Manners for the Real World

BACKGROUND
Research has shown that many acts of violence can be traced to one single incidence of rudeness. In fact, this is something that we should really think about when we watch news reports about school shootings and road rage. Studies also show that people with manners tend to be more successful in personal and professional life. However, between text-messaging, emails, and video-games, many of the once-common courtesies are slowly becoming extinct. With an ever more competitive job market, social graces can really make someone stand out and get noticed. This lesson will help youth with basic table manners, sportsmanship, and meeting and greeting.

INTRODUCTION
What happens when you throw a boomerang? If thrown correctly, it will come back to you. Good manners are a lot like a boomerang - eventually, they come back to you. Communication and being considerate for others are important life skills that can help you get what you want, but more importantly, they are required to be a good, productive citizen of society. It is not hard to learn good manners, it just takes a little practice. Good manners are really just about being considerate of others and using good common sense. Today, we are going to practice three different types of manners:

• Table Talk
• Sportsmanship
• Meeting and Greeting

WHAT TO DO
You can have the entire group do each lesson in succession, or have smaller teams rotate through three different stations. Read or share the background information for each category of manners, and then have youth perform the activity.
Table Talk- refer to youth handout for background info. You can ask youth to take turns reading the do’s and don’ts. Divide youth into teams, and conduct a table setting relay. Have a table for each team, and ask each team to form a line about 20 feet from the table. Place a box with all the items for a table setting in front of each line. The first member of the team picks up an item and races to put that item in the correct position for a table setting. The team that correctly sets the table first wins.

Sportsmanship- refer to the youth fact sheet for background info. Allow youth to take turns reading each paragraph. Divide youth into pairs, and conduct a tic-tac toe tournament (or if the weather is nice, you can play kickball outside). Be sure to emphasize that this is an opportunity to practice good sportsmanship (congratulate one another, shake hands, etc).

Meeting and Greeting- refer to the youth fact sheet for background info. Allow youth to take turns reading each paragraph. Divide the group into teams. Have the first person of each team sit in a chair. Ask a “Nice or Nosey” question. If the question is nice, the first person who stands up gets a point for their team. If the question is nosey, everyone that stands up loses a point for their team. The team with the most points wins.

TALK IT OVER
Sharing-  
- What was the hardest part of this activity?  
- What did you enjoy the most?

Processing-  
- Have you ever been around someone who did not have good manners? How did it make you feel?  
- Why is it just as important to be a gracious winner as a gracious looser?

Generalizing-  
- Why is it important to have good manners?  
- How do you think manners will help you in the future?

Applying-  
- What types of situations in life require you to demonstrate good manners?

ENHANCEMENT IDEAS  
- Collect different types of party decorations and have the youth participate in a table decorating contest. Be sure to set some criteria (Example: as a team, they must pick a theme, create a centerpiece, place-cards, and basic table setting).
• Have a member/parent reception so that youth can practice party manners. Allow youth to plan the menu, make invitations, and form a receiving line. Give them assignments, such as they much introduce a family member to a friend; offer their guest a glass of punch, etc.
• Have youth practice different types of fancy napkin folds or make napkin rings out of toilet paper rolls (cut each roll into 4 sections). Youth can wrap the rolls with raffia or ribbon, and decorate with shells, flowers, or charms.
• For more information and activities, the following books and websites are recommended:
  o http://www.emilypost.com/kidsandparents/index.htm
  o Emily's Everyday Manners by Cindy Post Senning, Ed.D. and Peggy Post

**TRAINER TIP**
Role playing is much more fun with props. Provide toy phones or old cell phones (or youth can use their own), and interesting costumes for the cell phone activity.

An icebreaker is always a good idea to help build enthusiasm and introduce the topic. Here are a few ideas:
• **Manners Mix-Up**- give each youth a card and have them find their match (red cards are questions and green cards are answers). For example: Where should you wear an American Flag pin? Answer: on your left lapel or shoulder. Once each youth has found their “match,” have them read their question and answer and introduce each other to the group.
• **Circle of Compliments**- Tape a paper plate to the back of each youth and have them form two circles (one inside the other). The outside circle should rotate all the way around the inside circle, stopping to write a compliment on each person’s paper plate (the inside circle can’t see who is writing what). Have the circles switch places and repeat, then let the youth see what was written. Make sure you direct them to only write positive comments!