

Ball Toss

“Ball Toss” (adapted from *Activities That Teach* by Tom Jackson) is a fun activity used for teaching goal setting.

Students are divided into groups of about 4 and given a piece of paper, pencil, and 3 balls. Buckets are set before each group and the groups are told that each person is to throw the balls into their group's bucket. They receive 1 point if they hit the bucket, 3 points if the ball goes into the bucket but bounces out, and 5 points if the ball goes into the bucket and stays. For the first round set the buckets 10 feet from the group and have the throwers keep their eyes shut. **Debrief** by discussing that if you don't have any goals, you won't know which direction you are heading or how to get there. Blindly throwing the balls shows how hard it is to hit a goal you can't see or haven't set.

Have the students do several more rounds with eyes open moving the buckets to a different distance from the groups each round varying from 2 feet away to so far away that they can't hit the target. On the last round have one student in each group hold the bucket helping to try to get the balls to land in it.

Processing/Debrief:

- Re-emphasize how the blind tossing shows how hard it is to reach a goal if you don't have one.
- Discuss how the far bucket is so difficult that the goal is rarely, if ever, reached.
- Discuss how the bucket 2 feet away is not much of a challenge.
- Discuss how the medium distance was about right and why.
- Discuss how having the help of the person holding the bucket in the last round made it easier to reach the goal.
- Finish by tying this learning to classroom goals.