

## Children's Connection Curriculum

**Session Topic:** Self-Esteem – Feelings, Encouragement (Family Totem Pole)

**Developmental Level:** Elementary or Middle School

**Purpose:** For people to explore feelings, perceptions, and relationships that they have with their family members.

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper, Glue, Scissors, Tape, Colored markers, (Optional) Cardboard tube (e.g. toilet paper tube, paper towel roll, or wrapping paper tube), (Optional) Google eyes, felt, fabric, puff ball, pipe cleaners, or anything else that can be used to create animal faces

**Description of Session:** Ask the group if they know what a totem pole is. Explain that a totem pole is a tall woodcarving consisting of animal heads and/or bodies that is used to tell Native American stories or legends. Explain to the group that they are going to create their own unique totem pole about their families. Each person chooses a different animal to represent each family member and places the animal on the pole wherever he or she thinks that family member should be in his or her own story. For example, one pole may have a lion for a brother who is good-looking, athletic, for whom everything seems to come easy, and who is known for being quite lazy. Each totem pole must include at least three people, and each person must put himself or herself on the totem pole. Emphasize that a family can be whoever they feel their family is at the time. For some children, it may be a foster family, grandparents, a special relative, or even a group home.

Give each person a cardboard tube or create one by rolling construction paper long ways into a tube and taping it. Supply the group with all the animal face creation supplies that you have gathered to create animal faces. Instruct them to create animals out of the materials and to glue them onto their totem pole. Allow quite a bit of time for this activity so that the children do a good job and are proud of their totem poles when they are completed. Allow for sharing time at the end so that each person may explain his or her special family totem pole to the group.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Whom does each animal face on your totem pole represent?
2. Why did you choose that animal to represent each person?
3. How is each totem pole unique?

Reference: 104 Activities That Build by Alanna Jones, p.176-177

