



**AFS-USA  
End-of-Stay Event  
Handbook for Coordinators  
2008**



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# End-of-Stay Event

## Overview

In years past, the End-of-Stay (EOS) Event occurred, along with a bus trip, over a period of several days. This provided a transitional time period between saying good-bye to the U.S. family and hello to the participant's natural family. The length of the event allowed for deep reflection and evaluation of the AFS experience. In 2004, the minimum amount of time required for the EOS Event was reduced to 24 hours and subsequent changes to the content of the orientation were made.

**Currently the required minimum length of the EOS Event is 16 hours, with at least 6 hours devoted to content and/or activities with the participants. For those teams with a bus ride of more than 10 hours, the total minimum length of their event would be the duration of the bust trip plus 6 hours.** For example, if a team has a bus trip of 14 hours, the minimum length for their event would be 20 hours, or 14 hours plus 6 hours. **In any case, the 6 hours of “face time” with the participants are exclusive of any time spent with their host families prior to their host family’s departure from the EOS site.**

While some Area Teams continue to run a lengthier EOS Event, many do not, and, as such, the value of the EOS Event as a transitional period is diminished, leaving minimal time for processing and evaluating the experience. As a replacement, Area Teams may choose to focus on processing and evaluating the participant's experience during the Pre-return Orientation. In this way, the EOS Event becomes more of a celebration of the participant's completion of the AFS program in the U.S., rather than a period of more intense reflection and evaluation.

In light of these two different scenarios, this handbook offers options and ideas on how the Area Team may choose to run their EOS Event, based on the time available and what has been covered during the Pre-return Orientation. The Area Team may choose to run any or all of the EOS activities in this handbook; however, the **Travel and Logistics** session is **required for everyone**.

The three goals of the EOS Event are to:

1. Celebrate the completion of the participant's AFS experience in the U.S;
2. Help the participants process and evaluate their homestay experience; and
3. Help the participants prepare for re-entering their home culture.

Regardless of the format of the event, it is also one last chance for participants to be a part of the international community of AFSers hosted in their area. At some point during the EOS Event, participants should be encouraged to volunteer with AFS in their home country and be reminded that without volunteers, AFS would not exist. Just as volunteers made a difference in their life here in the U.S., they can make a difference in the lives of young people hosted in their home country. Their commitment to the mission of AFS should not end along with their participation in the program. They are now privileged to be among the “Keepers of the AFS Mission,” no matter where they are.

This EOS Event Handbook contains the following sections:

## **Running Orientations**

This section includes helpful hints to make your orientation sessions run smoothly. It has a checklist of What Should Be Done in Advance, Tips on Facilitating Group Discussions, and a section on Managing Groups.

## **Ideas for End-of-Stay Events**

This section contains a list of activities and venues that volunteers have used in the past. If you have additional activities or ideas to submit for future versions of this handbook, please contact Robin Weber, AFS Manager of Quality, Orientation and Training, at [rweber@afs.org](mailto:rweber@afs.org).

## **Icebreaker and Energizers**

In this handbook we have provided some icebreakers and energizers adapted from *Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership*, by Karl Rohnke and Steve Butler. Other activities were taken from *New Games*, Andrew Fluegelman, ed. These books are great resources for anyone leading an orientation. These activities can be used either at the beginning of a session, whenever the group needs a little “lift,” or when there is time to fill before the next session begins.

## **EOS Event Activities**

This section includes the **Travel and Logistics** session (required), as well as other optional activities, such as Family Closure and Re-entry Activity.

# EOS Event Coordinator Job Description

End-of-Stay (EOS) Event is a major event that helps students prepare for their return to their home country, provides closure for their year, and also is part of the logistical process to return students to their home countries. Since there are several responsibilities for the EOS Event Coordinator it can be beneficial to set up a committee in which different volunteers take on different EOS Event tasks.

- **Communicate EOS Event plans to Regional Travel and Logistics Coordinator (TLC) in a timely manner via the End-of-Stay Planning Database of AFS Online.** The Regional TLC needs information on coordinators, plans, bus pick-up point, chaperones, address for mailings, and emergency contact numbers. Deadlines for submitting this information are included in the EOS Guidelines which you received from AFS-USA and the Regional TLC.
- **Communicate with volunteers, host families and students in your Area Team regarding EOS Event plans.** All communications about EOS Event specifics must be generated by the Area Team. The only communication sent by the TLC Department to the participants and host families is the luggage mailing in early spring, a copy of which can be found in the Travel Section of AFS Online. The EOS Event Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that participants and host families are informed of where and when the EOS Event will start and how long host families will be allowed to remain at the meeting point. We recommend that this communication occur at least six weeks before departure in order to allow families to plan to attend. Local volunteers should be involved in the planning of EOS Event and kept informed of details.
- **Locate EOS Event facilities and lodging.** You may need to recruit short-term host families or secure a site for participants to stay for the duration of EOS Event. You will also need to locate facilities for events and orientations.
- **Recruit chaperones for the bus trip to the Gateway City.** Some teams may not need to recruit a chaperone. Some busses will come from other Area Teams and already have a chaperone on the bus. All teams that require a chaperone will also be responsible for recruiting a back-up chaperone. All chaperones must have the use of a cell phone during the bus trip.
- **Provide the Regional TLC with directions to EOS Event pick-up point.** Directions from a major route to the pick-up point must be provided to the Regional TLC. This point cannot be a private residence, must provide space for students to store their luggage until the bus arrives, and must provide enough room for the bus to turn around if necessary.
- **Recruit group leaders to cover selected orientation activities with students.** Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to split it up into smaller groups during some of the activities.
- **Reconfirm charter bus pick up time and directions the Friday before your EOS event.**
- **Ensure students abide by luggage weight and piece restrictions.**
- **Note:** detailed information regarding luggage and pre-departure information will be sent to you by your Regional Travel and Logistics Coordinator.

