective than trying to describe a scene. Imagine how much more persuasive a photograph of a destroyed rain forest is than describing the way it looks.

- **When your audience may fall asleep.** In some speeches it may be necessary to give many statistics or to talk about percentages. Overheads showing pie graphs or charts may break up the monotony of numbers. Better yet would be to show a short video clip illustrating the content of your message between bouts of delivering statistical data.

## Audiovisual Tips

A few tips to remember when using equipment to present visual aids follow.

- Choose your audio and visual aids thoughtfully, keeping in mind the size and shape of your room, the expected size of your audience and available equipment. For example: If you're expecting an audience of 50 you wouldn't want to show a video if you only have a single or small monitor. The same is true for writing on a chalkboard or flip chart for a large room where your audience might be spread out over a distance.

- Practice with all equipment before you deliver your speech so you're comfortable with how it works. Allow time to make adjustments if necessary. You could practice with the equipment at the same time you check the microphone (if you're using one).

- You may need to speak louder than you normally do in order to be heard over some equipment. Test this before your presentation.

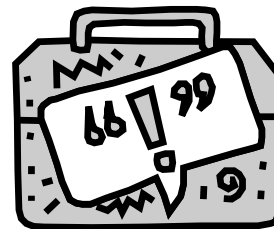
- Structure your presentation so that you aren't constantly turning on and off the lights. Audience adjustment to light and dark may be slow, creating lag time in your presentation.

- Rehearse your speech, including all of your visuals. You should be able to use them smoothly to enhance your presentation and not distract the audience from your primary message.

- Always have a backup plan in case you aren't able to use your audio or visual aids (for whatever reason). A presentation that relies completely on a video or slides may be a disaster if the equipment doesn't work or isn't available.

## SKILL SHEET:

# Overcoming Stage Nerves



The largest barrier to learning to speak effectively in front of a group is the fear that something terrible will happen. Some people who dread public speaking are afraid because they've had poor first experiences and were unprepared to handle the situation. But for most people it's the lack of practice or opportunities to speak that keeps them from feeling like capable public speakers.

It is important to recognize the difference between a real phobia and just a bad case of stage nerves (also called "stage fright"). The symptoms of stage nerves could be quite severe, but should lessen as you become a more experienced presenter. You don't have to lose your fear before you can do a good job. You can learn the mechanics of overcoming fear, and through repetition you'll gain confidence.

If you get nervous before crowds, remember that a little nervous energy is absolutely necessary to give you that excited spark that the audience can share. Even very experienced speakers and actors feel "butterflies" before going on stage because they all want to give their best performances. Only speakers who don't care don't feel anything.

## Tips for Reducing Stage Nerves

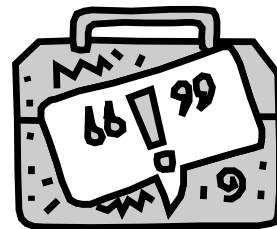
To reduce your stage nerves and work toward becoming a confident speaker, follow these tips:

- Be prepared. A well-planned and well-rehearsed talk will sound clear and organized and seem natural to deliver.
- Only speak about things you know well or that interest you, so you feel confident you have something to offer the audience.
- Complete the "Let's Talk About Nerves" activity found on page 48 to help you identify your anxiety symptoms. Then learn to prepare for and eventually overcome them.
- If you get nervous speaking in front of strangers, try to chat with a few members of the audience before you have to give your speech. This helps establish contact and make you feel as though you're on friendly ground.
- Eat light before a presentation.
- Avoid carbonated beverages, which may cause stomach upset or uncomfortable gas. Dairy products may coat the mouth and throat, and also may cause stomach upset for some people.
- Practice giving your presentation several ways so you're comfortable making last-minute adjustments.
- Learn a quick stress-reducing routine for relaxing your neck, shoulder and facial muscles just before giving your talk.
- Visualize yourself succeeding and enjoy the applause!



## SKILL SHEET:

# Writing for Public Speaking

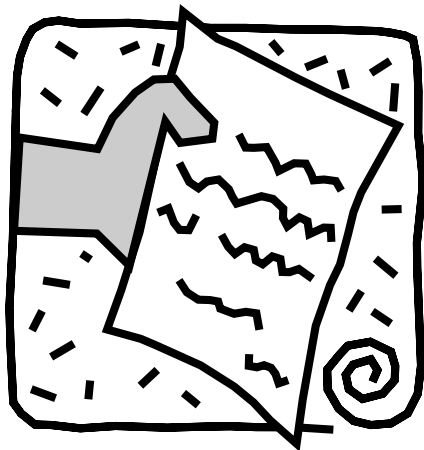


Several points that will help you write good presentations follow.

