



THE  
**COUNCIL**  
FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

# Standing Together: A Journey into Respect



**10-WEEK FACILITATOR**

**ACTIVITY GUIDE**

For Ages 9 – 14

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Written: 12/06, Revised February 2010



## Week Nine Theme: BOYS & POWER

Boys will explore how power and popularity are enacted, sustained, and reinforced in “boy culture” through a game that randomly assigns power and popularity to the boys. The activity and reflection promote an awareness of how power and popularity are determined and how they affect boys’ lives.

**ACTIVITY:** Aces and Deuces

**MATERIALS:** A deck of cards

### PURPOSE

- To become aware of how boys interact with social structures, power, and those with less power
- To develop more awareness about the non-verbal cues boys give and receive
- To challenge boys’ stereotypical thinking patterns

QUOTES FOR FACILITATOR: *If you examine more powerful and less powerful groups you will see that “you are in or have been in groups on both sides --- more powerful and less powerful.” As children, most of us know what it is like to be vulnerable to violence from adults. This gives us some idea of what it is like for people...[with less power than we have]. We each come to know what it is like to be in a powerful group and to have some power over others.”*

- Paul Kivel, *Boys Will Be Men*, p. 24

*“Even boys who are not allowed to watch violent movies or play violent games, but who watch television sports, will nevertheless consume a steady diet of commercials in which a man is not a man unless he is tough, drives a tough truck, and drinks lots of beer. These are not visions of manhood that celebrate emotional introspection or empathy... Our culture co-opts some of the most impressive qualities a boy can possess – their physical energy, boldness, curiosity, and action orientation – and distorts them into a punishing, dangerous definition of masculinity.”*

- Michael Thompson & Dan Kindlon,  
*Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*, p 15

### FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- 1 If you are working with a group of less than 15 boys we suggest that you make your deck of cards smaller (but still allow for ‘chance’ and random assignments) to make sure that there are cards drawn from each category needed. In addition, if your group is very small, choose fewer categories (and therefore fewer cards), to ensure a diverse experience.
- 2 Choose a Warm-Up Activity from the tabbed section of this guide.



# Week Nine



## OPENING RITUAL

Open with your chosen ritual that marks the beginning of your council.



## THEME INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the theme of the week – “Power.”
- Review The Council Agreements.



## WARM-UP ACTIVITY

(Choose from tabbed section.)



## CHECK-IN

Using the talking piece, go around the council, and have each boy “check in” about whatever he would like or he can respond to the following:

- “You know a boy is powerful in a group when.....”



## ACTIVITY

### “Aces and Deuces”

- 1 Set the stage for this activity by telling the group that the name of the game is “Aces and Deuces.” During the game, they are to imagine that they are a new player on a sports team. Say, “It’s the first day of practice and the coach has told the group to divide up for a practice scrimmage. You know that the coach is going to favor the winners of the scrimmage so you really want to get on the ‘good team.’ **THE WAY YOU WILL KNOW WHO THE BEST PLAYERS ARE** is by the cards you have:
  - Players with a Joker card are to be avoided and removed from the team
  - Aces are the really terrific athletes
  - Face cards are good athletes but not the best
  - #5-10 are neutral – only so-so
  - #2-4 are novices- they don’t know how to play the game.

When I say, ‘Go,’ you will quickly move around and observe the other players on your new team, looking for people you think are really good athletes. You want to be near the good athletes so that when you scrimmage you are on the winning team.”
- 2 Shuffle the cards and deal one card to each boy face down and **ASK THAT NO ONE LOOK AT THEIR CARD.**
- 3 The facilitator says “GO,” and everyone is to hold their card **WITHOUT LOOKING AT IT** on their forehead, facing out. Say: “**DO NOT TELL** each other the type of cards you have.”
- 4 Instruct the boys to start mingling to form the best team. Remind them to not look at their own cards. Allow participants to mingle for a few minutes. When you see the group has formed smaller groups, ask the group to **FREEZE.**



## Week Nine

- 5 Ask individuals to look at their cards, then reassemble as a large group.
- 6 Reshuffle and do the activity again one or two more times. This will give the boys a chance to compare different experiences.



### REFLECTION

Select 3 or more of the following questions in order to facilitate a discussion:

- What happened in that game?
- What did you feel about the card you were dealt? What about the group you were in ... how did you feel about it?
- How were those with less power/popularity treated vs. those with more power/popularity?
- Is school like this? Is life? How?
- How do groups form? On what basis? Is it fair? Does it make sense?
- How do you feel about cliques? How do they impact the guys you know?

Pass the talking piece for this final question:

- What would you like to do the next time you notice different groups standing around, separated by status or popularity?



### CLOSING RITUAL

Complete this weeks council with your groups closing ritual.