# Running Orientations

You will encounter participants who have had different kinds of experiences with their families, in their schools, and in their communities during the year. This is because each person is unique. As facilitator of the orientation sessions, encourage the participants to reflect upon their year and listen to the experiences of others. The sessions should produce some lively discussions as the participants look back on their year, assess what they have learned, reflect on ways they have grown and changed, and think about how these experiences will fit into returning home.

## **What Should Be Done In Advance**

- Read and study this handbook carefully;
- Prepare any flipcharts, handouts, or other materials needed for the orientation sessions;
- Have a supply of pens or pencils, masking tape, and markers on hand;
- Decide which icebreakers and energizers you plan to use and bring the supplies needed (such as a ball of string); and
- Bring a box of tissues for those emotional times!

## **Tips on Facilitating Group Discussions**

As you facilitate, you should be aware of the session on two levels: (1) Process Level (how group members interact) and (2) Content Level (the subject being dealt with). Your role as facilitator is to help group members work together (process) and to be sure to cover the content.

### ***Encourage Equal Participation***

Make sure every participant in the group is present at each session and try to include everyone in the discussion. Some members will participate more than others, but try to keep one person from dominating. Provide opportunities for more silent members to contribute. One technique is to use “go-arounds,” with each person in the group commenting on the subject at hand. Another technique is to ask for comments and observations from different group members and encourage people in the group to ask each other questions. When necessary and appropriate, affirm the right of each individual to have different feelings and reactions. Be aware of cliques forming and try to prevent single-country groups from banding together too much.

### ***Be Sensitive***

This is a time and place for participants to share their thoughts and feelings about their experiences. Limit your role to that of a facilitator. Do not get involved in a lengthy discussion of your own personal experiences.

### ***Be Creative***

We encourage you to follow the suggested activities and personalize them so they work for you. You may wish to make some changes or additions to fit the mood of the group. Different people learn in different ways, so be sure to vary your techniques for presenting material. Remember to be clear to the group why you are doing something and how it fits in with other planned or completed activities.

### ***Be Flexible***

Don't feel locked into a subject if the discussion takes a different direction that is equally valuable. You can always return to the original subject matter at another time.

### ***Build a Group***

The first session is very important. Sit in a circle. Make eye contact. Learn names and get everyone to know each other. It is strongly suggested that when the group meets for the first time, begin with an “icebreaker” that is designed to help people get acquainted.

### ***Communicate***

Be honest and open, clear and concise. Visual aids and written handouts help reinforce the exercises.

### ***Listen***

Be a good listener. Much of the time when someone is talking, we aren’t really listening but are thinking about how we will respond. Try not to evaluate immediately what is being said in terms of what it means to you, but understand what it means from the speaker’s perspective.

### ***Clarify***

It may be helpful to re-phrase something that has been said to make sure that you and the rest of the group have understood it as the speaker intended. Do this in a way that leaves room for correction. Instead of asking “why” questions — “Why do you feel that way?” — try a “what” question, such as “What reasons do you have for saying that?”

### ***Summarize***

Just before breaks or at the end of the session, try to pull together various parts of the discussion and sum it up. State what ideas have been discussed, what progress has been made, and where you think the group is going.

### ***Pace***

When a specific subject has been covered, move on. If necessary, have an additional activity in reserve if the subject has been covered, but there is still time available. If people are restless, is it because they need a break or are they just tired? When silences occur, do they seem comfortable or uncomfortable? Are people bored, uneasy with the subject, or just shy with each other? Ask the people in the group what is going on if there is an uncomfortable feeling. If it is hard to pull the whole group into a discussion, it may be a good time to choose an alternate activity, such as a group game, which is more active. This may help the group feel more at ease with each other. If one or two members seem bored, you may want to confront them directly and ask them if there is any comment they would like to make. On the other hand, it may be more appropriate to wait for a break and then talk to them in a low-key, friendly way.

### ***Process***

Keep communication open. Encourage a variety of responses to a single question. Provide opportunities for expression: “Juan, how do you feel about what Ahmet and Selena have been saying?” Ask for group feedback: “Does anyone else have an interpretation of this incident?” Provide suggestions: “It seems to me that we are bogged down. Let’s break for lunch and come back with some fresh insights.” Try not to give a definitive answer for every question raised; rather, try replying with “What do you think?” or “Could someone suggest a different response or new idea?”

## **Managing Groups**

We have attempted to categorize below the different types of issues and concerns you may encounter when leading a group of teenagers. We also suggest some possible responses to these as they crop up; however, rely on your best judgment in dealing with these situations if they arise.

### **Individual Issues**

#### ***Resident Expert***

The person who has an answer and opinion for everything. Sometimes a person has background in the area and wants to be sure that the group knows it.

