

Pop Culture Identity Embers

www.campaugusta.org

Theme: Identifying this thing called “cool” and its subtleties in media.

Age of campers: 12+

Time allotted/actual: 30-45 minutes

Location: Anywhere quiet and comfortable.

Props/Materials/Symbols: Up to you, and dependent on how deep you want to go. Media images, magazines, video, etc. Any might have their place if the discussion leads to them.

Prep done: Thoughts and research done in advance, as well as material gathering if needed. Reading the “Wall of Cool” in the Partnering with Parents section. Also, the videos on “Merchants of Cool” and “The Cost of Cool” are very useful.

Opening/Mood set: Begin the group with a conversation about each other’s preferences for music and media identities (favorite songs and fashion, stores, etc). Include any aspects of pop culture or television that come up or are seen as relevant. Sing radio songs together, quote TV and movies and feel free to get lost in it for at least a short time.

Questions/Activities:

1st activity: Ask the camper what “cool” means to them. Examine what comes from you and what comes from media influence. Cite studies on brand name recognition and discuss how that affects each of us.

2nd activity: Challenge the campers to examine WHY they think things are cool and how they have been influenced by these thoughts. Share your own pathway through the world of cool and where you are now

3rd activity: Go over some of the media mediums that you brought and discuss what comes up.

Closing: Ask the campers if any of their thoughts or ideas in how they view media coolness have changed.

Were other people involved? None needed for logistics, however this is an excellent one to include guest figures that you are aware the campers think of as “cool,” and work with their presence to guide the discussion.

Thoughts on pacing? These topics can open floodgates with some campers. The discussions can go on and on in some cases, plan accordingly.

What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it? Consider tying into follow up discussions on specific issues with media portrayal---body image, preoccupation with success/wealth, violence, etc.

Camper feedback: “My favorite embers at camp, ever.”