

### **Helping the boys to listen - Story Recall Games Robert P. Adams (Dr. Bob)**

Nearly all boys clubs have a meeting in which they present some material, which they hope the boys will assimilate. Of course, listening is one of the poorest ways to communicate as it only involves one sense. But often the boys hear a story or read it but it is very difficult to get boys (particularly after school is out or in the evening) to listen! Although, I have had no problems with boys watching videos presenting the story (especially if the videos are less than 15- 20 min).

Recently, I have been using story recall games as a motivation for the boys to listen. While the boys are each orally reading a paragraph of today's story (lesson), just underline facts in the story that you can use to ask as questions later. When the reading of the story is completed, discuss the story (lesson) as desired. Then tell the boys, "Line up, we are going to play a game". Bean bags and Nerf® balls work well for this. For example, just put a trash can near the wall and a piece of masking tape about 10' away. Ask the first boy a question about the story (ex. "Where did John live?"). If he answers it correctly, give him a Nerf ball (tennis balls bounce too much!), and if he 'makes the basket' give him 2 pts., if he banks it on the wall, 3 pts., if he bounces one time on the floor then into the basket, 4 pts. (try this out to be sure the ball you are using will bounce on the floor). If he does not know the answer in about 3 sec., go 'beep' and send him to the rear of the line. Ask the same question to the next boy, etc. It takes about 3 meetings for the boys to figure out that if they listen, they can answer questions and win the game.

It is amazing how much better the boys listen when they know they will play a 'recall game' later. In fact, I usually have the boys practice the game as they arrive, so they know for sure there is a 'recall game' tonight. There are almost an endless number of ways you can toss bean bags to score points. Make a tic-tac-toe board with tape on the floor (or a permanent one on a piece of plywood), and play teams. Attach different sizes of cans onto a board and give 10, 25, 50 pts for the smallest, medium and largest cans.

Another good game is 'Mother May I'. Line up the boys along a wall, facing you. Ask a story question. If he is correct, he takes one step towards you. If he misses, he stays where he is. You can play this several times as a boy may reach you before you have covered all the questions. In any case, I like to go through my questions twice to reinforce the facts. I usually have about 20 questions from a story.

In the following section are several games that you can build for use as story recall games. I find that having about 8 of these games is sufficient so the boys don't get burned out on one type of game.