Suggestions:

- Avoid fighting. Ask other group members for their opinions: "How do other people feel about that?"
- Emphasize that teaching is the responsibility of everyone in the group, and others with knowledge, provided they don't get the group off-track, are welcome.
- Always admit that you don't know something if you don't.

#### ***The Non-Talker***

The person who never says much and does not seem to be part of the group.

Suggestions:

- Avoid saying, "We've not heard much from Veronica. Veronica, how do you feel?" Instead, try going around the room, asking everyone, including Veronica, how they feel about something.
- A non-talker often becomes involved if allowed to work in smaller groups so they can get to know people.
- Try to talk to the non-talker during breaks to find out if there is a cause for the silence. It could be the result of shyness, disinterest, or any number of things.

#### ***The Rambler***

Takes a lot of time to say nothing, tells stories, etc.

Suggestions:

- Thank them for the contribution and ask a question which brings the discussion back to the main topic: "What would this illustrate about the topic under discussion?"
- If they continue, interrupt tactfully and ask, "I'm not sure if you're saying A or B ..."
- Interrupt tactfully and say that you're not following what they are saying very well. "Would someone else in the room help you understand the point that was being made?"
- When all else fails, you are in charge and can limit each person's time to three or four minutes, if need be.

#### ***The Fighter or Arguer***

The person who opposes everything the leader suggests.

Suggestions:

- Don't fight or argue back: that will just make things worse. Instead, check out the statements with the group: "How many people share this opinion and want to do this?"
- Try to move the disagreement outside the group if possible. "Is it clear that you and I just don't agree on this? As I really don't want to occupy any more of the group's time on it, can we continue this discussion immediately following this period?"
- If they speak not just for themselves but for many in the group, then of course the session should be stopped and a group discussion should be started on the problem.

### ***Special Interest***

The person who has a particular problem that is raised no matter what the subject is at hand.

Suggestions:

- If legitimate, sympathize with the problem, but explain that it can't be dealt with adequately during group time, and you'll meet immediately following the session to talk in more detail.

### ***Talker***

The person who talks to people and goes around the session.

Suggestions:

- Often, activities such as small group sessions, which are built by random numbering, will break up the cliques by encouraging conversation in the small groups.
- Frequently, it's best to simply stop the session and wait until the group quiets down. In addition, you can directly address one of the people involved and either ask for their opinion or ask what they are talking about.

### ***Yes, But***

The person who can always give unlimited reasons why any suggestion that's made won't work.

Suggestions:

- Ask them to tell you how they have tried to solve the problem and their analysis of why it didn't work. Then ask them what might work instead.
- Create smaller groups and ask each to come back with two constructive solutions.
- Ask the group what it is about this particular problem that makes it hard to identify solutions.

## **Group Situations**

Every group and situation is unique. Below we discuss various group problems that you will probably experience to varying degrees. Use the trust you have established with the participants, as well as your common sense and objectivity, to resolve the majority of group problems you will encounter.

### ***The Quiet/Reticent Group***

One of the most difficult situations a leader will face is a group that will not get going or seems to come to a halt midway. Typically, leaders try to get it moving by suggesting new topics, joking, taking a break, etc. The easiest thing to do is simply to say, "I'm really not sure why this group is so quiet. Let's break down into smaller groups and discuss the reasons for this. We'll get back together in ten minutes to discuss it together."

### ***The Will-Not-Settle-Down Group***

Every group has two needs: to socialize and to accomplish a task. Often, groups have a hard time settling down because something has happened which needs to be talked about. The best strategy is to wait until they are ready to work. You may make a few false starts, but do not begin feeling it is your own fault. Another possible tactic is to join in the discussion. If the situation remains, you might again have to break up into small groups which discuss the question: "Why are we having such a hard time getting off the ground?"

### ***The Will-Not-Agree-to-Anything Group***

Occasionally, groups reject anything a leader says. The silent members are probably inhibited by the more vocal. Your best strategy is to get the quieter people talking.

## **Timing and Transition**

Saying good-bye to friends and family is bound to be a very emotional experience for the participants, and therefore they will need a little time to shift gears before participating in a very

structured activity. We recommend a large group icebreaker to insert some fun and humor into the atmosphere, and we recommend it is done before the participants introduce themselves. This will allow some individuals extra time to compose themselves, while “blending in with the crowd” in the larger group, rather than having to be the center of attention, even for a very short period of time.

# Ideas for End-of-Stay Events

## Venues

- Scout camps — national listing available at <http://www.usscouts.org/databases/camp/ocd.cgi>
- National parks — listing available at <http://data2.itc.nps.gov/parksearch/geosearch.cfm>
- Youth hostels — national listing available at <http://www.hihostels.com/openHome.sma?AffiliateID=97060>
- Religious facilities or retreat centers — for example national listings of Christian camps available at <http://www.ccca-us.org/public/camps/campsearch.asp> or <http://www.allaboutretreats.com/>
- YMCA/YWCA
- Community centers
- College campuses
- Amusement parks or water parks
- The beach
- State parks
- Private homes (Please note, buses may not pick up participants at private homes)

## Activities

*(Make sure to obtain any necessary permission slips or Activity Waivers well in advance of the EOS Event.)*

- Make a banner, T-shirts signed by all participants, a yearbook, or a mural.
- “Before and After.” Compare a photo of each participant when they first arrived with a current photo. Works well during discussion of ways participants may have changed.
- Community service activity.
- Games — water balloon toss, three-legged race, horse shoes, badminton, bingo, etc. Award AFS or other gifts that are easy to pack, such as T-shirts.
- Show a video or digital film of participants taken throughout the year.
- Make a video or digital film to be shown to next group of AFSers.
- Rafting, canoeing, paddle boats, steamboat ride.
- Bar-B-Q, picnic, potluck.
- Team sports.
- Hiking, camping.
- Talent show.
- A dance, or music and snacks after structured orientation activities.
- Bowling.
- Mini golf, go-carts, bumper boats.
- Pool party.
- Lock-in (where participants are locked into one place and can watch movies, sleep over, eat pizza, relax and integrate the activities already mentioned, games, sports, etc.).