- **Choose a topic.** When preparing any good speech, the first important step is to pick a topic you're comfortable with. If you're familiar with and excited about the topic, your speech will be more interesting for the audience to listen to and easier for you to present.

- **Consider your audience.** The next step is to consider your audience, how you'll present your material and how much depth or detail will be necessary. Targeting your message to your audience increases the likelihood that your speech will be a success. If you know something about your audience, you'll be better able to plan a talk that speaks directly to them. For example, consider how a presentation for a group of 8-year-olds would differ from the same topic presented to a group of adult volunteers.

- **Develop an outline.** Keep in mind the three basic outline parts: introduction, discussion and conclusion.



Developing an outline first will save you work and frustration later on.

- **Remember the high points.** Write down certain phrases or points that you don't want to forget.

- **Use the introduction to grab attention.** The introduction should grab your audience's attention and set the stage for your presentation. Choose a quote, a joke, a challenging question or something surprising to get the audience interested. The introduction should also outline important parts of your speech and tell your listeners what you'll be talking about. You may want to include some information about yourself, too.

- **Be logical and thorough.** Present your material in a logical order and be sure to cover the areas you outlined in your introduction. Again, tailor your talk to fit the age and interests of your audience.

- **Get personal.** Use personal examples, illustrations and stories in your talk.

- **Summarize your speech.** The conclusion summarizes the speech. It should stress the most important parts of the speech and tie everything together.

Follow these tips to present your written ideas in the most effective way.

- **"Tell 'em what you're gonna say."** Remember, in the introduction you tell the audience what you're going to say, in the body you say it and in the conclusion you tell the audience what you said.

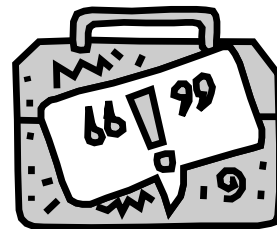
- **Follow your notes or an outline.** Don't be afraid to use your notes or outline during your talk. However, be sure the print is large enough to refer to at a glance. This will help you stay on track and make your presentation flow. Losing your place in your notes distracts you and the audience.

- **Avoid memorizing.** When you're truly familiar with your topic, memorizing your speech is unnecessary. Thoroughly prepared speakers learn their outlines, then relate the major points and supporting information when delivering the speech. Working from a written outline without memorizing the entire speech will give you more flexibility if something unexpected happens.



## SKILL SHEET:

# Tips for Effective Demonstrations



**Demonstrations are talks that show, one step at a time, how to perform an activity.**

## Planning Tips

Your demonstration may take only 10 minutes, but the time you spend planning those 10 minutes will determine your success or failure. Here are some questions to ask yourself and points to consider:

### Will my topic work as a demonstration?

- Pick a well-defined skill or activity that can be demonstrated in a short time period. For example, showing how to toss a salad is easier than explaining how to cook.
- Select a topic that can be easily broken down into illustrated steps that the audience can be successful at doing themselves. For example, you may be able to wiggle your ears, but others may not find it as easy to do!



- Consider how much background your audience will need on your topic before you begin demonstrating. For example, if you are showing how to saddle a horse, you may need to first explain how to approach the horse and make it hold still.

### What is my audience going to be like?

- Plan your demonstration around the size of the group. Will you have a small group that can cluster around you, or will you need large visual aids and a microphone to be seen and heard?
- Try to anticipate how much your audience may already know about your topic. Pick a skill level that you think will be high enough to hold your audience's attention but not so high that they can't keep up with you.

### What do I want my demonstration to accomplish?

- Decide if the purpose of your demonstration will be to **educate** the audience on how to do something, **inform** them on how something works or **persuade** them that one method works better than another. You can do all of these in one demonstration if you plan well.
- Think about what response you want from your audience. For example, do you want them to try a new skill, or change an old way of doing something?

- Consider how much time you have, the skill level of your audience and your own expertise.

## Organizing

Once your initial planning is done, make a detailed outline or script for what you plan to cover in your talk and what visuals or props you will need for each step. A well-organized speech contains the following basic parts:

**1. Introduction** – Where you capture the audience's attention with a relevant story, quote, challenge or other interesting remarks and then explain what the demonstration will be about.

