4-H Grab and Go: Who is My Role Model?

Concept:
Positive role models as well as their characteristics and values affect choices.

Age/Grade Level:
Middle school: Ages 12-15

Education Standard: National Health Education Standard 2: Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

Life Skill:
Decision Making, Healthy Life Choices, Self-Discipline, Self-Responsibility

Success Indicator:
Youth will identify a positive role model, their traits and characteristics, and how they influence them.

Background Information:
Role models provide a way of helping youth identify who they are. A role model can be someone youth know personally, such as a family member, friend, or someone else close to them. A role model might be a professional in the community such as a doctor, lawyer, clergy, teacher, or someone who has professional connections. Others that might be selected as role models could include sports figures, singers, actors, or someone in the spotlight.

The influence of a role model depends on the role model themselves, and his/her traits and characteristics. Youth who identify a positive role model known to them have higher grades, higher self-esteem, and a lower likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors such as tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.

It is important that youth identify and engage with appropriate family, as well as non-family, role models within their community. Helping youth identify positive role models is key to insuring constructive influence.

Instructions:
One way youth can be positively influenced is through role models. In order to be a positive influence, a role model should be someone who can be imitated; and who is an example of good behavior and characteristics.

1. Give each participant a sheet of paper and a pencil/pen. Ask them to write the name of their role model at the top. Remind youth that when selecting a role model it should be someone who has traits, characteristics, and a life they respect.

2. Have the youth write at least five positive traits or characteristics that role model has. How does the role model influence them?

3. One at a time, have participants act out the role model in a charade while the others try to guess who the role model is. (If they choose a grandparent, they might act like they are walking with a cane or rocking in a rocker. Remind youth

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Youth Development Tip:
Youth start to develop concepts of fair and unfair, and evaluate characteristics of others.

Open Ended Questions:
- Was it hard to pick a role model? Why or why not?
- Could some people not be good role models? Why?
- In what areas of your life do you imitate the characteristics and traits of your role model?
- Why might it be important to have a role model who is a family member or community member, instead of (or in addition to) a famous person in sports, music, or acting?
- How can a role model help someone avoid using tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs?

4. Have participants review the traits and characteristics listed and ask for additional traits/characteristics of possible role models. Discuss the traits and characteristics and ask youth why these are important.

5. Review the Open Ended Questions.

Additional Notes/Extension/Glossary
Values – items of importance
Belief – what a person accepts as true or real
Trait – a personal quality
Characteristics – a prominent trait or quality

Learn More
The following website provides additional information:
http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/CharacteristicsOfMostEffectiveMentor.htm