## Keeping Costs Down

- Seek donated goods/services — pillows from airlines, food from large grocery stores, approach banks and other large businesses to sponsor some aspect of the event;
- Location — Try centers of worship. They may make facilities available to outside groups at no to low cost. Religious centers with schools attached are better because the classrooms can serve as break out rooms, they may have showers, a place to play, somewhere kids can sleep, a kitchen, etc.;
- Find a place with a kitchen and bring your own food. (Have vegetarian food available.);

- Get a couple of volunteers to handle the food purchasing and preparation. Enlist the kids in the preparation and clean up.

## Icebreakers and Energizers

This section includes games and activities to get participants to mingle, to meet one another, or to stimulate and revive the group. If you don't want to interrupt the flow of the session, do some simple stretching exercises instead of an energizer.

### Active Group Trust

Form two lines of about eight people each, facing each other. Clasp arms with the two people across from you, left arm to left arm and right arm to the next person's right arm. Stand shoulder to shoulder and hold firmly. A volunteer stands on a chair and falls into all the arms. A more daring variation is to run and jump into the arms. Do this activity only with careful leadership.

### Catch the Dragon's Tail

This is a very active game, best played out of the way of trees and holes in the ground. About eight to ten people line up, one behind the other. Now everyone puts their arms around the waist of the person in front of them. The last person in line tucks a handkerchief in the back of his belt. The dragon roars and at the signal begins chasing his own tail. The tricky part of this is that the people at the front and back are clearly competing — but those in the middle aren't sure which way to go! When the head finally captures the tail, the head takes the handkerchief and becomes the new tail, while second from the front becomes the new head.

A variation is to have two dragons chasing each other's tails. Best is a whole field of dragons chasing each other's tails. Wearing nice clothes for this game is not recommended.

### Categories

This activity works well with very large groups. Ask the group to separate quickly into smaller groups based on the categories that you are about to announce (see below). Alternate 50-50 splits (only two groups) and other splits (many groups). Be upbeat and directive in your presentation; keep the group moving by changing the categories. As soon as the milling around has slowed and distinctly smaller groups have established themselves, give the participants time enough to look at one another, say "Hi," then hit them with another categorical split.

Present no more than 10 – 12 groupings. Look through this list and pick those categories that appeal most to you, or create your own.

#### **List of Categories:**

- Clasp your hands and fold your thumbs. Is your right or left thumb on top?
- Fold your arms. Is your right or left arm on top?
- Have someone look at your eyes and tell you what color they are. Group yourselves according to eye color.
- Which leg do you put in your pants first?
- When you clap, is your right or left hand on top? Parallel hands?
- When you tap your foot to music, do you use the right or left foot?
- Using your index finger as a pencil, draw an imaginary circle in the air. Does your finger travel clockwise or counterclockwise?
- Again, using your index finger as a pencil, draw a profile of a dog. Is the dog facing right or left?

- With which eye do you give a spontaneous wink?
- Thinking of clearing a ditch or low fence, off which leg do you jump?
- What month were you born in?
- What is your astrological sign?
- When you lick an ice cream cone, do you rotate the cone clockwise or counter-clockwise?
- When standing casually with your hands in your pockets, are they in your front or back pockets?
- Do you prefer cats or dogs?
- Do you shower primarily in the morning or at night?

***Variation:***

As a means of dividing up teams or to pick partners, ask a person to find a partner — someone they don't know but with whom they have something in common that is not visible. After all the people have a partner, ask each pair to disclose what their common trait is. This technique can be used over and over.

**Commonalities**

This is a quick mixer for medium- to large-sized groups.

**Set-up:**

Ask the group to arrange themselves into clusters of 2s, 3s, 6s, 8s, or whatever suits the mood. Give each group a piece of paper and pen.

**Play:**

The task is to generate a list of things that are common to all the people in the cluster but which you could not identify by looking at them. Ask people to come up with a specific number of commonalities or as many as they can in a couple of minutes.

***Some examples:***

- Have the same number of brothers or sisters
- Traveled to a certain country
- Have the same letter starting their last names
- Play a particular instrument
- Wear contact lenses
- Took a U.S. History class during the past year

Some examples that you can see, and hence don't count: wear glasses, have brown hair, have blue eyes, etc. Given a few minutes, it's amazing how many commonalities people can find with each other. It's a simple way to begin learning about other people in a fun way.

**Famous Persons**

Pin or tape a card with the name of a famous person on it to the back of each person. They must find out who they are by asking "yes" or "no" questions of other people in the group. Some possible questions: "Am I a man?", "Am I still living?", "Was I a politician?" As each person finds their identity, they should sit down on the sidelines and not participate.

**Follow the Leader**

This game works best with five or more people. Ask the participants to sit in a circle and one person is sent out of the room. A leader is selected from those participants in the circle.

