



Sample Activity from the S.P.A.R.K. Teen Mentoring Program

Activity One: The SPARK is Yours (15 minutes)

Activity Focus: The purpose of this activity is to show that the SPARK comes through and guides each of person differently. It is also to show that the participants' **SPARK** is always inside them even when it is covered up. It can never be broken, damaged, lost, or taken away.

The facilitator will begin by passing out one empty thought bubble to each participant and instructing them to write down the first thought that pops into their head. Once the participants have finished, the facilitator will collect the thought bubbles and demonstrate the following activity.

Step 1: Start by turning the lamp on without the shade, just the bare bulb, and explain: *This represents us all. Everyone has this light. This light represents the **SPARK** that guides us in all situations. This SPARK is all around us guiding everything, everyday but it's also inside every one of us, helping and guiding us individually. This SPARK is mine and yours too. This is where your wisdom, gut instinct or common sense comes from. This is also where your "out of the blue" creative ideas come from or even the answers to any decision you may have to make.*

Step 2: Next, put the lampshade over the light and explain: *See how this is still bright enough to see but not as clear? This represents **Thought** and how it is occurring all the time and is beyond our control. **Thought** allows us to have our own view and shades our experience. But it never completely covers the **SPARK** we have inside.*

Step 3: Next, take out the prepared dark-fabric, thought bubbles that the participants filled out earlier and ask the participants, one at a time, to pick up a thought bubble, read it aloud and fasten it to the shade. Then explain: *When we have thoughts and treat them as concrete facts, those thoughts create a caught-up state of mind. As each thought is put on the shade, the less the light can shine through. Eventually, the shade becomes so dark that the **SPARK** cannot be seen.*

Step 4: Then, explain that although participants can't see any light coming through, it is still there under all the darkness!

Step 5: Ask each participant to remove a thought, one at a time, until all have been taken away, explaining that with each thought removed, a little more light comes through until it becomes bright again.

Step 6: End by removing the shade, demonstrating that the **SPARK** is always there, right underneath their personal thinking, just waiting to shine through.

Next, the facilitator will lead a discussion regarding the **SPARK** represented by the lightbulb.

Sample Questions:

1. When might you experience a clear mind, like the light without the lampshade? *Example Answers: When I'm present in the moment, or "in the zone" and Thoughts are flowing in and out freely. For example, when I'm playing my favorite sport or instrument.*

The facilitator will point out that only when present in the moment do we truly have a clear mind and that **Thought** comes and goes without our control, so we can't ever clear our own mind. However, we can start to get a feel for when we are in a clear state and when we are in a caught-up state of mind and that feel can help guide us back to seeing our **SPARK**.

2. What types of feelings do you have when you are in a caught-up state of mind? *Example Answer: Stressed out. Overwhelmed. Busy. Excited. Tired.*

The facilitator will guide the participants to realize they can have all types of feelings when in a caught-up state of mind. Some may feel happy and some may feel fear. Even if something that is normally positive or exciting to you happens, while in a caught-up state of mind, you may not experience it in that way because your experience will be influenced by your current state of mind.



3. What is the **SPARK** that is represented in the lampshade activity? *Example Answers: The **SPARK** is our guidance system that naturally resides in all of us.*
4. How is the **SPARK**, yours, and mine individually? *Example Answers: Though the **SPARK** is the energy behind how everything works (like the internet), it can also be seen as our own because it guides each one of us differently.*

The facilitator will point out that the **SPARK** is working for us all but comes through each of us differently. Therefore, we each have our own **SPARK** within.

5. Can you think of a time that you were in a caught-up state of mind and couldn't see your **SPARK** but later realized it was there the whole time trying to guide you? *Example Answer: When I had to take a hard exam, I stayed up studying all night and still failed. I later realized I wasn't learning anything because I was so tired, and my **SPARK** was trying to get me to go to sleep.*

The facilitator will point out that though sometimes their **SPARK** is missed because they are in a caught-up state of mind, it is always in the background working for them. The facilitator should end by emphasizing that the **SPARK** in us all is always available and can never be put out, regardless of their state of mind or decisions they make.

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