

The Young Statesmen Society Binder

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Binder Insert

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“An Education to Match Your Mission”



What is YSS?

By Rachel DeMille, TJEEd.org

YSS is a service and achievement organization for Love of Learning* boys and girls. The club activities help members earn “medallions” by planning and completing, with their parent/mentor, goals in a variety of areas. YSS can be successfully used in a home setting, or with a formal “club” composed of multiple families coordinating their efforts.

There is no established norm on what the projects/goals should be. The goal-setting and achievement process involves the parent and child, as they communicate and cooperate on determining what "completed" consists of. In this way the TJEEd** model of mentor-facilitated self-education is fostered. As mentioned, YSS can be administered solely in a home environment, or cooperatively as a multi-family club. The commentaries that follow below were originally intended for those who desire to implement YSS as a club. However, there are many pertinent details that will help anyone trying to use YSS for Love of Learning achievement and learning – whether in a family or a club – so it is recommended that you review this document entirely.

In the club model, many times the participants enlist one another (and perhaps an advisor) on a joint project, and thus encourage and support one another toward their goals. This is great as a community builder for those who are seeking to build local support for their family education culture, and fosters relationships that build on cooperation and excellence. I have developed a binder insert which tracks goals and accomplishments, that acts as a record and portfolio for the child’s schooling, and helps give a little structure to their progress.

In the club model, we periodically have a medallion ceremony in which those who have achieved all of their goals in a particular area are given a medallion as a keepsake. When our family ran a YSS club locally, we usually met on the 3rd or 4th Wednesday of the month for three hours. A typical meeting—called the “Club Assembly” had several features.

Details on the Club Assembly:

1. Announcements of the Committees

The announcements take place after the prayer, pledge of allegiance and the recitation of the mission statement. Announcements include upcoming activities, requests for ideas or help, updates on projects that the committees have undertaken, etc.

Regarding Committees: there are 6 areas of achievement which each has a hero icon. [See *the YSS Overview for a list of heroes and achievement areas.*] Committee

* Love of Learning Phase is described in *Leadership Education: The Phases of Learning* by Oliver & Rachel DeMille

** “TJEEd,” also known as “Leadership Education,” is an educational philosophy and methodology. To learn more, visit TJEEd.org.

leadership consists of an Advisor and a Chairman (a parent/child team, usually). They report on the activities of their committee for the past month at this time.

2. Prisms/Compositions

Following Club Business we move to the “Prisms” of “Compositions” portion of our Club Assembly.

Prisms is where the girls share their progress toward a particular goal; the book Pollyanna makes a deal out of the magic of the prism turning ordinary things into things of beauty, and this is how we characterize their efforts toward a goal.

As some boys don't resonate with the Pollyanna “Prisms” story, the equivalent “Compositions” concept is taken from Alcott's *Little Men*, alluding to the event where each individual shared based on their own interests, abilities and achievement.

This is not a talent show. Participants share things that represent recent progress toward a specific goal.

Examples include:

- a medieval tunic sewn for self or brother [Sacagawea/ Gandhi: Sewing];
- pictures of a service project for the local homeless shelter [Father Damien/Mother Teresa: Service];
- a Babysitter's Kit [Hannah Hendee/ Casper ten Boom: Childcare];
- a collage of copied book covers representing a reading goal met [Benito Juarez/ Abigail Adams: Literature];
- the list could go on and on.

IMPORTANT side bar for more on the Committees: Each achievement area has a list of goals that are named only; there is no structure or specification of what the goal “should” be. This is to be determined by each child with his/her parent/mentor. In this way the TJE principles of personalization, self-direction and mentor-facilitation are reinforced.

Many families use this club as the outline for their Love of Learning boys' and girls' education, and incorporate their other achievements into the YSS design, whether they be private lessons, other clubs, church youth programs, etc.

The committee advisor and chairman sponsor periodic meetings (once a week to once a month, depending on what is being worked on) to assist the chairman in progressing toward achieving all the goals in the area, and thus, the medallion. They invite others in the Club to attend, and help facilitate their progress as well. It's a momschoo-within-a-momschoo. So in any given month, a child may attend the Club Assembly meeting and several or none of the Committee meetings, depending on the objectives and ideal level of involvement outside of the home.

Committee Leadership rotates from time to time in order to give others a chance to serve/lead, and so that the Chairman can put focus on a different achievement area.

End sidebar ☺. Back to reporting on the Club Assembly...]

3. Blast from the Past

Some years ago we had a father in our community of families who loved science, and who portrayed Galileo for several class sessions, exploring scientific thought at the children's interest level. Building on this thought, we have had similar visits from:

- Rosa Parks
- Abraham Lincoln
- Margaret Thatcher
- Patrick Henry
- Sacagawea
- Abigail Adams
- Mother Teresa
- George Washington
- Joan of Arc
- Hannah Hendee

I have been amazed at the excellence of portrayal by my really cool friends. I just say, "Can you present [so-and-so] for 20-40 minutes in character (in costume, using their own words in first person) to my club [45 days from now]? I offer help in finding suitable costuming or research sources, and they have been anything from excellent to out-of-this-world. I'm shocked every time at the way they step up and deliver for these kids. And I can't help but think that the presenters also feel richer for it.

4. Lesson/Activity

We spend the last part of the meeting on some other type of planned learning experience. We most recently capitalized on the interest/progress of several of the older girls in their study of U.S. History and Government with the Key of Liberty Scholar Project. In last Club Assembly they instructed us on the features of the federal government. The girls made three-cornered hats out of large pieces of construction paper, with each broad side labeled to represent one of the three branches of government, and we sang, "My Hat, It Has Three Corners". We did a simulation of oppressive government, discussed the Declaration of Independence and had a "Blast from the Past" from Patrick Henry.

I like to include some sort of hands-on activity---last month they made homemade ice cream in a baggie in honor of George Washington's birthday (he loved ice cream) and also played party games that would have been popular in colonial times; they came dressed in colonial style and were formally announced as they entered by our doorman (my son Oliver, who's always willing to play the fool, bless his heart).

The potential for making YSS your homeschool "curriculum" is really strong. I know many people who do this. As you can see from the Overview, they can get their feet wet in just about every area, and the program overlays well with other goals for young folks.

The younger ones commonly focus on the Father Damien/Mother Teresa area first, and then depending on whether their gifts/interests are with their heart (Casper ten Boom/Hannah Hendee), their hands (Gandhi/Sacagawea), or their head (Benito Juarez/Abigail Adams), they usually move to on of those three next – and so forth, as their needs, interests, and maturity suggest.

Some are more eclectic and pick and choose from here and there, but eventually most everyone seems to want to settle down and earn a medallion. Families/clubs can provide their own medallions (an online search reveals many options), or they can order from the Leadership Education store. Samples of the medallions are provided at the end of this document. My practice has been to have a nominal flat-fee-per-family monthly charge to participate in the club, and then not charge extra for the medallions.

IMPORTANT:

Read the YSS Overview document carefully; the details are in the fine print.

Please email if you have any questions.

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