After the leader is selected, the person who was sent out of the room returns. The group will follow the leader's actions. The leader performs some type of action (clapping, tapping, rubbing his head, etc.) and each time he changes actions, the whole group changes at the same time. The person from outside must observe and try to figure out who the leader is.

### **Group Trust**

This is a trust-building activity. Encourage people to be gentle and speak softly. Form a circle, shoulder to shoulder, of about eight people around one person in the center. Instruct the person in the center to stand, feet together, arms at her side, eyes closed, and body completely relaxed.

Tell her to lean back and let the members of the group support her and gently pass her around. It is helpful to alternate stronger people around the circle. Let all who want to have a turn in the center. This can also be done with the people making up the circle sitting and the center person standing.

### **Ha-Ha**

Lie down, heads on each other's stomachs. First person says "Ha-Ha." Try to get through the whole group without breaking into laughter.

### **Human Treasure Hunt**

This is a mixer activity for groups large or small, where people may or may not know each other, where you want a little or a lot of interaction, and where people can have some fun. It can last for five minutes to an hour, is great around meal times, fits most indoor spaces, and is a nice low-key energizer for a group just meeting each other.

This activity requires some preparation. You can photocopy the sample list in this handbook or you can create your own list, personalizing the facts to suit your audience.

You want to create a list of facts about people that will be representative of the group playing the game. Include facts that apply to some or most of the people in the group, with a few facts mixed in that may have only a few responses or possibly none at all. Examples are provided below.

Each person gets a treasure hunt list and a pen or pencil. The task is to circulate within the group and identify a person for each fact on the list. If Juan fits "born in the same month" then you can't use Juan's name for another fact. Specify that you must meet people individually if you write their name next to the fact.

To play competitively, tell people to finish their list quickly. Then, start your timer — or pretend to. Most players won't care, but the element of competition usually acts as a prod for performance.

**List of "Treasures"**

- \_\_\_\_\_ was born in the same month as I.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has the same number of host siblings as I have.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has been on TV or radio.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has performed on stage somewhere.
- \_\_\_\_\_ can play a musical instrument. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ has been to Disneyland.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has climbed a mountain over 10,000 feet (3,048 meters).
- \_\_\_\_\_ has been in a parade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has gone sky-diving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has gone scuba-diving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has done bungee-jumping.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has a relative who went on the AFS program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ got a 3.5 or better GPA for at least one term while in the U.S.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has won a national competition in the U.S. or home country.
- \_\_\_\_\_ knows someone famous. Who? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ has hosted an AFSer in their home country.

## **Instant Impulse**

Set-up:

- A quarter or nickel to toss;
- A medium-sized ball; and
- Blindfolds (or the group can just keep their eyes closed).

Divide your group into two teams, equal numbers on each side. Ask each team to sit down facing each other with approximately 12 inches between the teams. Each team must link together by holding hands so that all the players on a team are connected. The ball is placed exactly between the last two people at the ends of the lines. The ball should be equidistant from both players, and the last players need to rest their free hands on their knees at the start of the game.

At the head of the line, the first players on each team keep their eyes open. All other players are either blindfolded or close their eyes. Position yourself as leader close to the two sighted people at the start of the lines.

Play:

Flip a coin. When it lands, “heads” is the signal to send an impulse down the line; “tails” means nothing and the coin is flipped again. When “heads” turns up, the two sighted players immediately squeeze the hand of the next player in line. This impulse is passed down the line as quickly as possible to the last person. As soon as the last person receives it (the grabber), she tries to grab the ball. Whichever person gets the ball, that team wins the round.

Winning a round means the player at the head of the line (the sighted person) rotates to the end of the line (the grabber), and all players move up one spot in the sequence. A team wins the game when the person who started as the sighted player returns to the head of the line and wins a second round.

Should a nervous player send an impulse down the line and grab the ball, that team is assessed a penalty. They must reverse rotate one spot. Assess this penalty any time an infraction occurs.

Comments:

An ideal number for this game is 5 – 10 players per team. With larger groups, perhaps create four teams; two competing against each other and then have a final match between the two winners.

## **Ostrich**

Blindfold each group member. Whisper a number to each one (1 – 10). Instruct them to order themselves by number in a line without using verbal language. You may develop another form of communication. De-brief. Ask them how it felt.

## **Person in the Middle**

This game requires a sufficient number of people, reasonable strength, and great trust. All participants should sit on the ground in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. They should extend their feet towards the center of the circle (no shoes) and push together as closely as possible. One person stands in the center of the circle and is wedged in place by everyone’s feet. He then crosses his arms across his chest and allows himself to fall, keeping his body rigid. He is then passed around the circle until someone fails to hold him up and he falls. That person then takes a place in the center of the circle and the game is repeated.

## **Rain**

This is a good warm-up or warm-down exercise. Sit in a circle, facing the center. Have everyone close their eyes, pausing for a moment or two of quiet while everyone gets ready to repeat the sound that the person on the right will be making.

Keeping their eyes closed, the rainstorm gets underway as the leader rubs the palms of his hands together, back and forth. The person to his left joins him, and then the person to her left, and then the next person, and so on around the room until everyone is rubbing palms and they listen to the drizzling rain building in intensity.

