



Most effective LIFE meetings for the 2004-2005 school year for St. John Vianney High School thus far

In order to introduce ourselves at the beginning of the year (first month), we all brought in one or two *songs* that were important to us. It is good to have the lyrics typed up. We played them for one another and talked about the meanings and why they were special to that presenter. We did this as an icebreaker for the first half-hour of the meetings.

Best Meeting Topics

Presidential Debate

We used laptops to familiarize ourselves with the positions and discussed them. Not the best debate, but a good change of pace.

Stress

We took 6 inches of yarn for every stress that we identified in our life and tied ourselves up with it. We could only become untied with the help of our friends. We discussed our stresses. This turned out to be a great topic because it let up know a lot about all of our students. Kind of like Dayton's "Bag Exercise".

Parent/Son Conflict

This was a major commonality identified in the stress session. Pretty heavy. As moderators we needed to refocus on the idea that parents never claimed to be perfect and that they love us and are trying to do their best. Not for the faint of heart, but VERY effective.

Depression

As we all know, very relevant to teenage lives. We talked about ways to battle depression with a particular focus on mind/body relationship and meditation.

Thanksgiving

We made "hand turkeys" like kindergarten and each finger was something for which we are thankful. The hand was our spiritual center. Good to initiate happy discussions.

Readjusting to School

Beginning of school year. Everybody has an opinion, so a safe topic for early sharing.

Rudolph and the Island of Misfit Toys

We showed this video and discussed with whom we most identified in the movie. What is our "Abominable Snow Monster"? How are we misfits, but what is a misfit, really? How do misfits work together?

Other Notes

We have a rather immature bunch this year (primarily sophomores). To facilitate discussions when even leaders are not even exhibiting good listening skills we often have to resort to a "speaking duck." Only the person holding the duck can talk.