

MATH NIGHTS THAT WORK!

A GUIDE TO SUCCESS

**Join us at our session on Thursday
to participate in an actual Math Night
and to receive a CD of a year's worth of activities.**

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BACKGROUND

Our first Family Math Nights were held during the 2005-2006 school year. We decided to hold four math nights, one in January, February, March and April. We thought we might be lucky to get 25 to 30 people to come, so we held it in Sally's classroom. To our surprise, more than 80 students and parents showed up. We moved tables and chairs from Elizabeth's room and luckily we had made extra copies of everything we would need.

We were in the middle of playing the whole group game when the fire alarm went off. Everyone went outside, down the stairs to the street. The fire department arrived and after checking, determined that someone had pulled the alarm. We all went back inside to continue our game. Within five minutes, the fire alarm went off again. Again, we had to exit the building. This time, the fire department tripped it while resetting something. We thanked everyone for their patience and told them that we would understand if they just wanted to go home. Not one person left, so we entered the building and continued on what was the beginning of one of best activities we've ever held in our school. We were hooked.

THE BASICS

- We hold four sessions per year - January, February, March and April. Because we only have 7th and 8th grade in our school, we have come up with eight sets of activities. We rotate them on a two-year cycle.
- They are on Thursday nights from 6:30 - 8:00 pm.
- We hold them in the Media Center.
- We use round and rectangular tables.
- We place our dates on the school calendar in October to avoid conflicts.
- Some years we receive a small extra-duty stipend.
- Our Parent Club provides us with a small grant to buy supplies and snacks.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

- Posters in the hallways
- Daily announcements
- School reader board
- Reminders on our whiteboards
- Community calendar in the local newspaper
- School newsletters
- Automatic caller
- Teachers talk it up before and the day after each session

BASIC SCHEDULE

The times below are approximate, but they give an idea of how much time we spend on each activity.

5:45

- Set Up - Place group supplies on tables, organize snacks, get supplies ready for activities, set up document camera, write agenda, etc.

6:30

- Sign In - We use a spiral notebook. Students sign their name, the name of the responsible adult and their math teacher (we have given extra credit in math).
- Estimation Contest guessing
- Warm Up - We have this on the table with directions on the overhead. They work on it while others arrive. It is usually a puzzle to solve or a game to play with a partner.

6:40

- Whole Group Game

7:00

- Main Activity

7:55

- Estimation Contest Winner

8:00

- Clean Up - If parents and students offer to help clean up, accept their help gladly. It's been a long day.

SNACKS

We found that snacks are very important to our success. We buy bags of pretzels from Dollar Tree and bulk jellybeans, conversation hearts, etc. from WinCo. We started out using paper bowls, but we didn't like just throwing them away. We purchased plastic bowls (4/1.00) from the Dollar Tree. After each session, we take the bowls home and run them through the dishwasher. We put two bowls of pretzels and one bowl of candy on each table.

STORAGE

We use copy paper boxes to store our activities. We have one box for each of the eight sessions we hold. Each box is labeled with the activities it contains and holds all supplies, copy masters, etc. needed for those activities.

We also have a container that holds supplies that we use for each math night. It includes things like overhead pens, overhead sheets, extra pencils, dice, estimation contest supplies, sign-in book, pens, tape, scissors, scratch paper, markers, etc.

When we first started math nights, we would take all of our supplies down to the media center and spend a great deal of time running around and putting supplies on the tables that our families would need that night. We found that we were wearing ourselves out after a long day of teaching, so we decided to have table baskets. We can put everything we need for the night in the baskets while we are still in our rooms where the supplies are stored. Then, we only need to make one trip around the media center. In the buckets, we place pencils, pens, colored pencils, scissors, a calculator, rulers and scratch paper, whatever we might need for the night. This has been a great timesaver.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Plan for more people than you expect.
- Choose activities that you enjoy doing, especially those that you might not have time to do in class.
- Talk it up!
- Use parent helpers to put together materials.
- Take lots of pictures. You can use them for the yearbook, bulletin boards, newspaper articles, etc.
- Be flexible.
- Have Fun!!!
- Be sure to contact us if you have questions
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