When the leader hears the drizzle sound being made by the person on his right, he starts snapping his fingers. One by one around the circle, each person replaces palm-rubbing with finger-snapping, and the sprinkling rain turns into a steady patter. When the snapping action has been picked up by everyone, the leader switches to hand-clapping, and each person then picks it up. A hard rain is falling.

The storm builds to a downpour as the leader begins slapping his thighs. Then the skies open and thunder crashes as the next round has everyone stamping their feet.

And then the storm subsides, just as it grew — foot-stamping, thigh-slapping, hand-clapping, finger-snapping, and back to palm-rubbing. (If there is trouble hearing the changes, have each person alert their neighbor with a gentle nudge each time one action is switched for another.)

For the last round, the leader stops rubbing his palms, and takes the hand of the person on his left, as each of the people does in turn around the circle until there's silence once again.

## **Shoe Scramble Game**

Everyone takes off one shoe and tosses it into a pile. People are then asked to choose one shoe and find the person to whom it belongs. The two then pair off and introduce themselves. The one holding the shoe then “interviews” the other (you can establish a set list of questions or just talk at random). When the entire group is finished, the interviewer introduces the interviewee and tells the group what he has learned about that person. Remember that everyone will be involved in two such transactions because everyone will both take a shoe and be without his own shoe.

## **Sit on Knees in a Circle**

All participants form a circle, standing close together. They then turn so they are standing with their backs to each other. Each person then bends down as if to sit, and carefully sits on the knees of the person behind him. This takes a certain amount of patience and balance, and will invariably end with everyone falling to the ground.

## **String**

All participants should sit on the ground in a circle. The group leader provides a ball of string. (Make sure there are no snarls or the game will be a fiasco!). The person who begins the game takes the ball of string, and says her name and something interesting about herself that would not be found in an application (for example: “My name is Mariko and I love peanut butter.”) Holding on to the end of the string, she then tosses the ball at random to another participant. The procedure is repeated until everyone has participated. The result is a web of string with each participant holding on to some part of it. The resulting configuration should then lead to a discussion about interdependence, connections, etc.

## **Telephone**

Sit in a circle. One person starts a message by whispering it in her neighbor's ear. Keep going and see how it comes out in the end. A variation allows the receiver to question the sender. This theoretically demonstrates the value of making sure that you understand what is said.

## **Telephone — Non Verbal**

This game works best with a large group of people — preferably more than ten.

Have the group sit in a circle. Ask everyone to close their eyes, and no peeking, please. The leader starts this game by passing on a non-verbal message to the person on her right. For example, the leader might gently pull on the next person's ear lobe, a friendly pat on the leg, etc. This "message" is then passed around the circle, keeping in mind that all have their eyes closed. As with the traditional game of *Telephone*, the end result is usually quite different from the original message!

## **Wink**

Divide your group in two with one of the groups having an extra person (divide by sex, if possible, but it is not essential). Have each person in the larger group take a chair and form a circle with the chairs. Then, each person should stand behind their chair. The members of the smaller group each take a seat in one of the chairs. This leaves one person standing behind an empty chair and that person is "It." That person winks as inconspicuously as possible at one of the people sitting in the circle. Upon seeing the wink, that person tries to dash over to the empty chair before the standing partner stops them by grabbing their shoulders and holding them down in the chair. If they escape, their standing partner becomes "It" and the game continues until everyone gets sick of it. This is a great icebreaker in a new group and it gets really crazy!

# EOS Event Activities

## Travel and Logistics

(Required)

### Objectives

By the end of the session participants will:

- Be aware of the schedule of events between now and their departure; and
- Know how to pack for their international flight.

### Time

15 – 30 minutes

### ***Overview of Departure Day***

Introduce the bus or flight chaperone to the participants.

Review the following with the participants:

- Participants will receive nametags to wear for Departure-Day (D-Day). This nametag will include a bus number, departure time, and their international flight information.
- Groups flying to D-Day will be met by D-Day staff in the baggage claim area and taken to a local hotel or D-Day site.
- Groups traveling to the D-Day site by bus will be met by D-Day staff and given more detailed information.
- Participants need to have their passports handy; these should NOT be packed into any luggage that will be checked.
- Pack anything of importance (toothbrush, one change of clothes, etc.) in a separate, smaller carry-on bag.
- When the participants arrive at the D-Day site, they must first move all luggage off the bus to the appropriate area before saying good-bye to their friends.
- Share any additional logistical information regarding the End-of-Stay Event.

### ***Just in Case ... Lost Passport***

During normal business hours the loss of a passport must be reported immediately to your Regional Service Center at 1-800-876-2377. Outside of normal business hours contact the Duty Officer at 1-800-876-2376. You will be instructed at that time as to how to proceed. Please have the following information handy when you call:

- Participant's full name and country of origin
- Date and place of birth
- Passport number (if known)
- Place where passport was issued and date of issue (if known)

If after reporting a lost passport you find it, be sure to call AFS back immediately so that replacement procedures can be halted.