**2. Body** – Where you present a step-by-step procedure, explaining key points as you go along. You can outline the steps by doing the activity and writing the steps down as you go.

**3. Conclusion** – Where you restate the purpose of your demonstration and give a brief summary of the steps.

## Tips for Choosing & Using Visual Aids

Use visuals such as posters, slides and overheads to help the audience understand your topic. Visuals can help keep the audience's attention, but don't overdo it – too many visuals can be distracting. It's very important to practice your demonstra-

tion using your visuals. Keep them within reach and in the order you will present them. When you're done using each one, set it aside so it doesn't distract from your next point. Make sure your visuals:

- Are attractive.
- Are readable from the farthest distance they will be viewed.
- Highlight important points.
- Are simple and neat.
- Are easy to use.

Props may be helpful when realism is needed. Make sure that your props are practical for the setting you will be in. For instance, including your dog as part of a demonstration on pet grooming might make it more realistic, but you'll also need to think about any problems that might arise from bringing an animal into a unfamiliar situation.



If you're planning to use electronic equipment, make sure you'll have outlets available nearby and anticipate any replacement bulbs or batteries you might need. Have a back-up plan in case your equipment fails.

## Tips for Good Delivery

- Be enthusiastic!
- Dress for the part.
- Briefly introduce yourself, explaining your interest or special skills in your topic.
- Start with your opening, then get right into the action. Keep things moving but don't rush.
- Know your subject and explain what you're doing as you do it.
- Practice in advance, but if something doesn't go the way you planned it in the final demonstration, explain briefly what happened and continue.
- Be sure your audience can see what you're doing at all times. Store items away from the center of interest when you're not using them.
- Speak clearly. If you must use noisy equipment like a blender, explain what you're doing before and after you use it. Don't try to shout over the noise.

- Stay within your allotted time. To show all the steps of a process, you may need to have materials ready to show in various stages (baking bread, for example).

- End your demonstration by showing the audience your finished product and letting them ask questions. If you don't know an answer, say so – don't guess.

## Practice Makes Perfect

Assemble everything you need for your presentation (and friendly volunteers to be your test audience) and **practice**. Videotaping your practice demonstration is another good way to help you fine-tune it. Afterwards ask yourself (or your test audience):

- Are my actions in logical order?
- Did I explain what I was doing while I was doing it?
- Did I give complete information?
- Are my visual aids effective?
- Did I keep to my time limit?
- Do I know enough about my topic to answer questions from the audience?

## ICEBREAKER:

# Speech Warm-Ups



### PURPOSE:

- To help kids feel relaxed with each other
- To help kids learn that it's okay to make mistakes when speaking or reading aloud

### MATERIALS:

"Tongue Twisters" handout on pg. 39; one per person)

### SETTING:

Comfortable room where kids can meet in small groups

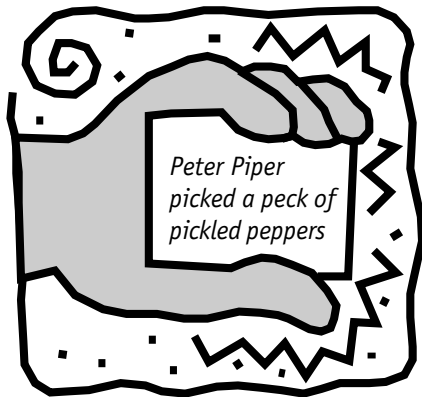
### TIME:

5–10 minutes

### PROCEDURE:

1. Divide the group into four- or five-person teams.
2. Have each person choose a tongue twister to work on. Give them a minute or two to practice saying their tongue twisters.
3. Have the participants take turns reading their tongue twisters aloud and teaching the tongue twisters to the rest of their small group.
4. After they've "sampled" each tongue twister, tell the teams to choose one tongue twister to read for the whole group.

**Leader's Note:** If everyone picks one of the simpler tongue twisters (4, 5 and 6) to work on the first time, repeat steps 1 through 4 and drop those tongue twisters from the list. Work with the kids to help them pronounce the more difficult words clearly. Explain that this will help them learn to speak clearly.



