Take the Soft Drink Challenge

Brand Loyalty Activity

Objectives:
1. Sample different brands of cola-type soft drinks and try to identify the brand without seeing the label.
2. Begin to understand the concept of brand loyalty.

Note: This activity is not intended to promote soft drinks. It is designed to help kids understand how advertising influences their choices. Soft drinks advertisements targeting this age group are everywhere. And kids are choosing soft drinks over more healthful beverages – at least in part due to these influences. Often they think their “brand” is the best because it tastes the best. This activity attempts to challenge that assumption and assess the influence of advertising.

Age:
10 years and older.

Length:
Approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Supplies and Materials:
1. Three different brands of cola-type soft drinks. Suggest 2-liter bottles of Pepsi, Coke and a store brand cola. Remove all brand identification. If this is not possible, pour into another container just before the activity.

2. Small (3-ounce) cups for sampling – three per person.

3. Marker to label cups and soft drink containers. Label 1, 2, and 3.

Special Considerations:
Food Allergies: Be aware that some participants may have food allergies or may not be allowed to drink soft drinks or sweetened beverages. Ask them to be your helpers in distributing supplies for the activity.

Activity Directions:
1. Provide each participant with three cups labeled 1, 2 and 3. Pour a small amount of each soft drink sample into the corresponding cup.
2. Ask participants if they have a favorite cola-type soft drink. Many will claim they only like “Coke” or “Pepsi” and that they can tell the difference. Have them sample each cola and decide which brand is in each cup. They need to keep their decisions to themselves.

3. Give the results. Ask if anyone guessed all three correctly.

4. Discuss why participants think they have a favorite soft drink brand. Pose some questions:
   * How did the colas taste? Was it hard to tell them apart? Was it hard to determine brands? Basically, cola-type soft drinks are very similar.
   * For those who accurately determined each brand, what was distinct about each brand? Did you notice a difference in flavor, color and/or sweetness? Was there an after-taste?
   * Where do we see advertising for soft drinks? (athletic score boards; pop machines in schools, stores, and businesses; school supplies; clothing)
   * Since the products are similar, the ads are selling an “image” to try to create brand loyalty. What effect does this advertising have on choices?
   * Do we drink soft drinks because we really enjoy them or because we are trying to fit an image?
   * Do you feel the same way about “your” brand now as you did before this activity?

**Take Home Tidbit**

Take home slip says the following:

“Ask me about the soft drink challenge and what I learned about advertising at the WIN Kids Fun Day.”