



## Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Program

# Building Leaders for Tomorrow

Instilling and developing leadership capabilities in youth and adults.

**AGE LEVEL** - Advanced

**CONCEPT OR SKILL** – Applying Leadership Skills – take full responsibility for office, club, committees, and leadership roles. Counsel and communicate with adult mentors/volunteers. Conduct oneself as a role model, mentor, counselor and teen leader.

**LIFE SKILL(s)** – **Hands** – Marketable Skills, Community Service Volunteering; **Health** – Character, Personal Safety; **Head** – Critical Thinking; **Heart** – Concern for Others

**BEHAVIORAL INDICATOR** – Want and need a strong voice in planning their own programs. Want adults to act as advisors instead of leaders..

## ACTIVITY 24: “Flying in Formation”

### THINGS TO KNOW:

If we have been successful in developing youth through the process of progressive leadership, at the age of 15-19 years old, we will truly be able to witness “Teen Action and Growth.” These teens will have been provided fundamental skills and given adequate opportunity to develop the skills necessary for increased leadership roles. At this point, they should be capable of taking full responsibility for their office, club, committees, and other leadership roles. Your role will truly be counselor and mentor. The teens understand this and counsel and communicate with you as adult mentor/ volunteer.

At this age, the teens will have proven their ability to assume leadership and their ability to follow-through with little prompting. They have exhibited to others that they can conduct themselves as a role model, mentor, counselor and teen leader with younger youth.

As a volunteer, your role will be to continuously observe and assist when asked or when the group begins to head in an unhealthy direction. Periodically you will want to do some training and continue to develop their leadership skills and perspective.

There is an analogy called “Lessons we can learn from geese.” This is a good illustration and perspective to why there is no “I” in TEAM. This summary is based on the work of Milton Olson of the Outward Bound Program.

- **FACT 1:** As each goose flaps its wings it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.  
**LESSON:** People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.
- **FACT 2:** When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.  
**LESSON:** If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.
- **FACT 3:** When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies to the point position.  
**LESSON:** It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.



- **FACT 4:** The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.  
**LESSON:** We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.
- **FACT 5:** When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot, two geese drop out of formation and follow it to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.
- **LESSON:** If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times, as well as when we are strong.



**Materials Needed:** Story book.

**Do:** Make sure you have space for this demonstration. Ask for 7-10 volunteers. Place the first as the head goose and ask them to extend their arms and start flapping. Gradually add participants to form the flying pattern of a “gaggle” of geese. The person at the front will always be flapping the hardest. Each row back will not flap quite as hard and fast as the row before. The geese at the back must encourage the lead goose. When the lead goose is exhausted h/she drops to the back and is able to take advantage of the updraft created by the work of the others. Each of the geese in the back will shift forward and begin to work a little harder depending on their location. During this exercise, have a short and fun children’s book that has a message about “leadership,” “team spirit,” “role-model,” etc. Have the story read for the entire group as the “volunteer geese” do their flapping.

**Reflect:**

- 1) How did it feel to be head goose?
- 2) What did it feel like being the cheering section?
- 3) What was it like to be flying at the tail end of the gaggle?
- 4) Was there a point when you had to encourage someone next to you, who just didn’t think they could continue?
- 5) How did you encourage them, so they could maintain their place in the flock? After processing the flying experience – talk about the “message” of the story that was read.

**Apply:**

- 1) What can geese teach us about leadership?
- 2) What happens when one person tries to do it all?
- 3) What is the result of shared leadership?
- 4) Should we constantly rely on one person for the direction or the entire leadership of the group?
- 5) How can we take care of or assist one another with responsibilities?
- 6) What does encouragement do for a person’s physical, mental and moral strength?

**Possible Books:**

Pfister, M. How Leo Learned to Be King. Scholastic Inc., 1998. ISBN 0-590-51153-X

DeRolf, S. The Crayon Box that Talked. Scholastic Inc., 1996. ISBN 0-590-81928-3

Hoberman, M. A. One of Each. Scholastic, 1998. ISBN 0-590-51437-7

Lionni, L. A Color of His Own. Scholastic, 1994. ISBN 0-590-48279-