## SPEECH WARM-UPS HANDOUT:

# Tongue Twisters



Say these slowly at first; then say them as fast as you can without making any mistakes! If you make a mistake, start over, a little more slowly. Speak all final consonant sounds (such as t, d and p) distinctly. Also, take care to make the vowel sounds (a, e, i, o and u) distinctly.

1. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers;  
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.  
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,  
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

4. Through thin cloths, the thief thrust thorns.

2. When a twister twisting would twist him a twist,  
For twisting a twist, three twists he would twist.  
But if one of the twists untwists from the twist,  
Then the twist, untwisting, untwists the twists.

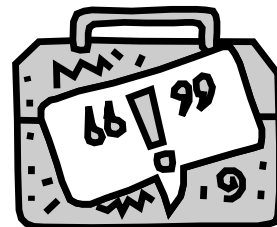
5. Cease sighing, since sighs seldom secure success.

3. If Theofilus Thistle, the thistle-sifter, sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles,  
where is the sieve of unsifted thistles that Theofilus Thistle the thistle sifter sifted?

6. Rubber baby buggy bumpers.

## ICEBREAKER:

# This Is My Friend



### FOCUS:

Beginning to speak in front of a group

### PURPOSE:

- To give participants opportunities to speak in front of a group
- To help participants understand the purpose of a good introduction

### MATERIALS:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens or pencils

### SETTING:

Room with chairs, an open area in front and a podium, if available

### TIME:

10 minutes

### PROCEDURE:

#### Before the meeting:

This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.

- Listen carefully to other people's presentations.
- Provide feedback in a positive way.
- Don't be rude, critical or hurtful.
- Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
- Be considerate of other people's feelings.
- Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.

#### During the meeting:

1. Have the participants pair off with someone they don't know well. Tell them they'll have 2 or 3 minutes to interview and jot a few notes about each other. Suggest that they ask at least the following questions:
  - What's your name?
  - How old are you?
  - What school do you attend?
  - What grade are you in?
  - What's your favorite project or projects?
  - How many people are in your family?
  - What's your favorite dessert?
2. Explain that they'll be building imaginary frames around their partners, and that the more information they have for their frames, the nicer those frames will be.
3. Give them another 2 or 3 minutes to write a brief introduction of their partners. Suggest that they follow the format, "Hi, my name is, \_\_\_\_\_, and this is my friend, \_\_\_\_\_." Tell them to read their introductions to their partners to make sure their information is correct.
4. Have the teams take turns introducing their partners to the whole group. After they've finished the introductions, ask the group what they liked or didn't like about talking in front of the large group.

**Leader's Note:** This icebreaker could be used with other speaking activities in this section or to warm up the group before working on any project area.



## ICEBREAKER:

# Imagine It!



### FOCUS:

To develop creativity and increase participants' comfort with acting in front of a group

### PURPOSE:

- To help participants relax before working on their public presentation skills
- To create an atmosphere of creativity and fun

### MATERIALS:

None

### SETTING:

Open area (inside or outside) with little or no furniture or obstacles

### TIME:

5–10 minutes

### PROCEDURE:

1. Set the stage by being enthusiastic yourself!
2. Have group members sit or stand in a circle.
3. Start by passing around an imaginary object such as a baseball, a flower or a basketball. Items that require action to use are the best.
4. As the “object” is tossed, rolled or handed around, each person should change the object to something else.
5. Encourage the participants to act out the motions completely, even exaggerating motions; the more dramatic they are the better. This can help participants loosen up and relax their muscles before they try to do something more difficult like give a demonstration or speech.
6. If the kids are enjoying the game, try acting out imaginary scenes like picking and eating an apple or learning to ride a bike.
7. When you're ready to quit, have the group talk about how they felt being “actors.” Connect this to public speaking by explaining the importance of using natural hand gestures and expressions during a presentation. For more advanced groups, try acting out emotions, expressions or action words – things that are not tangible.



