

Avoiding Passive Acceptance
12th grade Advisement Activity
Estimated time: 20-30 Minutes

Georgia's Teachers-As-Advisors Framework

Goal 12-3.23 – Develop positive, highly-developed interpersonal skills.

e. Recognize that one must accept responsibility for his/her behavior.

Objectives: The student will become aware of the dangers of passively accepting what others say and do.

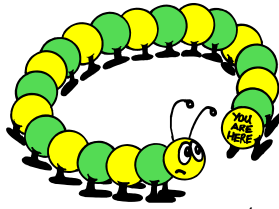
Materials: Handout, *Tale of the Processionary Caterpillars*

Activity:

- *Say:* Good morning, welcome to advisement. Today we are going to discuss a game you played when you were a child called “follow the leader.” Did any of you ever play that game? I know I did? If you didn’t play that game, I’ll bet some of you played “simon says”. I played that one too! You will be graduating very soon and you will be faced with many situations where you will need to make YOUR VERY OWN DECISIONS and perhaps not follow the crowd.
- *Distribute the handout,* “Tale of the Processionary Caterpillars.”
- *Say:* Review the objective with the students. In this activity you will become aware of the dangers of passively accepting what others say and do.
- *Say:* Divide into groups of two. Count off by ones and twos and then form your dyads.
- *Say:* I am going to read this tale aloud while you follow along. *Read the tale.*
- *Say:* In your dyad read the questions below the story. Discuss each one of the questions with each other for about 5-6 minutes. Then we will discuss the questions as a group. *Allow students time to discuss with each other.*
- *Say:* Now come back together for the group discussion. Read each question aloud and allow students to respond accordingly.
 - Question # 1 – Many students will tend to follow the crowd; do what everyone else does--right or wrong.
 - Question #2 – Young people especially tend to do what makes them “fit” into the group. We all need to belong to something so to belong we do what is expected.
 - Question # 3 – Think before you act. Strive to accomplish something, provide leadership and be innovative, be creative in your behavior. Don’t settle for something that leads you in circles without a beginning and an end.
- *Say:* Great job! I hope you will make every effort to “not just follow the crowd” ;but, to think independently of the crowd and make decisions that will benefit you in the most positive way without hurting or harming someone else. (If this activity takes place prior to PROM, encourage students to be safe and take responsibility for their behavior. Don’t be influenced by those who may LEAD you down a path with negative consequences at the end.) Have a great day and don’t go around in circles----create a vision and don’t always follow the crowd!

The Tale of the Processionary Caterpillars

Instructions: Listen to your advisor read “The Tale of the Processionary Caterpillars.”



There is a type of caterpillar called a processionary caterpillar, so named because one will establish a direction and all the others will fall in very closely behind and move in the same path. As a matter of fact, the followers' behavior becomes so automatic that their eyes become half-closed as they shut out the world around them and let the leader do all the thinking and decision making about which direction to pursue. Their behavior is rote and automatic.

An experiment by the French naturalist Jean-Henri Fabre demonstrated the inflexibility of the processionary caterpillars' behavior when he enticed the leader to start circling the edge of a large flowerpot. The other caterpillars followed suit in a tight procession, forming a closed circle in which the distinctions between leader and follower became totally blurred, and the path had no beginning and no ending. Instead of soon getting bored with the nonproductive activity, the caterpillars kept up their mindless search for several days and nights until they dropped off the edge through exhaustion and starvation from lack of food. Relying totally on instinct, past experience, custom, and tradition, the caterpillars achieved nothing because they mistook activity for achievement.

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1. In what ways are students like processionary caterpillars?
2. Are students like you susceptible to falling prey to the phenomenon of processionary caterpillars? Explain.
3. How can we prevent others and ourselves from becoming like the caterpillars in this story?

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