

CLASSROOM TLC: Teachers Lawyers Children in Partnership



COURT VISITS AND MOCK TRIALS

Two extremely popular activities among the participants in the program are mock trials and court visits.

Court Visits:

A court visit is an excellent prelude to a mock trial. Observing courtroom procedures and then talking with judges and other court personnel helps to make the law real and meaningful to students.

The lawyer partner can most easily arrange the court visit. It should begin with an orientation with appropriate court personnel. The court administrator's office can arrange the visit so as to be most beneficial to the students.

The lawyer should plan to attend the court visit and then help to debrief it afterward.

For more information, see the ABA Bar/School Partnership Programs publication, "The Courts and the Schools", listed in the Bibliography, Tab 2.

Mock Trials:

Mock trials are an extremely popular culminating activity, frequently used at the end of the school year. Through participation in a mock trial students can acquire a better understanding of trial process and procedures. Students also develop analytical skills, listening skills, oral skills, cooperative skills and organizational skills.

Mock trials range from scripts based on fairy tales which are popular with early elementary students to mock trials based on actual cases or on incidents affecting students. (See Bibliography, Tab 2 for a list of such mock trials.)

There are three general approaches for conducting a mock trial:

- ⇒ The lawyer and teacher can develop a scenario and witness statements;
- ⇒ The students can develop a scenario and witness statements;
- ⇒ The class can use prepared materials

For more information on mock trials, see the ABA Bar/School Partnership Programs publication, "Putting on Mock Trials", listed in the Bibliography, Tab 2.