## Family Closure

### Objectives

By the end of the session participants will have:

1. Written a thank-you letter to their host family; and
2. Gained closure on their host family experience.

### Time

30 minutes

### Materials

- Pens for each participant
- Postcards or writing paper and envelopes

### Instructions

Begin the activity by adapting the following:

*You may be feeling a little lost now. Being separated from your friends and family is difficult. You may not know when or if you'll see your host family again. You've lived with them and have shared many things during the year. Expect to feel sad, confused, and overwhelmed by these emotions. After our time together you will start feeling better and will be more prepared to re-enter your home culture.*

*Many of you had a great year. You've had many good times with your family. Some of you had a tough year and it's been difficult. How can you express thanks to your host families who made your year possible?*

*In the past, there have been participants who have not had the patience or the time to thank their host families. I'd like you to take a few minutes and write a letter to your host families because it means a lot to them. You can write that your chaperone made you write this letter — that's okay. Even if you wrote a thank-you note to your host family before you left, they will appreciate knowing what you are doing now.*

Distribute postcards or writing paper, envelopes, and pens. Ask participants to take a few minutes to think about all the good times they've had during the year with their family and in their community. Allow about 20 minutes for them to write. Let participants who finish early quietly talk in another part of the room.

Some participants may object to writing a thank-you note to their host families. They may say they had left notes at home; that it was too difficult to write this kind of letter in a group setting where there are so many distractions; and that 20 minutes is too short an amount of time to put into this type of effort. But it **is** important, particularly for the participant who won't ever communicate with the family again, to do so now. Ask the participants at least to write a quick "arrived safely, thanks again for a great year, here's where we are." If using a postcard, you may want to explain that the message goes on the left and the address of the host family on the right.

## **Summary**

Summarize the session by adapting the following:

*Every year has its ups and downs. Through the experience, you have learned more about yourself and the world. Each of you has grown in many ways that you may not even be aware of. The AFS experience will continue to have an influence on your life when you return to your home country.*

Thank the participants for sharing their thoughts and experiences. Review what is planned for them next. Answer any questions. Tell participants that you are available to talk to them if they have any questions or concerns.

## **Re-entry Activity**

This activity can be very intense and stir up a lot of emotions for the participants, therefore do not begin the EOS Event with this activity.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the session participants will have:

1. Visualized the immediate experience of returning home;
2. Shared feelings about their return home; and
3. Considered ways they may help ease re-entry into the home culture.

### **Time**

60 – 75 minutes

### **Breakdown**

Introduction	5 minutes
Activity: Re-Entry Visualization	30 minutes
Activity: Re-Entry Discussion (optional)	20 minutes
Activity: Letter to Yourself (optional)	15 minutes
Summary	5 minutes

### **Materials**

- Prepared flipchart listing objectives of the session
- Envelopes and paper (optional)
- Pens for each participant (optional)
- Boom box with soft music (optional)

### **Session Overview**

The session begins with a short introduction. Next, participants visualize returning home. A discussion follows. An optional exercise is for participants to write a letter to themselves, describing their emotions and thoughts. The session ends with a summary.

### **Instructions**

Start the session with a short introduction. Ask them how everything is going. Answer questions they may have about the schedule and activities.

Briefly review the objectives of the session using the prepared flipchart. Answer any questions about the session.

### ***Re-entry Visualization***

(Adapted from an activity by Robert P. Singer, Ph.D.)

Note: Practice the visualization in front of a mirror so that you feel comfortable doing it. Talk slowly so the participants have time to visualize the scenes. Practice pauses. It may seem a little awkward at first. It helps to think of yourself in the same situation as the participants while doing the visualization. This helps to set a realistic pace.

Chaperones have commented that this activity often brought tears to participants' eyes as they started really to think about what it would be like to be home.

Some chaperones recommend “mood” music for the background (soft music without a beat). You will need a boom box if you bring music. Recordings by Steve Halpern or on the Windham Hill label would be good for this type of activity.

Begin the visualization by adapting the following:

*Soon you will be on plane returning home. You’ve all probably thought about returning home — what it will be like to be back with friends and family.*

*I’ll be leading you through an activity called a “visualization” in which I will guide you through scenes as you return home. As I am talking, imagine what you are thinking and feeling. This will prepare you better for the experience.*

Have participants lie or sit comfortably on the floor (having them face the wall will help cut down on the giggling). Ask them to close their eyes.

After a few moments of silence, begin the visualization.

*Clear your minds of all thought. Let your mind go blank ... Soon you will be leaving to get on an airplane which will take you home. Imagine the airport and all the people, all the participants, getting your luggage checked in, and then waiting ... Now you are boarding the plane. You find your seat and get settled in ... It’s been a long time since you have seen your family and friends ... What are you thinking and feeling as you wait for the plane to take off?*

*The plane takes off and you begin the flight to your country. Are you talking with other AFSers? Will you talk to another person about your year in the U.S.? Are you thinking about what it will be like to be home again? Imagine what you will say and think ...*

*The pilot announces the plane will soon be landing ... Who will be there to meet you when you get off the plane? Your brothers and sisters? Your parents? Some friends? ... Will you give them hugs, kiss them ... Will they look different? Will you look different to them? ... What will it be like to see them again? ...*

*Will you talk to them about your experience? What will they ask you? ... What will you say to them as you travel home from the airport? ... What do you think it will be like to be back in your house again? You’re in the kitchen: smell the familiar smells; the living room, your bedroom ... What does it feel like to be home?*

*What is it like to sit down for your first dinner at home? Will you pick up the fork and knife differently? Will you be asking for the salt in English? ... Will your family and friends understand?*

*Have things changed in your town? Are there new buildings? Do your friends wear different clothes, listen to different music? ... What will it be like to go out with your friends? What will you tell them about the U.S.? ... Do you think they will want to listen? ... What will school be like? Will classes be different? ...*

*There are so many things to do. So many thoughts and feelings about your family in the U.S., and what you have just left ... Slowly return to this room, to the here and now. Open your eyes when you feel comfortable.*

Wait until everyone's eyes are open. Ask participants to share their visualization (optional). Lead a discussion with the whole group. Ask the following questions:

*Was it easy or difficult to imagine yourself in your home community? With your family? With your friends?*

*How did you feel when you were arriving home?*

*Does anyone want to share or describe their experience?*

*How do you think your parents will feel the moment you return home?*

### **Re-entry Discussion**

(Adapted from *Going Home: A Workbook for Re-entry and Professional Integration*, published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Washington, D.C.)

