

When You Are Up Front

Here are some helpful hints to remember when you are the person up front:

- **Know what you want to say.** A group will give you only so much time, so before getting their attention, be sure you know what you want to communicate. It is a good idea to write down what you plan to say. Even if you do not use your notes, you will have something to fall back on, and the exercise of writing will help you prepare.
- **Do not yell.** You might need to use a loud voice to get a group's attention, but project your voice, do not yell. Once you have everyone's attention, speak in an even voice.
- **Do not start speaking until you have the group's attention.** If half the members of the group are not listening, don't start speaking—you will only have to repeat yourself. Ask for attention before you start, and wait until you get everyone's attention before you begin sharing information.
- **When you are going to be leading an activity, make sure you practice giving the directions beforehand.** Giving directions always seems easier to do than it actually is; take the time to practice what you will say so that you can be as clear and concise as possible.
- **Listen to yourself and choose your words carefully.** Often when we get up front, we say things we normally would not (such as, "Shut up!") out of frustration. Find polite ways to ask people to stop talking.
- Any of the following ideas helps groups know when it is time to stop talking.
 - Say, "If you can hear my voice, clap once" (a few people will clap). Then, "If you can hear my voice, clap twice." Then, "If you can hear my voice, clap three times." Usually, by the time you get to three, people are clapping and not talking.
 - Let the group know that when you raise your hand, it is a sign that you would like their attention. They should also raise their hands and stop talking, encouraging those around them to do the same.
 - Develop a phrase that will be a signal to the group that you need their attention. Consider saying, "God is good," and requesting that the group respond by saying, "All the time." Then say, "All the time," and ask the group to respond by saying, "God is good."