

All-School Assemblies And Large Class Meetings by Mike Smith from DifferenceMakers.com

Why?

It is that time of year when we gather each of the classes *en mass* and give them the rules of behavior and expectations of the year. How we do that creates the environment we will work in for the next 9 months. Often we gather the entire school for the same purpose. Properly done, that assembly can lay the foundation for building the spirit we need to pull many of the uninvolved kids into the mainstream.

Many schools have difficulty explaining the value of All School Assemblies but consider:

- 1) Many schools suffer from poor audience behavior at graduations; performances and awards assemblies because most students have not been properly instructed in expected and accepted formal "large group" behaviors.
- 2) Where do our students learn their "large group behavior" if they are not properly instructed and given an opportunity to practice such formal behaviors?
- 3) The only "large group" behavior most students are exposed to comes from attendance at pep rallies and touring music concerts which is not formal.
- 4) Most families do not attend events where the parents can model and instruct correct normal "large group" behavior.

Don't we have some obligation to those we serve to provide instruction and practice in formal "large group" behavior? If so the following steps to successful formal assembly behavior can help. These are excerpted from HELPING THEM WIN a video presentation with hand outs designed to help train student audiences in formal "large group" behavior -

Assemblies Simplified (Excerpted from the HELPING THEM WIN program)

READY!

The Audience: Etiquette, Loading & Unloading, Crowd Control

ETIQUETTE: Review the expected behavior before the assembly. Establish the fact that side conversations detract from the ability of the audience to stay focused and alert. For those who feel the behavioral expectations are too great, present alternatives to attending the assembly in a non-threatening way.

LOADING/UNLOADING: This is done differently across the country. Some schools bring the under classes in and have them stand as the seniors take their places. Others load the room by academic classes, while still others use open seating. Whatever system you use, the entire audience should be centered so that the presentation can be focused. When dismissing the crowd, doing so by sections is often the safest and most orderly method.

CROWD CONTROL: To help facilitate a successful assembly, teachers should sit in the crowd with the students and demonstrate the behavior they want students to exhibit. By participating in the event, they set the example for students to follow. If a student needs to be removed for any reason, the removal should be accomplished quickly and orderly.

SET!

Attention: Getting it, Keeping it, Helping them Win!

GETTING ATTENTION:

Make sure you fit the attention-getter with the purpose of the assembly. For example, don't use a spirit yell to

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launch an awards assembly. Fade out the entrance music, use a Spirit Key or your school's mascot to focus the group's attention.

KEEPING ATTENTION:

Highlight members of your student body to keep attention -- for example, the school band can perform as part of the assembly. Also, a test or extra-credit assignment over the material covered in the assembly encourages everyone to pay close attention throughout.

HELPING THEM WIN! Determine ahead of time those who may have the most difficulty paying attention. Seat them with staff members to help, and work with them to further emphasize the necessity of proper audience behavior.

GO!

The Event-- Helping Them Win!

EVENT!

- 1. Have a person in authority** meet, calm, and quiet the group. Make sure to compliment the audience on something or find something positive to say. Then explain the reason for the meeting and review the expected behavior. Once that has been accomplished, introduce the student emcee with as gracious an introduction as possible, including accomplishments and titles with a call for applause. Applauding one of "their own" is a subtle and positive way to transfer the ownership for the correct behavior to the audience.
- 2. Emcee introduces performance.**
- 3. Performance.**
- 4. Closure:** The emcee thanks the performer or speaker and calls for more applause; the administrator congratulates the audience for good behavior, and the audience is dismissed by the emcee with instructions for exiting the area.
- 5. Evaluation:** After the event, in the classroom, either by discussion, short paper, or an evaluation form. Evaluation validates everyone who attended as important and invites them to play a part in determining what elements of assemblies are beneficial and which elements need improvement.

(Whenever there is an assembly or rally—if you have time in your classroom, we would love to have written evaluations from the student body. Please deliver those to Room 109 or Cindy Bader's mailbox.)