

## **Story Examples**

### **It happened at an Assembly...**

#### **A Simple Handshake**

I was inspired after my leadership camp experience to make a difference as a student leader at my high school. For 182 days, I stood outside the school's entrance and shook hands with every person passing through the doors. A special education student, Aaron, attached himself to me after the second or third day. He became a loyal student greeter as well. At the end of the year, I was honored at the awards assembly for my efforts. The presenter mentioned how I stood outside all year welcoming people to school, along with Aaron. Aaron heard his name and went up to get the award because he thought it was for him. I stayed in my seat. The entire school saw what was happening. It could have been a real awkward situation but the crowd through a standing, sincere ovation gave the moment to Aaron. Nobody ever said a thing and Aaron still has his 15 minutes of fame tucked into his heart.

#### **\$200 an Assembly**

An idea that has served us well each year is to offer clubs and organizations \$200 to sponsor an assembly. This works great because every assembly is slightly different based on the sponsoring group. For a spirit competition, the tennis team had participants attempt to return a volley from the tennis-serving machine. The drama department's assemblies are always a hit because they involve the audience in funny, ad-lib competitions and their skits are excellent. Another benefit is that the responsibility of planning assemblies does not fall solely on ASB and the leadership class.

#### **The Slab**

I was student teaching at an urban high school in the mid-80s. Heavy metal as an outlet for teenage angst was moving through the school. Student smoking was still allowed in a designated area know as The Slab. What was once a small, innocuous group of students that hung out at The Slab was now a milling mob of growing defiance. Assemblies were now a stand off between whoever was on the microphone attempting to lead the crowd and the mass of The Slab students heckling from the back rows. I finished student teaching in the fall and started substituting. Late in the spring I came back to the school. It was the day of an assembly. I was curious to see how the battle was going; I discovered it was over. Firing up the crowd from the beginning to the end was a longhaired student decked out in a black t-shirt, chains and ripped blue jeans. The entire school was on board. The back rows were respectful and loud at the right moments. The other students didn't seem to mind that their school mascot who used to lead the cheers had been replaced by Heavy Metal Man. Some genius at the school had figured out how to include The Slab students by giving them a hero on the gym floor. It was a lesson I would use over and over again as I started to lead student activities: identify which group is not involved in school then figure out a way to give them visible representation during an assembly.

#### **Look, Up in the Sky, It's...**

One year we had a student who surprisingly showed up at one of the assemblies in a Superman costume. The crowd went crazy. I never did figure out why the student did this, but the crowd loved it. By the end of the year, after making many spontaneous appearances during our assemblies, he had convinced his friend to join him as Robin, the Boy Wonder. I was glad he felt comfortable enough and accepted enough to take the social risk, but his appearances were never planned. He just kept showing up and adding a nice touch to the assemblies.