## ACTIVITY:

# Tell Me a Story (Illustrated Talks)



## FOCUS:

Using a visual aid in a presentation

## PURPOSE:

- To encourage creativity
- To give participants a chance to talk in front of a group
- To illustrate a connection between speaking and using visual aids

## MATERIALS:

- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Magazines
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

## SETTING:

Room with space for the group to spread out

## TIME:

15-30 minutes

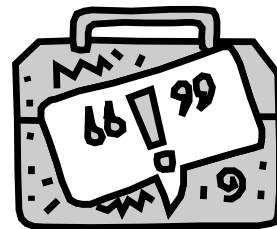
## PROCEDURE:

1. Give the group 5 to 8 minutes to select pictures from magazines. Suggest that they pick pictures that interest them or that seem to fit together.
2. Have the kids glue their pictures to a poster board. Suggest that they arrange the pictures in the order of a story or just arrange them so they look nice.
3. Depending on their ages or skill levels, you could have older participants make up stories about their pictures and younger ones tell why they liked each picture they cut out. Participants could use one of the story starters that follow (you may need to help younger participants decide on an opening).
  - I chose these pictures because...
  - This is a story about...
  - Once upon a time...
4. Have the group members tell their stories to the rest of the group. Encourage participants to point to the appropriate pictures at each point in their stories. Remind them to re-establish good eye contact with the audience after they have pointed out each picture.



## ACTIVITY:

# Show & Tell: A Demonstration Workshop



## PURPOSE:

To understand the basics of a demonstration and increase opportunities for public speaking

## MATERIALS:

- ☐ "Tips for Effective Demonstrations" skill sheet (on pg. 36; one per person – optional)
- ☐ "Delivering a Vocal Presentation" skill sheet (on pg. 31; one per person – optional)
- ☐ "Practice Demonstrations" handout (on pg. 45; one per person)
- ☐ Demonstration materials
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ "Tip Sheet for Evaluating Demonstrations" handout (on pg. 46; one per person)
- ☐ "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

## SETTING:

Enough space for kids to break up into small groups to work on their demonstrations; area should include a table for spreading out materials during demonstrations

## TIME:

30 minutes

## PROCEDURE:

### Before the meeting:

1. This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.
  - Listen carefully to other people's presentations.
  - Provide feedback in a positive way.
  - Don't be rude, critical or hurtful.
  - Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
  - Be considerate of other people's feelings.
  - Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.
2. Read the "Tips for Effective Demonstrations" skill sheet so you can describe the basic parts of a demonstration to the kids. You also may want to copy the skill sheet for each person. See the "Delivering a Vocal Presentation" skill sheet for more helpful hints.
3. If you have an older group member who has presented a demonstration before, ask him or her to prepare and give a short demonstration.

### During the meeting:

1. Have the older member give his or her demonstration.
2. Divide the group into teams or have the participants work alone, depending on their age and experience.
3. Hand each team a practice demonstration topic and the materials necessary for presenting that demonstration.
4. Give teams 5 to 8 minutes to create and practice their demonstrations. Encourage the teams to use posters to list ingredients or materials needed for their presentations.
5. After each team gives their demonstration, pass out the "Tip Sheet for Evaluating Demonstrations" handout. Help the team members identify the points they did well at and the ones they need to work on. Keep in mind that this may be hard for some kids and that just standing up in front of a group will be a challenge – always look for the positive first.





### **TALKING IT OVER:**

After all the teams have presented their demonstrations, encourage the whole group to talk about their experiences. Ask the following questions.

- How did it feel to be speaking in front of a group?
- What did you find fun about doing demonstrations?
- Was it as hard as you thought it would be?
- When do you think you might do other demonstrations?

## SHOW & TELL HANDOUT:

# Practice Demonstrations



**Leader's Note:** These demonstrations can be done alone or as a team. For first-time demonstrators, it might be helpful to do team presentations.

### **Pencil Judging:**

Explain how you would use judging techniques to rank a group of four pencils.

### **Making a Paper Airplane:**

Demonstrate how to properly fold a paper airplane for best flight. (Talk about the structures on the plane that have to do with aerodynamics.)

### **Folding Tissue Flowers:**

Demonstrate how to fold a paper rosette and demonstrate some of its uses.

### **Napkin Folding:**

Demonstrate three different ways to fold napkins for a dinner table.

### **Sanding Techniques:**

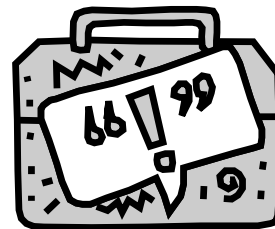
Demonstrate proper sanding techniques to achieve a smooth finish (include different weights of sandpaper and what each would be used for).

### **Peanut Butter Sandwich Making:**

Demonstrate different methods for making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to suit your taste.

