

## Memory Beads

### An Activity to Teach About the 40 Developmental Assets

By Brian Remer

**Purpose:** To summarize and review the 40 Developmental Assets

**Materials:**

- ✓ String
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ A variety of beads (see below)

**Introduction:**

The ancient Incans, who lived in the mountains of South America, built a thriving civilization that was dependent upon a strong communication system. To maintain government, military, and commercial systems they needed to communicate reliably across steep mountains and deep valleys. Messages were “written” in the form of beads strung together to represent the communication. Runners would carry these strings of beads through the mountains from the king to his governors.

In order for us to remember the Developmental Assets and “carry” them into our future for use beyond this workshop, we are going to create our own string of beads to help us remember the message of how important building assets can be for all of us.

**Procedure:**

Make small packets of string and beads with enough materials in each for 5 or 6 participants to use. Have people sit in groups of 5 or 6 so everyone has access to the materials. Ask people to choose a string and a pink bead. As they do tie the bead onto the string, explain that one of the external assets is support which is represented by the color pink. You can relate this to the support from our mothers or family.

For each subsequent asset, have people find the appropriate color bead. As they string it on, keep up a constant patter about why that bead represents the particular asset and give examples of what that asset might be for different people. Before moving on to the next bead, invite the group to review what each previous bead represents.

While people are tying off their last bead, have the group review what all the beads represent while giving specific examples of those assets. Follow up with some of the discussion questions below.

**Discussion:**

- Which assets that you have do you feel most proud of or happy about?
- What might you do to strengthen and build upon the assets you already have?
- Which assets are most important in your opinion?
- How much does it matter if you don’t have some of the assets?

*Additional questions for adults...*

- Which assets do you feel most able to help youth strengthen?
- How would you go about helping someone else build their assets?

40 Developmental Assets	Represented by...
<b>External</b>	
Support	Pink, Heart (Family support and communication, other adult relationships, caring school and neighborhood)
Empowerment	Green (Personal growth, service to others, safety, youth are seen as resources)
Boundaries & Expectations	Red, Stop Sign (Family, school, neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peers)
Constructive Use of Time	Bell, Clock, Numbers (Creative activities, religious community, youth programs, time at home)
<b>Internal</b>	
Commitment to Learning	Yellow like a school bus, Apple, Pencil, Book (School engagement, achievement, motivation)
Positive Values	Gold, Letter "V" (Integrity, honesty, responsibility)
Social Competencies	"Ethnic" or "Tribal" bead, Tie Die Color, Ying Yang, Peace Sign (Cultural competence, conflict resolution skills, decision-making skills)
Positive Identity	An Initial of Your Name (Personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose)