This Is My Friend…

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 have had poor first experiences. But for most people, it is the lack of practice or opportunities to speak that keeps them from feeling like capable public speakers. Teens do not have to lose their fear of public speaking to become good at it. They can learn how to deal with fear while speaking in front of others by getting lots of practice. Repetition in a safe environment will help them gain confidence.

Youth Will Learn:
Workforce Skill: Communication
Success Indicator: Youth will be able to prepare and deliver an informal speech.

What You Need:
Time Involved: minutes
Materials Needed:
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- “Tips for Delivering a Speech” Handout
- “Public Speaking Tips” Handout

Facilitator Tips:
This icebreaker could be used with other speaking activities or to warm up the group before working on any project area.

The Activity

This activity puts young people in situations where other students 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:

- Listen carefully to other people’s presentations.
- Provide feedback in a positive way.
- Do not 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.
1. Have the participants pair off with someone they do not know well. Tell them they will have 5 minutes to interview and jot a few notes about each other.

2. Explain that they will be introducing their partner to the rest of the group. Tell them that they are introducing their partner as if they are a new member of the group and no one knows them.

Suggest that they ask at least the following questions:
- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What school do you attend?
- What grade are you in?
- What is your favorite project or projects?
- How many people are in your family?
- What is your favorite dessert?
- What are two facts about yourself you would like to share?

3. Give them another 5-7 minutes to write a brief introduction of their partners. Suggest that they follow the format, “Hi, my name is, …, and this is my friend, …”

4. Have the teams take turns introducing their partners to the whole group.
Think, Speak, Success! Communication and Thinking Skills
Activity 2

Talk It Over

After they have finished the introductions, debrief the group. When all the pairs have given their introduction speech, encourage the whole group to talk about their experiences. Ask the teens what they liked or did not like about talking in front of the large group.

**Share**
- How did it feel to be speaking in front of a group?

**Process**
- Was it hard at all to get up and speak in front of the group?
- What did you find fun about doing the speeches?
- What have you learned about your ability to speak in front of others?

**Generalize**
- When do you think you might use public speaking skills?
- Share a time when you have had to speak in front of others. Did it make you feel uncomfortable at all?
- Why is it important to be able to communicate with others in an effective manner?
- How can you be sure you are communicating effectively?

**Apply**
- Have the teens begin to connect the idea of public speaking and communication skills to careers. Have them brainstorm about different types of careers that involve public speaking. Examples:
  - Actors
  - Auctioneers
  - Comedians
  - Lawyers
  - Lobbyists
  - Managers
  - Ministers and Priests
  - News anchors/broadcasters
  - Politicians
  - Professional speakers
  - Presidents of professional associations
  - Presidents and leaders of civil organizations
  - Public relations specialist
  - Radio broadcasters
  - Salespeople
  - Sports announces
  - Teachers
  - Telephone operators
  - Television personalities
  - Tour guides
  - Travel agents
Tips For Delivering A Speech

In any speech, demonstration, presentation, or reading you must be aware of how you are delivering your message as well as the content of the message.

**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.
- 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.
- Do not slur your words – practice pronouncing the d’s, t’s and ing’s on the end of words.
- When you are 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.

**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.
- 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 do not neglect the rest of the audience.
Think, Speak, Success! Communication and Thinking Skills
Activity 2

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 are 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 do not lean on it. Leaning gives the impression that you are 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, do not try to imitate others.
• Practice speaking techniques, not just individual speeches.

Remember: A strong confident voice will make your message more believable.
Public Speaking Tips

The Hidden Causes of Public Speaking Stress

- Thinking that public speaking is inherently stressful (it is not).
- Thinking you need to be brilliant or perfect to succeed (you do not).
- Trying to impart too much information or cover too many points in a short presentation.
- Having the wrong purpose in mind (to get rather than to give/contribute).
- Trying to please everyone (this is unrealistic).
- Trying to emulate other speakers (very difficult) rather than simply being yourself (very easy).
- Failing to be personally revealing and humble.
- Being fearful of potential negative outcomes (they almost never occur and even when they do, you can use them to your advantage).
- Trying to control the wrong things (e.g., the behavior of your audience).
- Spending too much time over-preparing (instead of developing confidence and trust in your natural ability to succeed).
- Thinking your audience will be as critical of your performance as you might be.

Key Principles To Always Keep In Mind

- Speaking in public is NOT inherently stressful
- You do not have to be brilliant or perfect to succeed
- All you need is two or three main points
- You also need a purpose that is right for the task
- The best way to succeed is NOT to consider yourself a public speaker!
- Humility and humor can go a long way
- When you speak in public, nothing “bad” can ever happen!
- You do not have to control the behavior of your audience
- In general, the more you prepare, the worse you will do
- Your audience truly wants you to succeed