## SHOW & TELL HANDOUT:

# Tip Sheet for Evaluating Demonstrations



The main purpose of any demonstration is to share information, ideas and skills with others. This could be accomplished in many ways. The important thing is for you to have the chance to practice speaking skills. Don't intimidate yourself by trying to achieve a certain set of standards. However, there are some basic areas in which you can evaluate your own progress and set goals for improvement. Think about and answer the following questions.

### Topic

Was the topic appropriate for the audience age and interests? Why or why not?

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### Content

Did the demonstration give enough information to spark the audience's interest? Why or why not?

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Was the information presented in such a way that the audience could replicate the techniques or ideas demonstrated?

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### Poise

Did you feel comfortable in front of the group? Why or why not?

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Do you feel that you presented yourself well? Why or why not?

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## **Delivery**

Was your demonstration clear and organized?

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Was the audience interested enough to ask for more information?

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Did people respond as if they could hear everything?

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## **Introduction and Conclusion**

Did you tell the audience what you were planning to say and then sum up what you said at the end?

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## **Other**

What else did you learn about giving speeches?

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## ACTIVITY:

# Let's Talk About Nerves



## FOCUS:

Increase public speaking skills

## PURPOSE:

- To help kids identify what makes them scared of public speaking
- To help kids learn to plan for and around stage nerves
- To help kids feel less afraid of the nervous symptoms they feel

## MATERIALS:

- ☐ "What Are *You* Afraid Of?" handout (on pg. 50; one per person)
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

## SETTING:

Comfortable area where the group can sit in a circle

## TIME:

20–30 minutes

## PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce the topic by telling a personal story about a public speaking experience. The story should contain something you learned about yourself as a result.
2. Ask the kids if they also have some fear of speaking in front of groups. Explain that some fears and symptoms of nervousness will go away with practice. However, they need to learn what they might be afraid of and how they can work around it and still be able to share their ideas.
3. Hand out pencils or pens and the "What Are *You* Afraid Of?" handout to each person. Give them 5 to 7 minutes to write down some of the fears they may have and to check off some of the symptoms this stress causes.
4. Bring the group back together to discuss their answers.

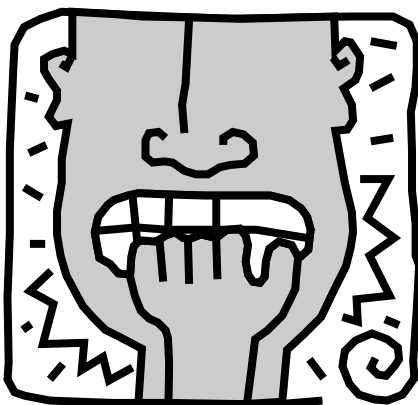
## TALKING IT OVER:

1. Allow at least 10 minutes for discussion, depending on the size of the group. Share the following information with the group. (For tips on reducing stage nerves or stage fright, refer to the "Overcoming Stage Nerves" skill sheet on page 34.)

Here are some fears that people have noted about public speaking:

- Boring the audience to sleep
- Burping uncontrollably
- False teeth coming loose
- Tripping on the way up to the stage

2. Ask the group the following questions:
  - What other fears can you think of? (Encourage the group to brainstorm as many as they can.)
  - Are you surprised at all the things people fear about public speaking? (Explain that when they can identify a fear very specifically they can work on overcoming it.)
  - What might you do to prevent some of these fears from coming true? (For example, to help keep from boring an audience to sleep, you could read your speech to a friend to see how it sounds.)
3. Ask the group to come up with at least one solution or problem-solving technique for each fear they listed. Encourage them to be creative and not to worry about whether the solution will work for every public speaking situation.
4. Ask for volunteers to talk about the nervous symptoms they've had before or while speaking in public. (You could open with





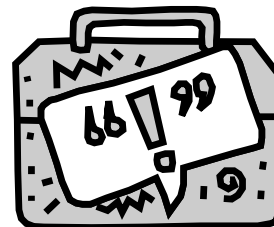
something like, "I always seem to get... sweaty hands... cold feet... an upset stomach... when I know I have to get up and talk in front of others.) After they've compiled a list of symptoms, encourage them to come up with some ways they can reduce the symptoms (for example, to remedy or minimize an upset stomach, eat only a light meal before speaking).

5. Give the group a final opportunity to talk about experiences they've had with speaking or reading aloud and how they felt.
6. Remind your group that being scared or nervous is not a good reason to avoid public speaking. Being able to express their ideas and share information is *very important*. Even though public speaking may be hard now, the more they do it the easier it will become.

