



## LESSON 8.11 Toothpick Towers

### Module #8: Leadership

Defining oneself as a leader in the school starts early, and ninth graders need to understand this. There are identifying characteristics of effective leaders that can be learned and developed – but it takes practice. It is important for freshmen to be aware of the opportunities to practice and fine tune their leadership skills in high school.

### Enduring Understandings

- I. **Effective leaders share common characteristics – characteristics that can be learned and developed.**
- II. There are many opportunities in high school to gain leadership experience.

### Essential Questions

- I. **What are the characteristics of effective leaders? (I)**
- II. **What strategies can be employed to build leadership skills? (I)**
- III. What opportunities exist in our high school to gain leadership experience? (II)

### Lesson Objective(s)

Students will learn techniques and develop skills to become better leaders in and out of the classroom.

Challenge 3.5

Lesson 8.10

**Lesson 8.11**

Challenge 3.6

Lesson 8.12

### Directions:

1. Divide the freshmen into small groups of 4-5. Each group will need to move to a workspace so that the groups cannot see each other.
  2. Give each group a box of toothpicks and a roll of masking tape. Explain to the students that they will be given 10 minutes to build a tall toothpick tower. They do not have to use all 10 minutes and can stop when they think the tower they have built is tall enough to win.
  3. At the conclusion of the 10 minutes, student leaders should measure the height of each group's tower. The tallest tower wins!
  4. Conclude the activity with a discussion about the activity with these questions:
    - Did any groups stop building before the time was up? Why or why not?
    - Would it have made a difference if you could have seen what the other groups were doing and how tall their towers were? Why or why not?
- So, when you do something, are you working hard enough just to be better than the person next to you, or are you doing the absolute best that you can?
  - What is there to learn about the leadership trait "tenacity" in this activity? Why is this such an important leadership trait?

### Materials & Supplies

- Toothpicks
- Masking tape
- Tape measure or yard stick
- Prize

FOCUS  
POINT

Great leaders never give up and keep working until the end to be the best — that's what having tenacity is all about. It's easy to just "do enough," but true leaders don't just do enough, they do their best!

- If you have the time, repeat the activity and require every group to work for the entire 10 minutes. Compare the heights of their first tower to their second. Chances are they'll be a lot taller and stronger!

resources  
&  
extension