You can run this activity in addition to the visualization exercise, as a stand-alone activity, or weave the comments below into the discussion immediately following the visualization. Involving one or more U.S. returnees in the discussion is a great way for the participants to connect with someone who has experienced something similar to what they are about to experience.

Begin the activity by adapting the following:

#### **Why should I be worried about going home? It is not a foreign country!**

- Some people who have lived abroad have found that the adjustment to returning home was more difficult than their adjustment to the foreign culture. Why? Once again, expectations play a major role. We expect some difficulty when we go to a new place, speak a different language, and learn the rules of a different culture ... but home? We **know** that place!
- While you may know your home, what you do not know after being gone for a period of time is that you have changed and had new and interesting experiences. They have changed, too. Aunt Ida's operation may not be as interesting to you as seeing New York City or the Grand Canyon, but it is just as important to her as your experiences were to you ... and describing your experiences may be as uninteresting to her as hers are to you! The world may have changed, but it did not stop because you spent a year in the U.S.

#### **What can you do to prepare? Here are some suggestions from returnees:**

- Be prepared for an adjustment process. Give yourself time to work through what you are feeling, and give your family time to do the same.
- There is a children's game called "What's wrong with this picture?" It is a drawing that looks normal ... a tree with a bird, a house with a door and windows, etc. What you find as you look carefully, however, is that there is a shoe drawn in the tree, but you cannot see it immediately; and there is a lamp in the bushes outside the house. These items are out of place, but cleverly hidden.
- Going home may feel the same way. Everything will look and feel familiar, but you may also feel that there is something out of place, you just cannot see it at first glance. It will be helpful to take some time out occasionally to think about what you are feeling and how your view of your familiar home has changed ... and why.
- Just as when you came to the U.S., you will be more aware of how your home looks when you go back. You will have a heightened sense of awareness that will last just a short time. Take advantage of that time by writing down your perceptions. Look at your writings later

and think about why you noticed the things you did and how your perceptions changed because of your experience in another culture.

- Upon return, people report that everyone says, “Tell me about your trip” ... then they listen for a few minutes and tell you about something they did! After awhile, they do not ask at all. Learn to give short responses, focusing on one or two ideas about what you did. Save your long discussions for returnees, who will understand!

### **Some ideas:**

- Try to remember to respond slowly when you first return to your home and school. Do not try to change the way others do things because you saw a “better way.” Show them that you appreciate the ways things are done locally, and, as opportunities present themselves, try to integrate some of your new ideas into the traditional ones. Try to go slowly!
- Reserve judgment. Give yourself time to process what you learned and to think through the larger impact of introducing new ways of doing things. What works in one situation may not work in another. Pick ideas that work well for you and set aside those that do not.
- Try to be sensitive to other people’s feelings. Are they really not interested in your experience, or are they feeling some jealousy because they did not have it?
- Try not to idealize or be overly critical of the U.S. or your own country. Attempt to remain neutral. Be careful how you phrase comments and criticisms about your country. Many foreigners are surprised when they come to the U.S. to find how freely Americans criticize! Do not forget that this may be unacceptable at home.
- Regardless of whether things or people back home have changed or have remained the same, you have certainly changed. As a result, your return home will entail a period of adjustment, just as your arrival in the U.S. did. Remain flexible, keep laughing, and try not to do too much too fast.
- Find other returnees with whom to share your experience. They will be happy to listen to you and share their experiences, too. They will understand what you are feeling!

### **Letter to Yourself**

Have participants write letters to themselves reflecting on any or all of the following questions:

- What are you thinking and feeling now as you are preparing to leave the U.S.?
- What did you like/dislike about the experience?
- How have you changed during the course of the experience?
- What aspects of U.S. culture would you like to retain in your home country?
- Tell them you will mail these letters to them next spring. It helps them gain perspective on their experience. This activity requires envelopes, writing paper, and pens for each participant.
- Have participants address the envelopes, seal them, and give them to you.

### **Summary**

Summarize the EOS Event by adapting the following:

*You have all prepared for this experience of returning home. There will still be some surprises and “shocks” as you re-enter the place you call home. However, you realize you have the skills to handle these differences. Just as you adjusted to the U.S. a year ago, you will once again adjust to your own culture. You will realize how much you have changed and grown. Your return home is only a beginning!*

Answer any questions they have about activities and the schedule.



## **Notes**

## **Important Contact Information**



### **AFS-USA MISSION STATEMENT**

AFS-USA works toward a more just and peaceful world by providing international and intercultural learning experiences to individuals, families, schools, and communities through a global volunteer partnership.

#### **AFS East Regional Service Center**

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**[www.afs.org/usa](http://www.afs.org/usa)**