### **TRY THIS, TOO:**

Ask a local radio, television or sports celebrity to speak to your group about his or her experiences with performance nerves.

# What Are *You* Afraid Of?



Write a sentence or two about the things that scare you about public speaking.

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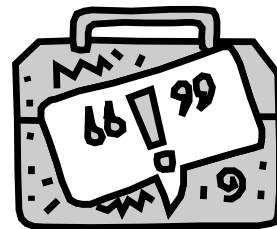
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This is how I feel if I have to talk in front of others: (Check each symptom that you feel.)

- ☐ My hands shake.
- ☐ I get a headache.
- ☐ My shoulders ache.
- ☐ I get dizzy.
- ☐ My mouth goes dry.
- ☐ My neck hurts.
- ☐ My heart beats faster than normal.
- ☐ I get sweaty palms.
- ☐ My stomach is upset and I'm nauseated.
- ☐ My legs are shaky.
- ☐ I can't stop my feet from tapping.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY:

# What's Wrong With This Picture?



## FOCUS:

To enhance understanding of basic public speaking skills

## PURPOSE:

- To show kids how much they already know about good speaking skills
- To show how public speaking can be fun
- To give kids a chance to speak in front of a group

## MATERIALS:

- ☐ "Topics" and "Speaking Rules" cards (from handout on pg. 53)
- ☐ "Delivering a Vocal Presentation" skill sheet (on pg. 31; one per person – optional)
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ "What I Learned" self-evaluation form (on pg. 8; one per person)

## SETTING:

Room with an open area like a stage or speaker's area on one side

## TIME:

10–15 minutes



## PROCEDURE:

### Before the meeting:

1. This activity puts young people in situations where other kids in the group will respond to their presentation skills or give feedback. It should be done only when group members respect each other and are willing to abide by the following guidelines for respectful behavior. If you choose to use this activity, review these points with your group in advance.
  - Listen carefully to other people's presentations.
  - Provide feedback in a positive way.
  - Don't be rude, critical or hurtful.
  - Be aware that everyone has differing abilities.
  - Be considerate of other people's feelings.
  - Follow the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated.

2. Cut out the "Topics" and "Speaking Rules" cards. If you have a large group, you might need more than one copy of each card. You may want to add a few topics that are specific to your group's interests.

### During the meeting:

1. You might want to hand out copies of the "Delivering a Vocal Presentation" skill sheet so the kids can refer to it during the rest of the activity.
2. Tell the group that they'll be demonstrating the basic "how-to's" of public speaking, but in an upside-down way. Tell them that this will give them a chance to show what they know about good public speaking skills.
3. Have each person pick one card from the Topics pile and one card from the Speaking Rules pile.
4. Tell the participants to prepare a 30-second presentation on the topic from their card. Their presentations should break the rules they know about the speaking skill they picked. For example, someone who chose the Speaking Rules card "Eye Contact" and the Topic card "Talk about your favorite dessert" might talk enthusiastically about chocolate brownies while looking at the floor or ceiling the entire time. This activity works best when the participants *really* exaggerate the rule they're breaking.
5. Tell them not to reveal what speaking rule they're trying to break so that the audience can guess which one it is.



6. When the audience guesses what the speaker is trying to do, ask them to identify how good speakers would handle the speaking rule.
7. Continue in this manner until everyone has had a chance to talk.

### **TALKING IT OVER:**

Ask the group the following questions:

- Did this activity help you learn anything new about public speaking skills?
- Have you tried or heard about other good tips for speaking to a group?
- Did this activity make it seem easier to try making a longer speech in the future?
- How could you share this information about public speaking with other kids or adults?

# Topics & Speaking Rules Cards



## **Topic Card:**

**Describe your dream vacation.**

## **Speaking Rules Card:**

**Audience Consideration**

## **Topic Card:**

**Talk about your favorite dessert.**

## **Speaking Rules Card:**

**Facial Expressions**

## **Topic Card:**

**Talk about your favorite music.**

## **Speaking Rules Card:**

**Hand Gestures**

## **Topic Card:**

**Create a new commercial for one of your favorite products.**

## **Speaking Rules Card:**

**Voice**

## **Topic Card:**

**Talk about someone who has influenced your life.**

## **Speaking Rules Card:**

**Eye Contact**

## **Topic Card:**

**Talk about a book you've read.**

## **Speaking Rules Card:**

**Proper Attire**

